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Gary Ridley Acting Chief Executive

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2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008

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 10<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2008** at **6.00 P.M.**

### AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To consider the Minutes of the last Meeting of the Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008 as a true record. Copies attached
3. Declarations Of Interest.

Members are invited to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests in matters appearing on the agenda and the nature of their interest.

Members should use either of the following declarations:

**Personal Interest – to be used where a Member will be remaining and participating in the debate and any vote:**

I have a personal interest in agenda item (...) regarding the report on (...) because I am (...)

**Personal and Prejudicial Interest – to be used where a Member will be withdrawing from the room for that item:**

I have a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item (...) regarding the report on (...) because I am (...)

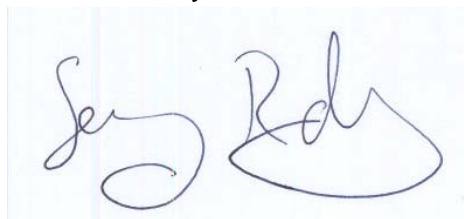
Officers are also invited to declare any interest in any matters appearing on the agenda.

**NOTE: Members are requested to complete the enclosed declarations form and, after declaring interests verbally, to hand the form in to the Committee Administrator.**

4. To consider the publication of the North East of England Plan (The Regional Spatial Strategy). 1 - 7

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|-----|---|----------|
| 5.  | To consider the Durham New Growth Point Bid: announcement and timetable.  | 8 - 17   |
| 6.  | To consider the Preferred Option for the Local Development Framework's Core Strategy document.  | 18 - 47  |
| 7.  | To consider an update on progress made towards delivery of the individual projects within the Bishop Auckland Renaissance Master Plan.  | 48 - 57  |
| 8.  | To receive an Auckland Castle Park update.  | 58 - 64  |
| 9.  | To consider an update in relation to the commissioning of Working Neighbourhood Funds projects and Safer Stronger Communities Fund projects.  | 65 – 142 |
| 10. | To consider Place Making – A Charter for Destination Management.  | 143 -145 |
| 11. | To consider the confirmation of a new Tree Preservation Order.  | 146 -148 |
| 12. | To consider a 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter monitoring update.  | 149 -160 |
| 13. | 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



**Acting Chief Executive**

Members of this Committee: Councillors Bailey, Mrs Bolam, Buckham, Ferguson\*, Harrison, Henry, Kay, Laurie, Mews, Mowbray, Miss Ord, Stonehouse, Taylor, Mrs Todd\*, David Wilson, Yorke and Zair.

\*ex-officio, non-voting capacity

Chair: Councillor Mews

Deputy Chair: Councillor Mrs Bolam

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

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FORM

<b>NAME AND DATE OF COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM NUMBER</b>	<b>NATURE OF INTEREST AND REASONS</b>	<b>PRINT NAME</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>



**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**10 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration  
**THE NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN:  
PUBLICATION OF REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY TO 2021**

**purpose of the report**

1. To bring to Members' attention the publication of the North East of England Plan (The Regional Spatial Strategy), the regional element of the statutory development plan.
2. To identify the implications of the adoption of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

**background**

3. Members will recall that in February 2008 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government published for consultation further proposed changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).
4. The District Council has formally considered and responded to all RSS submissions both individually and collectively with other County Durham authorities during the preparation of the RSS. The Council's most recent response was endorsed by Members at Regeneration Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008.
5. Following her due consideration of all representations made in relation to the further proposed changes, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has issued the North East of England Plan (ie the revised RSS). This final version of the RSS forms the regional element of the statutory development plan; the Wear Valley District Local Plan (adopted March 1997) forms the local element of the statutory development plan. The Local Plan, in time, will be superseded by the LDF.

**consideration of the council's most recent response**

6. In line with the content of the report presented to Regeneration Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008, the Council made four key comments. Below these are identified in turn (bold text), along with how these have been taken in to consideration in the final RSS.

- **The Council formally supported the RSS Further Proposed Changes as summarised in the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008 report.**

All the issues supported have been incorporated in the final RSS.

A key issue the Council raised through its representations throughout the development of the RSS, was the level of new housing allocated to Wear Valley. The higher figure we were seeking through our representations of 3485 was included within the Further Proposed Changes document (dated February 2008); the 3485 figure is also included within the adopted RSS. This is welcomed.

Another key change in terms of the housing figures is that they should no longer be viewed as ceiling figures, but minimum thresholds which local authorities are encouraged to exceed. In developing their LDFs local planning authorities can include targets above those in the RSS where they can be justified and supported by evidence. In the interim, whilst the LDF is being prepared, national planning policy requires the Local Planning Authority to perform within acceptable ranges of the figures included within the RSS (ie 20%).

- **The Council formally objected the exclusion of the Eastgate Renewable Energy Village from Policy 13, which identifies opportunities for key Brownfield Mixed Use Developments within the region.**

Eastgate REV is not specifically mentioned within the final policy. It does however gain support and specific mention in Paragraph 3.184 of the final RSS (as a named exemplar renewable energy development), which forms part of the reasoned justification to Policy 40 (Planning for Renewables), and is therefore part of the statutory development plan.

- **The Council formally objected to the failure of the RSS to recognise the importance of the Weardale railway and the A68 as strategically important transport routes for the district.**

The final RSS mentions neither these routes within the relevant policies. The only strategic routes the RSS mentions are of national or regional importance. As both routes are of strategic importance locally, they can be pursued through the LDF process.

- **The Council formally objected to the deletion of the 10% target for energy supply on major developments.**

The 10% target, in effect has been retained. Policy 38 (Sustainable Construction) requires LPAs to adopt (via their LDF) ambitious but viable targets for the proportion of energy to be supplied from decentralised or renewable and low carbon energies. It also provides LPAs with the ability to develop and adopt sliding size thresholds for different types of development based on local circumstances.

As an interim measure, whilst local targets and policies are being developed, Policy 38 of the RSS requires 10% of a sites energy requirement to be met by decentralised or renewable or low carbon energy supplies for developments of:

- 10 or more dwellings; or
- 1000 sqm non-residential floorspace (eg employment, retail, community and leisure developments)

At Regeneration Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008 Member's considered a report in relation to Annex A to Planning Policy Statement 1, regarding planning and climate change. At this meeting Member's concluded that the threshold for developments requiring the 10% renewable energy requirement should be 5 dwelling units or above. This is below the 10 units adopted in the RSS. The adoption of the RSS outweighs this previous local decision. Given local targets have to be based on firm viability evidence the Council could not insist on the lower threshold of 5 dwelling units or defend this stance through the appeal process.

7. Unfortunately, in those instances where the Council's concerns have not been reflected in the final RSS, there is no mechanism by which these can be redressed. These issues, if the Council still considers them a priority, will have to be brought up again at the relevant review stages within the RSS. In the interim, these issues can be considered and included through the LDF, which will transitionally replace the adopted Wear Valley District Local Plan.

### **implications of the adoption of the final rss**

8. The final RSS, forms the regional element of the statutory development plan. Section 38(6) of the planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that all planning applications received by the council are determined in accordance with the statutory development plan for that area unless there are other material considerations.
9. The final RSS contains 57 policies in total; of these 32 are relevant in the Council's determination of planning applications. Annex 1 to this report contains a list of all policies and highlights those of relevance to development control. In line with Section 38(6) of the planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) the Council will have to assess the conformity of planning application against these 32 policies.
10. Given the age of the current Local Plan in comparison to the final RSS, there may be instances in which the two are not in conformity with one another. In these circumstances Section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory purchase Act (2004) requires that the most recent element of the statutory development plan is given weight over the content of the older elements of the development plan. In Wear Valley, this will mean, where inconsistencies are identified between the final RSS and the current Local Plan, weight should be given to the RSS.
11. It is unlikely, however, that there will be many circumstances where the Local Plan is not in conformity with the RSS. This is because, as part of the Transitional Arrangements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the Council had to apply to the Secretary of State to extend the life of the policies set out in the adopted Local Plan. This process was reported to Regeneration Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2007 and 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007. A key consideration in determining which policies could be extended was their conformity with both national and regional planning policy.
12. However, to ensure that planning decisions are robust, it is recommended that, where a planning officer (development control) identifies an area of non-conformity between the RSS and the Local Plan, they liaise closely with Forward Planning Team during the determination of the relevant planning application. Should it be considered that the area of non-conformity is of significance, or likely to be a re-occurring issue, a report identifying the implications will be presented to committee.

## **key elements of the rss**

13. The final RSS sets out a long term, sustainable vision for the Region, up until 2021. It sets out delivery mechanisms to bring forward affordable homes, better transport systems and the environmental controls the region needs. It also represents the long term vision to tackle climate change, address general housing shortages and strengthen the region's economy.
14. In terms of the locational strategy, in relation to Wear Valley, Bishop Auckland and Crook are identified as Regeneration Towns or Areas and Stanhope is identified as the Rural Service Centre. Other towns in the district which support these settlements and therefore form an integral element of the regional locational strategy are: Coundon, Willington, Wolsingham, Tow Law and Wolsingham. These are of importance due to either the supporting role they provide to Bishop Auckland, Crook and Stanhope, or because of their specified regeneration need.
15. These areas should be the focus for the majority of new development and growth within the district, based on the city regions approach which underlies the RSS. Policies 4, 6, 9, 10 and 11 set out in more detail the considerations which should be applied to each of these settlements.
16. The RSS also sets out housing targets for the district, which should be viewed as minimum targets. The Council's 3<sup>rd</sup> AMR identified that there is sufficient housing land within the district to satisfy these requirements. This position will be updated within the forthcoming 4<sup>th</sup> AMR for the district.
17. It also sets out requirements in terms of Employment Land, and specific policies for town centre developments and tourism proposals. There are also a number of policies which set out environmental and accessibility, transport considerations.

## **conclusion**

18. This report seeks to bring to Member's attention the adoption of the North East of England Plan (the RSS). Throughout the preparation of the RSS, the Council has made numerous representations which reflect key issues in County Durham and specifically Wear Valley. Many of these have helped shape the content of the adopted RSS. There are two areas which remain unaddressed in the RSS, namely the omission of Eastgate REV from Policy 13 (which gains support through a different policy area) and the lack of recognition of the A68 and Weardale railway. It is recommended that these issues be reflected through the LDF, which will form the local element to the statutory development plan once prepared.
19. The publication of the RSS has significant implications for the Council in its role as Local Planning Authority. The publication of the document means the RSS now forms part of the statutory development plan, along with the 'saved' elements of the Wear Valley District Local Plan. Although it is considered that areas of non-conformity between the two will be infrequent, in instances where they do occur, the RSS outweighs the content of the Local Plan. As such it is recommended that planning officers in development control liaise closely with the Forward Planning Team in those instances where non-conformity is identified. Member training is also recommended, especially for Member's of the Development Control Committee, given its implications for planning decisions made by the Council.

## RECOMMENDED

1. That Member's support the inclusion of the Eastgate REV and the role of the A68 and Weardale Railway within the emerging LDF.
2. That Member's note and reflect the role and significance of the RSS in the determination of planning applications.
3. That Development Control and Forward Planning liaise closely where areas of non-conformity emerge between the two plans, and Member's consider future committee reports identifying significant or re-occurring areas of non-conformity.
4. Member training be arranged to bring the implications of the adoption of the RSS and its policies to member's attention. This is recommended for all Member's, but particularly those who sit on Development Control.

## PREVIOUS COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Special Regeneration Committee held on the **3<sup>rd</sup> October 2005**, endorsed the Council's proposed response to "VIEW: Shaping the North East", the submission draft of the RSS for this region.
- Members considered the Panel report recommendations at Regeneration Committees on **13<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006**
- Members endorsed an MPs 'Manifest for Change' at Committee on **10<sup>th</sup> January 2007**.
- Members considered the Secretary of States Proposed Changes at Committee on **11<sup>th</sup> July 2007**.
- Members considered the Secretary of States Further Proposed Changes at Committee on **25<sup>th</sup> March 2008**.

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### Officer responsible for the report

Robert Hope  
Strategic Director for Environment and  
Regeneration  
Ext 264

### Author of the report

Jill Thwaite  
Senior Forward Planning Officer

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**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**10 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration  
**DURHAM NEW GROWTH POINT: ANNOUNCEMENT AND TIMETABLE**

**purpose of the report**

1. To inform Member's of the announcement that the Durham New Growth Point Bid has been successful and the implications of this announcement.
2. To bring to Member's attention the timetable involved in preparing the Programme of Development and the related Community Infrastructure Fund.

**background**

3. The Housing Green Paper (July 2007) seeks to increase housing provision across the country, in order to meet the needs of the country's growing population. One of the key proposals contained within the document to deliver the necessary housing growth was to implement Growth Points across the country; at present growth points are only found in the South East of England. Local authorities were encouraged to work together to identify potential growth points and submit a bid, outlining the key aims and outcomes of the proposal to central Government.
4. The Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership Board submitted a New Growth Point Bid for Durham (hereinafter referred to as 'the Bid'), covering the south and east Durham coalfield area. This was reported to Regeneration Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008.
5. On 16<sup>th</sup> July 2008, the Minister for Housing and Planning made an announcement in relation to new Growth Points; Durham Growth Point was included as a 'successful bid'. This announcement enables the proposals contained within the Bid to be developed further into a 'Programme of Development' and expressions of interest to be submitted for the 'Community Infrastructure Fund'.
6. It is the intention of this report to once again outline the key proposals contained within the successful bid and provide a summary of the processes relating to preparing the 'Programme of Development' (the programme management plan for taking the Growth Point forward) and 'Community Infrastructure Fund'.

**headline output of the growth point bid**

7. An Executive Summary of the proposal is contained within Annex 2 of this report. The headlines of the Durham Growth Point proposal are outlined below:
  - Delivery of 14,500 net additional homes between 2004 and 2016 in the district's of Easington, Sedgfield and Wear Valley. This equates to 73% above the levels in the

County Durham Structure Plan and 50% above these set out in the final RSS (adopted July 2008, as reported in Item 6 of this Committee meeting). Our target is the at least 30% of new homes will be affordable housing;

- Delivery of new jobs through accelerated delivery of nine employment and mixed-use sites and town centre regeneration. Through delivering a balance between employment and housing growth and investment in public transport, the target is to deliver a modal shift and reduce travel distances; and
  - Raising environmental standards of development ahead of building regulations, and improving environmental quality and broader quality of place in the main towns. This includes improving 370 homes through supporting our Coalfields Housing Renewal Programme, and shifting the balance of housing provision to meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century requirements.
8. The proposals for accelerated housing and economic growth within Wear Valley in particular seek to deliver 3,000 new dwellings and 30 hectares of employment land in and around Bishop Auckland, in addition to supporting the housing renewal schemes in the Dene Valley and Coundon/Leeholme.
9. A diagram illustrating the spatial extent and broad locations of the proposals is contained in Annex 3.

#### **implications of the announcement**

10. In total 20 new Growth Point areas were included within the Minister's announcement, which also set out the broad approach to developing a strong working relationship between each of the 20 Growth Point areas, the relevant delivery partnership/organisation and the Government; these are to be called Partnerships for Growth.
11. The New Growth Point does not have statutory status in planning terms. New Growth Point proposals will be subject to consultation, testing and examination through the statutory plan making process, in particular the RSS and LDF. If, once the process is completed, the relevant RSS were to set out levels of growth below those contained within the Growth Point Bid and the Government's scheme criteria, CLG would need to review whether, or on what basis, the Partnership for Growth should continue.
12. Given that the RSS was finalised prior to the announcement of successful Growth Points, and the new national projections on regional housing need were released, the final RSS (as reported in Item 6 of this meeting) does not directly reflect any of the 5 successful Bids within the North East. The final RSS does however allow increased levels of housing growth to be justified through and included within the LDF. It is intended that the new Countywide LDF will reflect the proposals as contained within the Bid and the 'Programme for Development', where these pass the appropriate tests and plan preparation requirements.
13. The Bid has received a ring fenced revenue grant of £100,000 to support the development of the 'Programme for Development'. This is to be managed by Sedgefield Borough Council on behalf of the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership Board.

#### **programme of development (programme)**

14. As set out above, the 'Programme of Development' (Programme) is the programme management plan for taking the Growth Point forward. The purpose of the 'Programme' is to:
- Set out the partnership's plans and ambitions for growth, including a trajectory for housing delivery and the infrastructure required to achieve it;
  - Identify any funding/resources available to deliver the proposals and to provide an assessment of the extra funding required to support it;
  - Be used as a tool to inform engagement between the Growth Point Partnership and the relevant governmental departments and agencies, identifying areas where they can help deliver the programme;
  - Set out clear proposals for and remit of the partnership and delivery vehicle, and to identify the lead authority;
  - Present a strategic view of the actions necessary to deliver growth within the area; and
  - Enable government officials to make recommendations in relation to allocation of the 'Growth Fund'.
15. A single Programme will be prepared for the whole Growth Point area which covers areas of Easington and Sedgefield as well as the most eastern parts of Wear Valley.
16. The Programme of Development must be submitted to the Housing and Growth Programmes Team at CLG before noon on **Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008**. The 'Programme of Development' will be reported to Regeneration Committee at the earliest possible stage; however, given the short timescales involved, this may be after submission.
17. Following the submission of the Programme, it will be assessed by officials at CLG and Government Office for the North East (GONE) against a clear appraisal framework. The assessment will form the basis of recommendations to Ministers on final funding allocations. Final funding allocations are expected to be made within 8 weeks of the submission of Programme' (ie before **22<sup>nd</sup> December 2008**).
18. The funding referred to above is known as the 'Growth Fund'. CLG has allocated £97million of the total 'Growth Fund' to the 20 New Growth Points for the period 2009 to 2011. The Growth Fund is an 'un-ring fenced' block grant, as such local areas (ie the Growth Point area) are free to allocate the fund as they see fit, with the exception that capital must be used for capital expenditure. The Growth Fund will therefore form an important resource for the delivery of the Programme.

## **community infrastructure fund (cif)**

19. This is an additional capital funding stream of £200m which compliments the Growth Fund and other mainstream transport funds. CIF is designed to link transport infrastructure with the delivery of housing. It can help fund small to medium scale schemes which are vital to unlocking large housing development sites enabling development of housing to be brought forward and improving the sustainability of major growth locations.
20. Bidding for CIF is a two stage process. Expressions of Interest are invited; certain schemes will then be required to prepare and submit full business cases, prior to final decisions on funding being made. The timetable is as follows:
- **15<sup>th</sup> September**                      Deadline for Expressions of Interest;
  - **January 2009**                              Announcement of schemes to go forward to full business case;
  - **April 2009**                                      Deadline for full business case;
  - **July 2009**                                      Announcement of successful schemes.
21. As there are a number of infrastructure schemes which could be delivered through CIF within the Durham Growth Point area, a prioritisation exercise will be undertaken. The schemes of highest priority within the Growth Point area, will then be put forward as an Expression of Interest.
22. It is intended that the majority of projects funded by CIF will fall within the funding years of 2009/10 and 2010/11. It is essential that schemes are able to spend the capital and be completed within this period. This tight delivery timetable will therefore influence the infrastructure schemes prioritised within the Growth Point area and thus put forward as an expression of interest for CIF.
23. It is important that schemes put forward for CIF support proposals set out in the Bid and the Programme. They should have support from the Regional Development Agency and Regional Assembly, and wherever possible carry policy support, for example through the Local Transport Plan or RSS.
24. At the time of writing the report the schemes put forward for CIF have not yet been identified. A verbal update will be given at the meeting if possible.

## **next steps**

25. Officers within the Council are working closely with the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership Board and officers from Easington District, Sedgefield Borough and Durham County Councils to progress work in relation to the Programme for Development and CIF.
26. Initial work has also commenced in relation to the Countywide LDF. Although work has not commenced in relation to specific policy documents, and is unlikely to do so until early 2009, it is intended that the proposals within the Bid be progressed through the LDF, as the appropriate mechanism for gaining statutory status for the Growth Point.

## **finance implications**

27. The success of the bid, enables the partnership to apply for two capital funding streams, linked to the delivery of the proposals contained within it and the Programme.

### **human resource implications**

28. There should be sufficient capacity within the Council to progress the work requirements in relation to the Growth Point. Furthermore, given the nature of the work involved, there is the scope for elements to be completed under joint working arrangements and through the interim planning policy team, set up to progress work on the Countywide LDF.

### **it and health and safety implications**

29. None identified.

### **conclusion**

30. The Durham New Growth Point bid submitted to CLG earlier this year has been successful. As such work can commence in relation to advancing the Programme of Development (the programme management plan) and applying for capital funding from both the Growth Fund and CIF.
31. In order for work to progress in a timely manner and enable the deadlines for the submission of CIF application and the Programme to be met, action is required now and various decisions will have to be made over the next few months. Given the tight deadlines, it will not be possible to report each stage of the process to Committee for endorsement. It is therefore recommended that delegated authority be awarded to the Strategic Director for Environment and regeneration in conjunction with the Leader of the Council and the Chair of this Committee. Reports will be presented to Committee detailing the progress made, the content of the CIF and the Programme and any decisions made by CLG on the success of the CIF and Programme.

### **RECOMMENDED**

1. Member's note the content of the report and endorse the principles underlying the new Durham Growth Point Bid and its proposals.
2. Delegated authority be awarded to the Strategic Director for Environment and regeneration in conjunction with the Leader of the Council and Chair of this Committee.

### **background information**

Housing Green Paper, July 2007; Durham New Growth Point Bid; Second Round Growth Points: Partnerships for Growth

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#### **Officer responsible for the report**

Robert Hope  
Strategic Director for Environment and  
Regeneration  
Ext 264

#### **Author of the report**

Jill Thwaite  
Senior Forward Planning Officer  
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**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**10 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK:  
CORE STRATEGY: PREFERRED OPTION**

**purpose of the report**

1. To present to Member's for endorsement the Preferred Option for the Local Development Framework's Core Strategy document.

**background**

2. In summer 2007, the Council consulted upon the Core Strategy: Issues and Alternative Options Report, which set out the strategic alternative options for Wear Valley (see report presented to Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007).
3. In total 54 representations were received from Members, individuals, community groups and key stakeholders. Together with the findings of a Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment (both statutory requirements in the plan making process), these representations have helped shape the preferred policy direction selected by the Council, as set out in the Core Strategy: Preferred Option Paper.

**proposal**

4. Due to the forthcoming Local Government Review and the Transitional Regulations, which are likely to come into force later this year, the Council has previously agreed to suspend preparation of the district LDF (see Committee Report 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008). The Council has however considered it appropriate to finalise the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Paper (presented in Annex 4) for internal purposes in order to both draw the work to a close as well as providing a clear policy direction for entering LGR negotiations and discussions. Preparation and community engagement on Preferred Options would, under usual circumstances, be the next stage in plan preparation.
5. Work on the Countywide Local Development Framework, under informal working arrangements between the 8 Durham authorities commenced in August 2008. It is intended that this Preferred Options paper will also provide the policy direction for district during the preparation of the new plan.
6. It is not intended that community engagement will be undertaken on the district's Preferred Option paper, as this could cause consultation fatigue within the local community and could be perceived as an inefficient use of Council resources. All parties who made representations on the Core Strategy: Issues and Alternative Options Paper will be contacted in writing to inform them that preparation of the Wear Valley Local Development Framework has formally ceased and their comments will be considered during the preparation of the Countywide Local Development Framework.

## components of a core strategy

7. A Core Strategy is comprised of the following components:
  - Spatial Vision for the locality;
  - Spatial Objectives;
  - Locational and Development Strategy; and
  - Strategic Policies.
8. As such the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Paper contained in Annex 4, identifies the purpose of each of these elements before setting out the Preferred Options for Wear Valley.

## locational and development strategy

9. One of the fundamental purposes of the Core Strategy is to set out how new development will be distributed through out the district, in a manner which will help deliver the Spatial Vision and Objectives for Wear Valley. This element of the Core Strategy is known as a 'locational and development strategy' and is set out in detail in Section 3 of Annex 4 to this report. The level and scale of growth appropriate for the district is set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and informed by the evidence base which underpins the LDF preparation process.
10. The 'locational and development strategy' sets out the following:
  - The various strategic roles which the district plays;
  - The role of the district's settlements in general terms; and
  - A development strategy, which builds upon the above and reflects locally specific issues and circumstances.
11. In terms of the 'role of the district's settlements', three broad types of settlement have been identified. These echo the locational strategy as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS):
  - **Primary Settlements:** Bishop Auckland, Crook and Stanhope;
  - **Secondary Settlements:** Coundon/Leeholme, Willington, Tow Law and Wolsingham; and
  - **Other Settlements:** All remaining settlements which currently have a 'Limit to Development', as set out by Policy H3 of the Local Plan.
12. In order to reflect the diverse nature of the district and deliver a locally distinctive approach in the distribution of new development, the development strategy has been structured around the three sub areas within the district, specifically: Bishop Auckland, Crook and Willington and Weardale.
13. A Key Diagram, which depicts the locational and development strategy, is also included within the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Paper.

## **strategic site**

14. In addition to the above it is now possible to identify Strategic Sites within the Core Strategy, where they are integral or essential to the delivery of the Spatial Vision and Spatial Objectives.
15. The development of Eastgate Renewable Energy Village (Eastgate REV) has long been a priority of this Council and the County Council. It has gained support through a range of policies and plans, all of which have been reported to, or endorsed by, Member's through the committee process, including:-
  - the Wear Valley District Council Plan;
  - Departmental Service Plans;
  - Transition Plan to Unitary Local Government in Durham;
  - Renewing Weardale Strategy;
  - The District Economic Strategy;
  - County Durham Economic Strategy; and
  - The Regional Spatial Strategy.
16. Furthermore, in the development of the Core Strategy, the Council presented the various alternative options available for stakeholder and community consideration. The Issues and Options Reports published in July 2007 and open to 2 months of public consideration and comment, identified Eastgate REV as an alternative option available in order to contribute towards the delivery of the district's Spatial Vision and Spatial Objectives. The alternative option was identified as the preferred option by a number of consultees; more importantly there was no opposition to Eastgate REV being included within the Core Strategy raised at this stage by community groups, stakeholders, Member's or individuals.
17. The Council is also committed to a number of environmental or 'green' credentials; the Eastgate REV has been developed in line with these and plays an essential role in ensuring these are delivered. Of specific note is the Nottingham Declaration and the Council's commitment to delivering a carbon neutral economy by 2030.
18. For the above reasons, and given the significance and potential of the Eastgate REV in delivering the Core Strategy's Spatial Vision and Objectives, it is considered appropriate and necessary to identify Eastgate REV as a Strategic Site within the Core Strategy.

## **financial, legal, human resource, health and safety and it implications**

19. None identified.

## **conclusion**

20. The Council has prepared the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Paper following consideration of representations received in connection with the Issues and Alternative Options work undertaken in summer 2007 and the findings of a Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment.
21. It is intended that the preferred policy direction contained in the in the Core Strategy: Preferred Option Paper be used for internal purposes during LGR negotiation and discussion and during the preparation of the new Countywide Local Development Framework.



## RECOMMENDED

- 1 Member's endorse the preferred policy direction as contained in the Core Strategy: Preferred Option Paper for internal use during discussions and negotiations in relation to LGR.
- 2 Member's approve the use of the Core Strategy: Preferred Option Paper in the preparation of the Countywide LDF.

### background information

- Wear Valley District Council Corporate Plan;
- Departmental Service Plans – 14 May 2008;
- Transition Plan to Unitary Local Government in Durham – March 2008;
- Renewing Weardale Strategy – 30 July 2003;
- The District Economic Strategy – 19 December 2007;
- County Durham Economic Strategy; and
- The North East of England's Regional Spatial Strategy (July 2008 and all previous versions since Submission Draft June 2005) – 25 March 2008

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#### Officer responsible for the report

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#### Author of the report

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**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**10 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration  
**BISHOP AUCKLAND REGENERATION**

**purpose of the report**

1. To update Members on progress made towards the delivery of the individual projects identified within the Bishop Auckland Renaissance Master Plan.

**background**

2. The Bishop Auckland Urban Renaissance Master Plan, produced by the Red Box Design Group, outlines a programme of public investment in order to achieve the regeneration of the northern part of the town and to stimulate private sector investment.
3. The plan identifies a long term public investment programme of over £10.2 million which is intended to attract in excess of £30million of private sector investment in key locations within the town.
4. Members have agreed to support the employment of a dedicated project manager to help develop and deliver the priorities of the programme, these phases being: Theatre Corner, Fore Bondgate, Market Place, North Bondgate and Auckland Castle Park.

**project update**

**project management**

5. Funding for this project from ONE NorthEast, matched with WVDC money covers the employment of the Bishop Auckland Regeneration Project Officer and has also enabled Durham County Council's Urban Design Team to prepare designs for the public realm projects in order to meet the objectives of the Master Plan.

**phase 0 – theatre corner**

6. This project pre-dates the Bishop Auckland Urban Renaissance Master Plan and although not originally part of the Regeneration Programme it has been included as a preliminary phase of the renaissance initiative.

7. Details of the refurbishment works to the Theatre Corner and progress with these works were included in Committee Report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> July, the works being substantially completed at this time, except the installation of the Stan Laurel statue and the completion of the pedestrian guard rails.
8. This work and therefore this phase of the project has now been completed with the installation of the statue of Stan Laurel on 17<sup>th</sup> August by Artist and Sculptor Bob Olley, providing a fitting focal point at the Theatre Corner (see photograph Annex 5). To mark this completion a celebratory launch event and unveiling was held on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August, with the Chair of the Council and the Vice Chair of the Town Centre Forum officiating.

### **phase 1 – fore bondgate**

9. The overall aim of this project is to provide a more pedestrian friendly environment within Fore Bondgate and ultimately to improve linkages between North Bondgate and the Newgate Centre.
10. This scheme comprises of two main elements, improvements to the streetscape and support for improvements to premises to bring them back into productive economic use. Detailed plans for the public realm improvements produced in conjunction with Durham County Council Urban Design Team were subject to public consultation as detailed in previous Committee Reports.
11. Service Direct is currently carrying out the streetscape improvement works with an estimated cost of £415,000. In addition £100,000 has been identified for premises improvement grants. This is to be funded via contributions from ONE NorthEast, Durham County Council and Wear Valley District Council.
12. The works began 9<sup>th</sup> June 2008 and are programmed to take up to 20 weeks to complete. The works are on schedule and already there have been positive comments from businesses and the public.
13. Within Fore Bondgate two new businesses have opened recently and many of the owners, developers and occupiers of other premises within the street are either carrying out improvement works or are planning to in coming weeks. This demonstrates the confidence in the retail sector in this part of Bishop Auckland which at least in some part can be attributed to the renaissance initiative.

### **phase 2 – market place**

14. The main aim of this project is the enhancement of the Market Place to make it more pedestrian friendly and create additional event space. This would enable more events to take place and to attract more visitors to this part of town.

15. Following public consultation, the initial design has now been amended as outlined in Committee Report of 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008. The amendments being: 2 additional disabled bays making 7 disabled bays and 12 standard bays to the southern parking area and the relocation of the taxi rank a few metres to the west (see revised plan annex 6).
16. This revised plan has enabled DCC to begin the formal public consultation for the Traffic Regulation Order as the project requires changes to the existing Order. The closing date for comments being 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008. A copy of the TRO consultation plan is attached in Annex 7.
17. Whilst previously it has been indicated that the TRO process may take between 9 and 12 months to complete, in consultation with DCC colleagues leading this aspect of the process, we are hopeful that this can be achieved within 6 months, with completion by January 2009. Despite this optimism, there may still yet be delays with the TRO should there be a complaint regarding loading changes which can not be resolved within the process. Any delays to the TRO process will unfortunately delay the commencement of the project, as the improvement work cannot be started without this being agreed.
18. Key elements of additional work are required to support the design of the Market Place phase of the project. This includes:-
  - Markets and Events Strategy
  - Lighting Strategy
  - Design Feature

#### Markets and Events Strategy

19. To be produced by Wear Valley District Council Officers, this piece of work will help show how the improvements will create enhanced public space, identify the event servicing and infrastructure required and also how this will be used for the markets and special events.

#### Lighting Strategy

20. A specialist lighting consultant is set to be appointed in order to prepare a Lighting Strategy to cover the Market Place, Fore Bondgate and North Bondgate. The strategy will explore options for street lighting, building lighting, event lighting and Christmas Lighting.
21. It is estimated that the cost of this commission will be £12,000 with resources from ONE NorthEast, utilising funds from the Bishop Auckland Renaissance Capital Budget as matched funding.

#### Focal Feature

22. As identified in the previous Committee Report (2<sup>nd</sup> July), the initial consultation exercise revealed broad support for the provision of an appropriate vertical feature to provide a focal point within the Market Place. Also Officers believe that options for a form of temporary canopy should be explored to provide protection from the elements for markets and events purposes.
23. Based on experience and similar work elsewhere, Officers from DCC and WVDC are proposing to hold a design competition. It is proposed to:

- Advertise in appropriate journals inviting expressions of interest from suitable consultants.
  - Short list up to 6 practices and pay an honorarium of £1,000 for research and the production of feature designs which must be appropriate for the Market Place and must comply with the Design Brief.
  - Evaluate submitted designs firstly by technical experts such as Quantity Surveyors, Highways Engineers, Structural Engineers and Building Surveyors.
  - Establish selection panel to establish preferred design. The above experts to make up part of a selection panel which would also include District and Unitary Members and representatives of the Town Centre Forum.
24. This final selection would then be used to find additional funding potentially as part of the business case made to ONE NorthEast for funding as part of the this phase of the Renaissance Programme of works
25. The cost is estimated to be £15,000 - £20,000 funded from contributions from ONE NorthEast and utilising funds from the Bishop Auckland Renaissance Capital Budget as matched funding.
26. It should be noted that these features should neither pre-empt nor prejudice the public realm works and should be considered as a separate but complementing elements of the Market Place project.
27. Other works which are progressing include street furniture and planting schedules and detailing of specific areas such as around the church and war memorial. Following completion of these additional pieces of work it is intended that a fully designed scheme be presented for further member and public consultation, late Autumn 2008.
28. Preparation of the Business Plan for the Market Place is underway and should be submitted to ONE NorthEast, in early Autumn with development work to enable approval to be granted in January 2009 allowing the earliest start date of March 2009. However this may be optimistic as there are a number of hurdles to overcome particularly regarding the TRO process as outlined.
29. Any implementation work also has to have regard to existing uses of the area. As the main event in the calendar, careful consideration needs to be given to disturbance in the Market Place during the Wear Valley Food Festival which is scheduled 18 April 2009. This means that wholesale works within the Market Place cannot begin until after the festival although it may be possible to begin works to some specific and discrete, peripheral areas such as around the war memorial and church. Careful consideration will also need to be given to minimising the impact and ensuring the continued use of the Market Place by the market stalls and other events.

### **phase 3 – north bondgate**

30. Proposals for improvements to this part of town are based upon supporting and capitalising upon the proposed Helios/Gentoo retail/residential development on the north side of the street. At the time of writing this is due to be considered by Development Control Committee of the 28<sup>th</sup> August.
31. The submission of the Helios/Gentoo planning application has provided basic details such as the proposed entry points for the car park and service yard which has enabled an indicative design for the public realm improvements to be produced.
32. At this stage considerable work is still required on this phase of the plan however until the outcome of the planning application is known, little progress can be made on the refinement of the initial designs.

### **phase 4 – auckland castle park**

33. Progress made in relation to this project is included as a separate agenda item.

### **financial implications**

34. All contributions are currently allocated within the existing budget.

### **conclusion**

35. Overall, good progress is being made in project delivery and design. The completion of the Theatre Corner works, including the installation of the Stan Laurel statue and the progress being made with the Fore Bondgate phase of works are significant steps towards achieving the objectives of the master plan.
36. The Market Place TRO process is underway, its completion will determine the earliest start date of the main Market Place works. The detail designs for Market Place design are progressing and will enable further consultation, Autumn 2008.
37. It is essential that the proposed design competition to provide options for focal features for inclusion within the Market Place, must neither pre-empt nor prejudice the public realm works.
38. Progress with the North Bondgate streetscape cannot be made until the planning application for the Helios/Gentoo development is determined.
39. The proposed milestones in each individual project of the renaissance initiative, as outlined in my report, are included in Annex 8 as the Bishop Auckland Renaissance Programme project plan.

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That Members note the report and the continued progress with individual projects of the renaissance initiative.
2. That Members endorse the revised Market Place plan and note the Traffic Regulation Order consultation plan for the Market Place
3. That Members endorse the proposed design competition process outlined in paragraphs 23 and 24 to enable options for focal features within the Market Place to be considered.
4. That Members receive further progress update reports during the next consultation phase in Autumn 2008.

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**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**10 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Regeneration  
**AUCKLAND CASTLE PARK UPDATE**

**purpose of the report**

1. To update Members in relation to proposals for Auckland Castle Park (as an integral phase of the Bishop Auckland Urban Renaissance programme) and seek approval for the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration to submit the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund – Parks for People programme by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

**background**

2. Bishop Auckland is one of County Durham's major towns and with a population of 25,000 it is the main commercial, residential and employment centre serving a wider 150,000 population within South West Durham. Given this hinterland the town centre has significant economic potential and this has been recognised in the economic strategy for Wear Valley.
3. Achieving improvements to the vitality, viability and competitiveness of Bishop Auckland Town centre and the employment opportunities that this will bring is an important strand of current regeneration efforts. Indeed the Town Centre Strategy Vision aims to "restore Bishop Auckland's role as a vibrant and attractive market town for all the communities of Wear Valley and South West Durham as a whole, building upon the heritage and character of the town centre to enhance its competitiveness as a place to shop, work visit and live"
4. The Bishop Auckland Urban Renaissance programme seeks to implement a series of phases of public investment to help deliver (and create the infrastructure to enable the private sector to deliver) this vision. Integral to this programme is the proposal for the restoration of Auckland Castle Park.
5. Auckland Castle and the associated Park are both prestigious assets within Bishop Auckland but research in the preparation of this bid shows that these are relatively unknown and used by few people. There is a great deal of potential to develop the audiences for both the Castle and the Park and increase the use of these assets to the benefit of the town, supporting the objectives outlined above.
6. The Park is currently leased to Wear Valley District Council from the Church Commissioners for the purposes of public recreation. However, restoration of the Park and the key structures and features within, together with enhanced



visitor facilities and increased interpretation and accessibility would create an attraction for a range of new audiences.

7. The creation of a key visitor attraction, complimented by proposals for development at Binchester Roman Fort, would increase the tourism offer in Bishop Auckland and has significant potential, together with the other elements of the Urban Renaissance Programme, to improve the economic fortune and prosperity of the town and surrounding area.

### **developing the restoration proposals**

8. Whilst a number of attempts have been made to develop and fund a project to restore Auckland Castle Park, it has always proved difficult to identify an appropriate funding package for delivery.
9. However, significant development work on the restoration proposal has taken place since 2005, when the Urban Renaissance Programme was developed, with an identified potential funding package consisting of investment from:
  - Heritage Lottery Fund – Parks for People Programme,
  - Wear Valley District Council – Urban Renaissance Programme, and
  - ONE North East
10. This development work lead to a submission in March 2007 to Heritage Lottery Fund for £3.7million towards a total project cost of £4.9million. The key proposals were:
  - The construction of a new visitor centre;
  - Restoration and conservation of many of the parks buildings structures and features;
  - Improved access, amenity, education and interpretation;
  - Enhanced ecology, woodland and park management and maintenance.
11. The application was withdrawn in Summer 2007 on the basis of the concerns raised by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in their assessment of the bid (details contained in report to Regeneration Committee February 2008).
12. Since this time officers have been working with the Church Commissioners (as landlords) and Bureau Veritas / TGP (as our lead specialist consultant) to address the concerns raised. Although there was an expectation that these issues could be resolved to enable a submission to be made in March 2008 it proved impossible to obtain the necessary endorsements and therefore the application was not submitted.
13. It is now intended to submit an application in September. This represents the final opportunity to submit applications for the Parks for People Programme and therefore every effort is being made to present the strongest possible application within this timescale.

## **the current proposal**

14. Although there may be expected to be some minor revisions to the proposals prior to submission, the application is based around 3 key themes (see outline proposals in Annex 9). Copies will be displayed at the meeting.
- Restoration and conservation
  - Access, amenity, education and interpretation
  - Ecology, woodland and park management

### Restoration and conservation

15. The key proposals for restoration and conservation are predominantly about repairing and restoring the key structures and features within the Park including the Ice House, Trevor's Bridge, the Fishponds, the Pyramid, the Wishing Temple.

### Access, amenity, education and interpretation

16. The key elements of improving access, amenity, education and interpretation are to improve the access routes through the Park including footpath, bridges, interpretative boards, signs and way markers, creation of an appropriate, sympathetic play area, etc and also the essential element - the creation of basic visitor facilities.
17. Following an analysis of all potential premises the project is proposing the use of the Castle Lodge building located adjacent to the entrance gate to create Castle Lodge Gateway Centre to include a shop, café, toilets, exhibition space and education facilities as well as operational offices.
18. Whilst this building is grade I listed and the conversion needs to be handled sensitively and in accordance with all the necessary procedures and guidelines English Heritage, a key stakeholder, have indicated their general support for the principle of the scheme.

### Ecology, woodland and park management

19. This theme is predominantly about the management and maintenance of the Park and includes proposals to improve wildlife habitats, prepare detailed woodland management plan, develop nature trails, etc. In particular the submission of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid will require the development of a 10 year-Management and Maintenance Plan to ensure future sustainability of the investment.
20. All together these proposals are currently estimated at £4.5million and an indicative funding package has been outlined to enable the delivery of this proposal (see financial implications below).
21. Obviously the establishment of visitor facilities and increased management and maintenance responsibilities as outlined in the 10 year Management and Maintenance Plan will require a substantial commitment over future years

(currently estimated at around £500,000 of the £4.5million), although as outlined this will be supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

### **the application process**

22. Following submission of the application, the Heritage Lottery Fund will take up to 6 months to consider the proposal. If successful, HLF will commit to funding the project and set aside the requested resources. Further project development work will be required to enable a more comprehensive stage 2 submission to be made for final approval.
23. Given this lengthy two-stage application process it is anticipated that the project milestones will be as follows:

Stage 1 application submitted	End September 2008
Stage 1 approval	End March 2009
ONE preliminaries approval	End April 2009
Procure specialist consultants	End July 2009
Stage 2 information submitted	End January 2010
Stage 2 approval	End April 2010

### **financial implications**

24. Wear Valley District Council currently leases the park from the Church Commissioners for a peppercorn rent and is responsible for the repair and maintenance of many of the structures within the park as part of this arrangement. This also includes arrangements in regard of payment for the Park Keeper.
25. As outlined above in the current proposals section there will be a need for an increased commitment in future years with regard to management and maintenance to ensure the restored Park is sustained. Whilst every effort is being made to minimise these on-going revenue liabilities, this is eligible expenditure for Heritage Lottery Fund purposes and the application will therefore seek support for this additional expenditure.
26. The Parks for People programme outlines a maximum contribution of 75% towards eligible project costs, however given the competitive nature of the funding programme and competition from other projects it is proposed to only apply for a maximum 70% of the total to demonstrate increased value for money over the previously submitted proposal.
27. The Heritage Lottery Fund application will require a minimum 5% contribution from the applicant. As an integral part of the Urban Renaissance programme this has been identified as part of future phases of Wear Valley District Council's financial commitment to the regeneration of Bishop Auckland through the authorities Capital Programme including additional resources awarded to the authority through the Local Authority Business Growth Initiative (LABGI) for economic development activity.

28. In addition the project is seeking resources from ONE North East, as part of their investment in Bishop Auckland to support the delivery of the Urban Renaissance programme.
29. The indicative funding for the projects is therefore proposed as:

<b>Funder</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
Heritage Lottery Fund	£3,150,000	70.0%
New Authority	£350,000	7.8%
ONE North East	£1,000,000	22.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£4,500,000</b>	

### **legal implications**

30. As outlined above the Park is currently the subject of a lease between Wear Valley District Council and the Church Commissioners until 2022. This lease needs to be amended in order to meet the terms and conditions of the Heritage Lottery Fund and address the concerns raised previously.
31. Work remains ongoing with the Church Commissioners to reach agreement on Heads of Terms (currently still under negotiation) for the park and the premises identified for conversion to provide the visitor facilities.
32. The submission of an agreed Heads of Terms is essential supporting documentation to the application and therefore agreement will need to be reached with regard to this.
33. Given the timelines for the delivery of this project, there are obvious implications in relation to Local Government Review and the ability of Wear Valley District Council to act as project sponsor. Therefore the Heritage Lottery Fund application will be subject to approval from Durham County Council under the agreed LGR protocols. In addition agreement around the Heads of Terms and lease will need to be subject to these protocols.

### **human resource implications**

34. Identified within the outline delivery structure is the creation of an Auckland Castle Park Project Manager. It is proposed that this post would be appointed at the start of the stage 2 development phase and therefore would be subject to agreement of the new unitary authority. However, this post would be essential for the successful development and delivery of the project. During the delivery phases of the project it is anticipated that the majority of delivery would be contracted with limited direct human resource implications.

### **health and safety implications**

35. There is currently a health and safety liability in relation to the Park for Wear Valley District Council and its successor, the potential of obtaining an extension to the lease and subsequently being able to access resources for restoration and conservation of existing features and increased woodland maintenance and management, all of which are likely to reduce the future liability and health and safety risk.

## conclusion

36. The restoration of Auckland Castle Park to create a key visitor attraction is a key priority in the Bishop Auckland Regeneration programme and a great opportunity to develop the range of audiences visiting Auckland Castle and Park and subsequently the town. It enables the local authority to capitalise upon the potential of one of its existing leased assets.
37. The proposals have been revised to reflect comments made by the Heritage Lottery Fund and current plans present a strong proposition, supporting the economic, social and environmental regeneration of the town.
38. The implementation of the project is heavily dependent upon securing significant resources from the Heritage Lottery Fund – Parks for People programme matched with resources from ONE North East and Wear Valley District Council, through the existing Bishop Auckland Urban Renaissance capital budget. There will be a need for the authority to implement enhanced management and maintenance to secure the sustainability of the investment, although this has been estimated and included within the project costs.
39. Work remains to be completed on agreeing the Heads of Terms with the Church Commissioners for revised lease arrangements and this will obviously need to be considered in line with the agreed LGR protocols as will the funding application.
40. Overall, despite the constraints and issues outlined, the opportunity exists to attract significant resources to Bishop Auckland to restore Auckland Castle Park, creating a key visitor attraction and complimenting the programmes of work to regenerate the town, akin to the regeneration of Alnwick.

## RECOMMENDED

1. That Members endorse the submission of the application for Heritage Lottery Funding – Parks for People.
2. That Members agree the commitment of Bishop Auckland Urban Renaissance capital budget towards this project.
3. That Members request consideration of the proposal by Durham County Council through the LGR protocols.

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## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

10 SEPTEMBER 2008

### Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration **WNF / SSCF PROJECT COMMISSIONING**

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

1. To provide Members with an update in relation to the commissioning of Working Neighbourhood Funds projects and Safer Stronger Communities Fund projects.

#### **background**

2. The LSP agreed in February to use Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) and Safer Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) awarded to Wear Valley District Council through its Area Based Grant to continue a number of projects receiving Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) / SSCF funding in 2007/8 to ensure continued delivery of key regeneration projects. This was designed to enable information to be gathered to implement a project commissioning model for activity from October.
3. In April the LSP agreed to employ consultants to help develop a Wear Valley Employability Framework, building upon the Regional Employability Framework, to inform a commissioning process to target WNF funding on tackling gaps in mainstream provision and help tackle worklessness in the most deprived areas. The LSP also agreed the proposal for Wear Valley District Council and the Community Network to work with Woodhouse Close Community Partnership to develop an appropriate commissioning model for SSCF for Woodhouse Close to help narrow the deprivation gap.
4. At the August meeting, LSP members considered the work of the KSA Partnership, as the appointed consultants, in developing an Employability Framework for Wear Valley and also the submission made by Woodhouse Close Community Partnership in relation to their vision for SSCF funding and beyond.

#### **working neighbourhoods fund**

5. Attached in Annex 10 is the report from the KSA Partnership entitled, "Visioning for the Wear Valley Working Neighbourhoods Fund 2008 – 2011." This report provides a context for WNF in Wear Valley, examines and evaluates projects funded by NRF over the period 2006 – 2008, evaluates what worked, what improvements need to be made in developing a WNF 2008 – 2011 programme and finally suggests what needs to happen moving forward including key recommendations.

6. In brief summary, the report highlights that there are significant issues to overcome in tackling worklessness in Wear Valley. Through the NRF and subsequent WNF continuation programme a great deal has and is being achieved. The NRF / WNF funded interventions compliment existing mainstream activity delivered by Job Centre Plus, LSC, Connexions. In addition Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) funding is being used to support the enterprise agenda including supporting self-employment and business starts.
7. The report indicates that whilst the existing projects have achieved a great deal, there are gaps to consider in developing a Wear Valley Employability Framework and a WNF investment programme.

### **working neighbourhoods fund vision**

8. The report suggests a vision for WNF in Wear Valley. The key is that this should be founded on:

“Enabling workless people in Wear Valley to access opportunities and build the skills that lead to sustainable employment that is right for them.”

### **key components**

9. Identified in the report are the key features of a proposed Wear Valley Employability Framework funded through WNF and other funding sources (section 4.2, p28):
  - Effective individual engagement at the community level
  - Good independent IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance)
  - Quality training to develop employment skills
  - Employability support which impacts directly on individual access to employment
  - Accessing job placement, interim employment and volunteering placement linked to pathways to long term job opportunities
  - Establishing more sustainable job opportunities accessible to local people
  - Tracking individual progress and providing intensive support to those who need it most
  - Delivering an integrated programme of employability support, performance managing the programme of investment, and providing the mechanism for co-ordination of delivery ensuring employability activity is led by the community needs

### **target groups**

10. The report also recommends that the key target groups for the employability programme should be:
  - People on incapacity benefit (IB)
  - People living in the most deprived 10% SOAs in Wear Valley
  - Unemployed who are not yet receiving benefit
  - NEETS at 17+ and 18 – 24 year olds unemployed for less than 6 months
  - 25 + year olds unemployed for less than 18 months.

## **commissioning delivery - work packages**

11. To achieve these objectives, the report suggests seven work packages:

- **WORK PACKAGE 1 - Engagement**
  - Supporting engagement, motivation, confidence building, to the point of accessing IAG, entry for a job vacancy, entry to skills training, volunteering, ILM or other recognised opportunity
- **WORK PACKAGE 2 – Information Advice and Guidance**
  - Providing independent, coordinated, and quality assured delivery of IAG
- **WORK PACKAGE 3 - Employability**
  - commissioning and coordinating a range of a range of work, ILM, and volunteering placements linked into pathways to work
- **WORK PACKAGE 4 – People into Jobs / Employer Engagement**
  - A range of measures focussed on creating job vacancies and job opportunities locally and in encouraging employers to employ local people
- **WORK PACKAGE 5 - Mentoring and progression support**
  - Providing cross cutting intensive support for individuals with the greatest need as they as progress towards sustainable employment
- **WORK PACKAGE 6 – Innovation / Individual support to maximise pathways to work**
  - Providing an unallocated flexible fund for targeted interventions including individual support when a small amount of funding would help an individual access work.
- **WORK PACKAGE 7 - Programme coordination**
  - Providing the means to provide strategic links; coordinate implementation; monitor, review and optimise performance management.

12. These work packages are designed to meet eleven output measures. These output measures are:

- (i) Engagement of people in target groups (see section 4.5 below) moving into recognised employment pathways including:
  - People accessing IAG and completing an action plan



- (ii) People completing first step learning and progressing to levels 1 and 2
  - (iii) People completing initial training who then enter occupational training
  - (iv) People achieving level 1 and 2 vocational qualifications including apprenticeships
  - (v) People entering job search provision
  - (vi) People entering job placement, interim employment, volunteering leading to pathways to work
  - (vii) Jobs created as a result of inward investment, economic regeneration and business development
  - (viii) Job opportunities accessible locally
  - (ix) People in work/sustainable employment
  - (x) People accessing new business start
  - (xi) New businesses created
13. This information is presented in Annex 11 as an outline action plan. This includes details of the aim of the work package, the proposed outcome measures which will be achieved and also the proposed commissioning process (open or closed call) for appointing a project delivery organisation.
14. A closed call commission would be a process of negotiation between the accountable body on behalf of the commissioning group / LSP and a selected delivery organisation and will be used where there is only one potential deliverer. This will be the exception to the normal process.
15. The more common commissioning process will be an open call. This is where delivery proposals are invited and assessed on a competitive basis to ensure value for money and a programme of interventions to meet the identified needs.
16. The outline action plan was agreed by the LSP as the basis for project commissioning.

### **commissioning process**

17. Further details of the commissioning process agreed by the LSP are also outlined in diagrammatic form in Annex 12. This shows that the LSP will maintain its role in agreeing the overall objectives for Working Neighbourhoods Fund and a Wear Valley Employability Framework.
18. The KSA report suggested that responsibility for the commissioning process should be delegated to a new specific group, which should help develop the detail of the work packages outlined above. KSA suggested that this group should consist of mainstream service providers to provide an independent, technical input into the process and to assist in the development of the details of the work packages and the assessment of submitted delivery proposals

19. This approach is designed to ensure that duplication is avoided and added value is maximised. In addition this approach ensures that opportunities for attracting other sources of funding are also maximised.
20. The report suggested that this Commissioning Group should consist of the Chair / Vice-Chair of the LSP, Job Centre Plus, the LSC and the accountable body. In addition, Wear Valley District Council, as accountable body, suggested that the Chair of the Employability Framework Forum should be invited to participate. The LSP members agreed this approach with the amendment that the Chair and the Vice-Chairs of the LSP should all be invited to participate to ensure that the 3 cornerstones of the LSP, the local authority, the community and the business sector are all able to influence the process.
21. In order to commence the commissioning process it has been agreed the Commissioning Group will meet to define and agree the details of the work packages in line with the framework presented. Formal agreement to work package briefs will allow the accountable body to draft the necessary project specification information to begin discussions with delivery partners (for closed call projects) and allow delivery proposals to be invited (for open call projects).
22. Delivery proposals will be assessed by the Commissioning Group and incorporated into a draft Wear Valley Employability Framework Action Plan for endorsement by the LSP.
23. Alongside this new group the KSA report recommended that the Wear Valley Employability Forum should continue to ensure co-ordination of activity between the delivery partners. The LSP agreed to formally establishing this grouping.

#### **next steps / timescale**

24. A draft outline timetable was presented to the LSP as part of the papers sent out. However, following discussions between the WNF recipient districts and the County Council in relation to Local Government Re-organisation, it proved impractical to be able to proceed with the commissioning process as originally proposed.
25. Instead revised milestones were tabled to allow time for papers to be presented by the WNF recipient districts to the Cabinet for the new unitary authority for their consideration. These indicative revised milestones are presented below:

LSP agree WVEF and commissioning process	4 <sup>th</sup> August
Accountable body develop initial draft work-package specifications and output / outcome framework	5 <sup>th</sup> August – 29 <sup>th</sup> August
Commissioning Group meet to consider initial draft project specifications	w/c 1 <sup>st</sup> September
Commissioning documentation prepared	w/c 8 <sup>th</sup> September – 26 <sup>th</sup> September
Agreement to begin project commissioning	w/c 22 <sup>nd</sup> September
Begin project commissioning Closed call – begin negotiations with delivery partners Open call – proposals invited	w/c 29 <sup>th</sup> September
Deadline for delivery proposals to be submitted	17 <sup>th</sup> October
Commissioning Group assess proposals	w/c 20 <sup>th</sup> October
Draft action plan completed	31 <sup>st</sup> October
LSP endorses action plan	17 <sup>th</sup> November
Contracts issued to project delivery organisations	w/c 17 <sup>th</sup> November
Project delivery commences	1 <sup>st</sup> January

26. This approach suggests the majority of the Wear Valley Employability Framework will be commissioned for project delivery from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 until March 2011. In line with the recommendations from the KSA partnership the process will then evolve to consider maximising other funding streams and alignment with other programmes to help efforts to tackle worklessness.

#### **safer stronger communities fund**

27. Annex 13 contains a submission from the Woodhouse Close Community Partnership in relation to the Safer Stronger Communities Funding for the area. This outlines the process of the Partnership in preparing the submission, key issues in the Woodhouse Close SOAs, details of current interventions and proposed interventions which most effectively tackle SSCF issues.

## safer stronger communities fund vision

28. The submission states that it “outlines a Neighbourhood Management model for Woodhouse Close which relies on Partner organisations working together to create a cohesive ‘virtual’ structure which can effectively monitor and deliver against SSCF and other funded initiatives with streamlined administration functions.”

## key components

29. The key issues / needs highlighted in the submission are:
- a) **Issue 1** - Dealing promptly with the environmental damage that local people associate with crime and anti social behaviours
  - b) **Issue 2** - Improve the management of the estate as a whole to meet the liveability outcomes in terms of housing and estate management
  - c) **Issue 3** - Address the high level of worklessness on the estate through provision of skills training
  - d) **Issue 4** - Address worklessness through provision of supported employment programmes
  - e) **Issue 5** - Improve access to health provision
  - f) **Issue 6** - Reduce crime by providing support to those at risk of participating in drug and substance misuse
  - g) **Issue 7** - Reduce young people at risk of involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour
  - h) **Issue 8** - Inform, engage and involve all sections of the community in service development
  - i) **Issue 9** - Increase the percentage of residents who feel their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds and communities can live together harmoniously
  - j) **Issue 10** - Reduce the proportion of vulnerable households living in non-decent accommodation. Ensure housing meets needs
  - k) **Issue 11** - Reduction of numbers of households at risk of homelessness because of debt, tenancy breakdown, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence or family breakdown by providing early support
30. Of these eleven identified issues, it would be expected that issues 3 and 4 will be addressed through the Working Neighbourhoods Fund commissions above and therefore SSCF should deliver against the other 9 identified issues / needs.
31. In addition, in developing the commissioning process for SSCF consideration needs to be given as to how the proposed interventions will help narrow the gap between the Woodhouse Close SOAs and the others in Wear Valley. Attached in Annex 14 is data taken from Index of Deprivation 2007 (ID2007), and a brief comparison of whether this indicates the area is more or less deprived than the 2004 statistics. Although caution needs to be exercised in using this information as ID2004 is based upon 2002 data and ID2007 based upon 2005 data and therefore these statistics do not reflect investments made through the 2006 – 2008 NRF, SSCF and Liveability programmes. Nevertheless, this information needs to be considered for the priority focus in the development of a new SSCF programme.

## commissioning process

32. The submission is to be welcomed and the progression towards an overall Neighbourhood Management strategy for Woodhouse Close admired. In order to progress it is proposed to adopt an approach similar to that outlined for Working Neighbourhoods Fund.
33. It was agreed at the LSP that the Woodhouse Close Community Partnership should continue to co-ordinate partner involvement but that a Safer Stronger Communities Fund Commissioning Group (SSCFCG) should be established. This will consist of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the LSP, 2D / Community Network, Dale and Valley Homes and the accountable body and the Chair of the Woodhouse Close Community Partnership. However, the Vice-Chair representing the business sector has declined this opportunity due to work commitments and it is proposed to seek a deputy from the Economy Theme group of the LSP.
34. The Commissioning Group will consider the submission made by the Community Partnership and agree a project specification to meet the needs identified and taking into account the analysis shown in Annex 15. This will then be used to invite delivery proposals from those projects identified in the submission and provide an opportunity for other delivery proposals to be submitted to meet the identified need.
35. Delivery proposals submitted will then be assessed by the Commissioning Group and incorporated into an action plan which can then also be incorporated into the Woodhouse Close Neighbourhood Management Strategy. This will be presented to the LSP for endorsement.
36. The revised milestones for this commissioning process are in line with the WNF process outlined above:

LSP agree key issues and commissioning process	4 <sup>th</sup> August
Accountable body / Community Partnership develop initial project specifications and output / outcome framework	5 <sup>th</sup> August – 29 <sup>th</sup> August
Commissioning Group meet to consider initial draft project specifications	w/c 1 <sup>st</sup> September
Commissioning documentation prepared	w/c 8 <sup>th</sup> September – 26 <sup>th</sup> September
Agreement to begin project commissioning	w/c 22 <sup>nd</sup> September
Begin project commissioning	w/c 29 <sup>th</sup> September
Deadline for delivery proposals to be submitted	17 <sup>th</sup> October
Commissioning Group assess proposals	w/c 20 <sup>th</sup> October
Draft action plan completed	31 <sup>st</sup> October

LSP endorses action plan	17 <sup>th</sup> November
Contracts issued to project delivery organisations	w/c 17 <sup>th</sup> November
Project delivery commences	1 <sup>st</sup> January

37. Again, this will allow projects to be commissioned for delivery from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 until the end of the funding in March 2010. The Woodhouse Close Community Partnership will have a key scrutiny role for the projects identified further developing, enhancing, evolving and refining project delivery to meet the Neighbourhood Management Strategy.

#### **further continuation of existing projects**

38. In view of the delays in commencing the commissioning process LSP Members were concerned about the effect on project delivery and the momentum which has been gathered over recent months. The LSP therefore endorsed a recommendation by the accountable body to extend the existing continuation project by a further 3 months to the end of December 2008. This should, subject to all of the milestones being met, enable a transition period and ensure continuation of delivery.

#### **conclusion**

39. The report by KSA provides Wear Valley with a framework for tackling employability issues. The report shows that the work implemented through NRF and the WNF continuation programme is filling a gap in the Employability Framework for Wear Valley and helping to tackle worklessness. The report recommends a series of work packages to ensure focus on the delivery of key outputs to enable progression through the model.
40. Despite delays to the proposed commissioning process the agreement of the LSP to continue funding for another 3 months will ensure existing projects helping to tackle worklessness will continue. Wear Valley District Council as the accountable body will use this additional time to prepare the necessary commissioning documentation to enable the process to commence, once agreed, and will also continue to work with local authority partners to make representation to the new unitary cabinet.
41. The submission by the Woodhouse Close Community Partnership outlines a number of key issues for the area and tries to identify potential projects to meet these needs. However, the process agreed by the LSP is designed to take account of both the identified needs and the deprivation statistics to further refine this information into commissioning documents. Again, as with WNF, continuation funding has been agreed to enable key projects to continue, whilst the issues around future commissioning are resolved.

**RECOMMENDED**

**Working Neighbourhoods Fund**

- 1 That Members endorse the decision of the LSP to agree the report produced by the KSA Partnership, including the work packages, target groups and output framework.
- 2 That Members endorse the decision of the LSP to agree the commissioning process outlined.

**Safer Stronger Communities Fund**

- 3 That Members endorse the submission by the Woodhouse Close Community Partnership and welcome the principle of establishing a “virtual” Neighbourhood Management model.
- 4 That Members endorse the agreement of the LSP for the commissioning process outlined

**Continuation Funding**

- 5 That Members endorse the decision of the LSP for the continuation of the key projects identified in advance of resolving the issues around future project commissioning.

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## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

10 SEPTEMBER 2008

### Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration **PLACE MAKING – A CHARTER FOR DESTINATION MANAGEMENT**

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

1. For Members to consider and agree to:-
  - agree to the principle of developing “**A Charter for Destination Management**”
  - agree to cross departmental input to allow on going review of the service needs.

#### **background**

2. Place making – a Charter for destination management has been developed by the LGA with the RDA’s throughout the country through the Partners for England stakeholders. This Charter aims to establish how key organisations can best contribute to supporting the development of the visitor economy in a specific area.
3. It also aims to raise aspirations and foster positive collaboration with key organisations and stakeholders in a local area to make these aspirations a reality.

#### **why do we need a charter?**

4. In order to realise the huge crosscutting economic, environmental and social benefits of a thriving visitor economy. A focus on destination management, as in the case of the current plan for Stanhope and future plan for Bishop Auckland is essential, as is the need for joined up thinking in the development and implementation of national and regional policy.
5. Within an area several types of organisation provide those services which underpin a vibrant and successful visitor economy.
6. To ensure success, it is important that this is given the highest profile within business planning processes. The charter aims to identify the roles and responsibilities, in strategic development, implementation and delivery, of those key organisations active within the visitor economy. Those with a role will include in the main, Local Authorities, ATP’s, RDA’s, VisitBritain, The Tourism Alliance. Clarity between respective roles will be provided by each signing up to the Charter for destination management.



7. Under the Charter the Local Authorities will amongst other:-

- “ensure a clear understanding, at senior member and officer level, of the key role that tourism and the visitor economy plays in supporting their area’s economic and social well being (a statutory service)”;
- “recognise that a thriving visitor economy is as important to the social, cultural and economic well being of local people as well as the businesses that serve visitors”;
- “embed the needs of the visitor and visitor economy in all local authority place shaping plans”;
- “consider schemes with a visitor economy focus which can support development and environmental improvements”;
- “invest in those areas of place management that only the local authority can deliver and in projects that will make the place more appealing for residents and visitors”;
- “commit to the development of skills within the local authority beyond those of promotion and marketing”.

**the process**

8. Starting with us the Local Authority, as outlined within the Partners for England document, we should identify how we can deliver on the principles of Tourism with local partners.
9. Once this is complete, the sub regional tourism partnership, namely the County Durham Area Tourism Partnership will collate the Charters of all participating Local Authorities and develop an overarching Charter for the sub region, this is then shared with the Regional Development Agency, One NorthEast.
10. The RDA will use each sub regional charter when completing the RDA section, VisitBritain and the Tourism Alliance will complete their sections in relation to the 9 RDA charters.

**resources**

11. Our experience from the Film Friendly Partnership Charter is that this does not result in additional expenditure but does result in better communication, understanding, co-ordination and more efficient working throughout departments.

**conclusion**

12. A thriving and sustainable visitor economy has far reaching impact on the economic and social wellbeing of local people and their environment; it is integral to creating a sense of place.
13. Local authorities have a vital role to play in leading and co-ordinating destinations and creating and maintaining safe and attractive places for local people and visitors.

14. Area Tourism Partnerships, Regional Development Agencies and other national bodies also have a role to play in supporting the delivery of excellent destination management.
15. All areas, regardless of size, have unique challenges that require local solutions. Recognising this, the Charter sets out a core set of principles that all relevant stakeholders can sign-up to and which can help identify where principle delivery responsibilities lie in their areas. By signing up to the Charter an organisation is agreeing to champion excellent destination management in their area and ensure key tasks are carried out by the organisations best able to do so.

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That Members agree to the principle of developing a **Place Making - A Charter for Destination Management**
2. That Members agree to the cross-departmental input to allow on going review of the service needs

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**Officer responsible for the report**

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**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**10 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration  
**CHERRY TREE HOUSE, 68 WEST END, WOLSINGHAM TREE PRESERVATION  
ORDER 2008**

**purpose of the report**

1. For Members to consider and agree, if appropriate, the confirmation of a new Tree Preservation Order.

**background**

2. The above Order was served on the owner and all other interested parties on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008 as a response to a request for Conservation Area Consent to fell a Fir Tree to the front of the host property, site map attached at Annex 16.

**reasons for making the order**

3. The reasons for making the Order are:-
  - The tree is a health semi-mature tree of high aesthetic and amenity value.
  - The tree is not causing an actionable nuisance with the wall and therefore should be retained and protected.

**observations**

4. One letter of observation has been received, the contents of which are summarised below:-
  - Whilst it is obviously a matter of opinion, I have no personal reason to wish the tree to be retained as it is, in my view, intrusive and a non native type, unlike adjoining trees.
  - Its potential will be to have an adverse effect on the garden in question and this conifer will continue to grow more and more and become intrusive, out of scale as it continues to grow.
  - It is not the sort of tree which would ever lend itself to pruning. I have recently observed a conifer which has been pruned with predictable and unfortunate consequences.
  - Whilst a preliminary appraisal might suggest the tree be worth keeping, on balance its removal would be no real loss.

## response to observation

5. The following comments are made in response to the above observations:-

- From close consultation with Durham County Council Arboricultural Officer, Mr Alan Hodgson, it has been determined that the tree is not causing any actionable nuisance. It is a health semi-mature tree of high aesthetic and amenity value which contributes to the street scene and enhances the village. He has suggested that three very minor lower branch stubs should be removed.

**RECOMMENDED**                      1            That the Committee confirms the Tree Preservation Order.

## background information

Application – TCA/2008/0013

Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies – September 2007.

Consultation response from Durham County Council Arboricultural Officer.

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**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**10 SEPTEMBER 2008**

**Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration  
1ST QUARTER MONITORING UPDATE**

**purpose of the report**

1. To provide 1<sup>st</sup> quarter monitoring information and to update Members on activity within the department during the period April, May and June 2008 on progress against the Department Service Plan for 2008/09.

**background**

2. The Regeneration Committee endorsed the Service Plan on 14 May 2008. 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: planning and environmental policy; economic regeneration; and public protection. Summarised in Annex 17 to this report are measures of our performance against key targets and indicators.
3. The indicators show performance against target (where this can be measured) in the quarter and an indication of service improvement.
4. Attached in Annex 18 is a review of planning appeals and complaints received in the quarter.

**planning and environment**

**development control**

5. All three key performance indicators were exceeded in the quarter (1 April to 30 June 2008) of the Service Plan Period.
6. In total 196 applications were determined in the quarter.
7. The performance is as follows:-

	2006/07	2007/08	Target (set nationally)	2008/09 Q1
Major	82%	69.5%	60% in 13 weeks	75%
Minor	81%	82.5%	65% in 8 weeks	70%
Other	90%	90%	80% in 8 weeks	87%

8. The percentage of applications determined in Q1 through delegation to officers was 88.78%.

### **appeals**

9. During Q1, six appeal decisions were received (see Annex 18). Four appeals were dismissed and two were allowed.

### **enforcement**

10. During the quarter a total of 108 complaints were received. 106 (98.15%) of these complaints were responded to within 15 working days. 54 complaints were resolved (50%). No enforcement notices were served. Two Planning Contravention Notices were issued.

### **complaints**

11. Five Stage 1 complaints and one Stage 2 complaint were received in Q1. These are detailed in Annex 18.

### **ombudsman cases**

12. In Q1 no Ombudsman cases were decided.

### **building control**

13. In Q1 the building control team determined 111 applications. 76% of the full plans applications were responded to within 3 weeks (national target 75%). However, only 45% of these applications were vetted and approved in 5 weeks (target 80%) because architects/owners were slow in returning the requested amendments/information. The percentage of inspections undertaken in one working day was 100% (target 100%).

### **brownfield land**

14. During Q1 100 houses were completed. 83% of these were built on previously developed land (target 65%).

### **public protection**

#### **contribution to council plan**

15. Following on from the successful implementation the smokefree legislation, which made all workplaces smokefree, we continue to carry out educational and enforcement visits to ensure compliance, including joint visits with the police.
16. We also continue to implement environmental protection legislation thereby preventing atmospheric pollution and ensuring good standards of air quality within the district.

## service plan

17. During the first quarter of the year the section has carried out its statutory duties in-line with relevant policies and in the light of Government guidance. In addition to on-going programmed work the section responded to over 900 complaints and requests for service from the public including:

Type of Complaint or Service Request	Total
Food complaints	5
Food Poisoning	43
Noise complaints	106
Public Health Nuisances	63
Pest Control	344
Air Pollution	21
Licensing	290
Other Complaints	87
Total	959

18. The section continues to work closely with traders and community groups in developing an event strategy for economic regeneration and community development. We assisted with the successful food festival at Bishop Auckland by providing stalls and other logistical support including car-parking facilities. We also organized a successful, complimentary program of events and market at the market place.
19. Staff continue to work with other agencies particularly our colleagues in the other authorities through liaison groups but also with the police, health Protection Agency, HSE, Environment agency and of course colleagues from other departments.
20. The section has instigated a study based on the recently amended noise at work regulations into noise exposure experienced by both employees and the general public in public houses and licensed clubs.
21. Promotional work in relation to various aspects dog control and of good dog ownership has taken place in schools and the market places in Crook and Bishop Auckland.

## customer satisfaction

22. A survey is carried out of a random sample of customers receiving visits from pest control. The results indicate:-
- the average score for April to June 2007 was 92%
  - the average score for April to June 2008 was 95%.
23. This demonstrates a significant increase in the customer's satisfaction with the pest control service.

## **economic regeneration**

24. In the first quarter of the year 2 significant planning applications have been granted permission and a prominent UK developer has secured One North East gap funding to develop a large scheme in the District:
25. Gustoni Ltd have acquired 4 acres of land at South Church Enterprise Park and have planning permission for 9 office blocks and 21 small factory units on a freehold or lease hold basis. Both will be built on a speculative nature by the developer. Office units are between 4,000 – 6,000 Sq ft and the factory units of 1,000 Sq ft. This is the first 100% privately funded development in the District's history.
26. The second application is from a local company PEDS who are building a 12,000 Sq. Ft factory for themselves and an additional 12,000 Sq. Ft that will be available on a speculative basis for industrial units.
27. The Northern Trust Ltd have met with representatives from the Councils Economic Regeneration department and are set to submit a planning application for 85,000 Sq. Ft of industrial/ factory accommodation on South Church Enterprise Park, the company have secured gap funding for the scheme and are intending on starting phase one of the development in January 2009.
28. **Stanhope Market Towns Programme** - The first quarter of the year has been occupied with negotiations with County Durham Economic Partnership and One NorthEast to make progress to a business case for Single Programme investment 2008-2010 in support of CDEP's Retail Distinctiveness Report Action Plan. Additional design and consultation work has been proposed, and initial discussion held with DCC Engineers and Highways over the feasibility of the projects in the Action Plan.
29. The draft Whole Town Vision consultation has been completed. Development work with the Steering Group has included one to one meetings with all members. Contributions have been made to the initial work on the destination marketing planning project for the Town being put forward by County Durham Tourism Partnership.
30. **Bishop Auckland Renaissance** – please refer to the main agenda items which provide a full update on the Town Centre Development and Auckland Castle Park.
31. Town Centre Manager: Steve McCormick has been in post for 9 months. In that time, after meeting all the major stakeholders, and entering into discussions with traders, an Action Plan for the town centre has been produced. This has been ratified by the Bishop Auckland Town Centre Forum, and is now a working document which helps to direct the Town Centre Manager's work programme. One of the early outcomes of the plan, is the development of the re-launched Shopwatch scheme, which is becoming an active group in the town centre community.



32. A first edition of a town centre newsletter was produced in spring and was welcomed by traders as a means two-way communications. A special issue regarding the regeneration of Fore Bondgate was also produced, and a further main edition is planned for late August.
33. Two summer promotional events have been held and an unveiling event for the Stan Laurel statue is being organised. Christmas lights, Christmas events and publicity surrounding them are at the early planning stage.
34. **Tourism** - Following the successful event last year a second familiarisation tour for travel writers was held in Wear Valley. 8 writers attended the tour visiting attractions throughout the district including Auckland Castle; Binchester Roman Fort; Escomb Church; Durham Dales Centre; Killhope Lead Mining Museum; Weardale Railway etc. The visit has already resulted in a number of articles being published in a range of magazines and internet sites.
35. The Weardale DVD, produced through the Market Town Programme in 2004 to raise awareness of the area as a visitor destination, has been updated and broadened to include attractions throughout the whole of the district. With a launch event planned in August.

## **LEGI**

36. Celebration Event - Be Enterprising held its celebratory event on 10th July at Hardwick Hall Hotel, Sedgefield. The event attended by 276 people and saw the unveiling of the annual report and delivery plan to 2011 as well as an exhibition of small businesses demonstrating the diversity of business who have been helped. Simon Henig, Leader of Durham County Council, on touring the exhibition, described the business as "really inspiring". Keynote speaker at the event, Ruth Badger from the Apprentice, herself from a deprived area said it was hard to believe many of the businesses exhibiting had just started up. Of the 233 people who have been helped to set up in self employment 32 were from the Wear Valley area two of which took part in the exhibition, (John Thomas Fenwick Garden Services, and Elizabeth Smith, The Pop Art Studio).
37. ERDF Bid - BE Enterprising is currently working with One North East on a bid to secure additional funding through ERDF.
38. Be-Franchising – are looking to set up franchising within the Wear Valley District, currently they have set up 2 franchises in Derwentside and 3 in Sedgefield.
39. **Conservation Area Character Appraisals (CACAs)**: Following the successful completion of four conservation area character appraisals by the end of March 08, for Cockton Hill, Eastgate, Hunwick and Thornley, (copies are available in the members room), work on the CACAs for Bishop Auckland, Wearhead, Westgate, and West Auckland are progressing well.

**RECOMMENDED**

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

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**Notes;**

The grey highlighted policies are these that should be used to assess planning applications/proposals on the basis that the policy contains the phrase "planning proposal".

## Executive Summary of the New Durham Growth Point

The Durham Housing and Neighborhoods Partnership Board presented this Expression of Interest to Government for a New Growth Point for South and East Durham. The Partnership comprises senior representatives from the seven district councils, Durham County Council and representatives from County Durham Primary Care Trust, housing associations, and local community representatives. The Partnership has also consulted with other partners, including English Partnerships and ONE North East, in formulating this New Growth Point submission.

### Growth Point Vision

*“to make your home in Durham a great place to live”.*

This vision is expanded on below:

*In 2016 South and East Durham will have modern dynamic economies and balanced housing markets based around a series of networked towns in which people enjoy both living and working, which are well-designed, accessible and well connected and which are beacons of environmental sustainability in the region.*

*Growth will have contributed strongly to the County’s economic renaissance, attracting new and higher skilled residents to move to South and East Durham; transforming the quality of place, image and investment potential of our towns. New employment premises will have been delivered as part of mixed-use schemes, providing enhanced opportunities for people to live and work locally, reducing levels of out-commuting and encouraging shorter journeys to work and modal shift.*

*A much improved context for investment will support existing communities and businesses, encouraging greater ambition, participation, enterprise and workforce development.*

*The area will be outward looking, in common with the most successful economies. Its housing and economic base will develop in tandem in a way which supports and complements the major urban areas which surround it, and which recognises that transformational growth will be necessary in all areas for the region to close the productivity gap with the UK average.*

*It will be an affordable location of choice for many, with new affordable and market housing opportunities provided which meet the needs of all in the community. New housing will have met new, challenging standards of environmental sustainability, reducing the carbon footprint of our towns. Outstanding design quality and integration with the existing built fabric will make them places which others visit and want to emulate.*

*The population base will have grown, supporting the successful renaissance of our town centres and growth in local services. Best use will have been made of existing infrastructure capacity and planned investment in delivering growth.*

### Context to Growth

County Durham is located at the heart of the North East region. It relates functionally to both Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley, with all seven of County Durham’s districts falling within either the Tees Valley or Tyne and Wear City Regions. Our bid is based around the main towns in the A19 East Durham; and Bishop Auckland-Darlington Economic Growth Corridors. These areas demonstrate both an economic opportunity and regeneration need. They are accessible, relating well to major road and rail corridors.

- **Durham's Housing Market:** In common with other parts of the country, housing supply has not been able to keep pace with growth in demand. This has fuelled house price inflation. Over the past 5 years, house prices in County Durham have grown faster than regional and national averages. A considerable affordability challenge now exists in the County.
- **Economic Opportunities:** The New Growth Point bid recognizes and reflects the geography of economic opportunity in the County. It focuses on areas where there is potential for sustainable housing and economic growth, in which there are sites available, and in where there are current or potential economic drivers to be supported. The strategy aims to address key supply-side factors to facilitate and enable sustainable economic growth.
- **Quality of Place:** The bid recognizes that most housing choices are influenced as much by places as housing products, and seeks to develop both. The Coalfields Housing Market renewal and proposed Growth Point programmes form part of a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to place-making, the building blocks for which are in place through our existing Area Development Framework and Masterplanning work.
- **Governance:** Joint working is well-embedded across County Durham. The County Durham Local Area Agreement will provide an important mechanism to co-ordinate delivery of the vision for the South and East Durham Growth Point.

### **Accelerating Housing and Economic Growth**

Proposals for accelerated housing and economic growth have been worked up by the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership. The three districts of Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley have worked together through the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership to present an accelerated programme for housing development and economic growth, supported by place-making and infrastructure investment.

We offer the potential to sustainably step up delivery levels against current targets. Potential land capacity is not a constraining factor, but we require assistance through Growth Point status to achieve strong delivery rates and ensure sustainable growth in both housing and jobs to address increasing acute affordability pressures and secure housing, place and economic regeneration. All of the sites we have included are considered through a preliminary assessment to be sustainable and deliverable to 2016.

Housing and economic growth in East Durham will be focused on the two main towns of Seaham and Peterlee. Significant regeneration is underway in Seaham, with Town Centre development schemes coming forward, delivery of the East Durham Link Road, new housing development being delivered on the former Vane Tempest and Seaham Colliery sites, and development of Dawdon and Foxcover employment sites.

In South Durham we proposed accelerated housing and economic growth in the triangle made up of the main towns of Newton Aycliffe, Bishop Auckland and Spennymoor. Our growth proposals include new housing, employment and mixed use sites, together with Housing Market Renewal in the priority settlements of Ferryhill, Chilton and Coundon.

### **Supporting Infrastructure Requirements**

We are well-placed to deliver a 'growth agenda' in South and East Durham with a substantial body of work carried out to set the framework for this. However there are a set of fundamental issues identified by partners to be addressed if ensure that housing is built out, that accelerated economic growth is achieved, that quality of place is improved and that growth is delivered in a sustainable way.

- **Town Centre Regeneration:** Town centres function as the ‘front doors’ to our places and affect how people perceive them as places to live and work. We need to develop our town centres, improving the quality of environment and public realm, the retail and leisure offer, and to increase their role as employment hubs. We are well placed to deliver town centre regeneration, with masterplans or development proposals in place in Peterlee, Seaham, Bishop Auckland and Newton Aycliffe and proposals being worked up for Spennymoor.
- **Transport Infrastructure:** Successful places are accessible and outward looking. Transport infrastructure will need to be improved to enhance accessibility of the Growth Point area, supporting the success of the housing market and accelerated economic growth; as well as providing sustainable means of access to employment further a field. Proposals are made in relation to rail, bus and road.
- **Housing Market Renewal:** New housing needs to be delivered alongside investment in existing housing and housing renewal to create sustainable communities and deliver balanced housing markets which are successful over the medium-to long- term. In order to ensure that funding is directed effectively at those communities that require early and comprehensive redevelopment, involving a range of public and private investment streams, the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership has identified four early intervention areas: Easington Colliery; Dawdon and Parkside in East Durham; and Ferryhill Station, Dean Bank and Chilton; and Coundon in South Durham. Housing clearance and re-provision will be taken forward alongside effective housing refurbishment, to deliver mixed communities that have a wider mix of house types and sizes and an improved environment.
- **Social infrastructure:** Investment in social infrastructure is planned or ongoing through the County-wide Building Schools for the Future Programme and the Tees Valley and South Durham Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) Programme. Both of these programmes cover the proposed Growth Point area.
- **Utilities and Energy:** We are not aware at this stage of any specific infrastructure capacity constraints to growth, but would investigate this further as part of the detailed infrastructure planning process to be undertaken if successful.

### **Delivery Framework and Funding**

The intended move to County-wide unitary local government and our Coalfield Communities Housing Market Renewal Programme provides a strong framework from which to develop an appropriate Local Delivery Vehicle which can coordinate resources, engage the private sector and secure maximum value from land and other assets in order to take forward the Growth Point agenda quickly and effectively.

We are in the process of forming a new Housing and Regeneration Company with key partners which can deliver the New Growth Point programme in conjunction with the Durham Coalfields Housing Market Renewal Programme. This would be a jointly-owned company which would be responsible for coordinating the delivery of both the growth and renewal agendas, aiming to achieve sustainable growth in both housing and employment supported by investment in quality of place and local facilities.

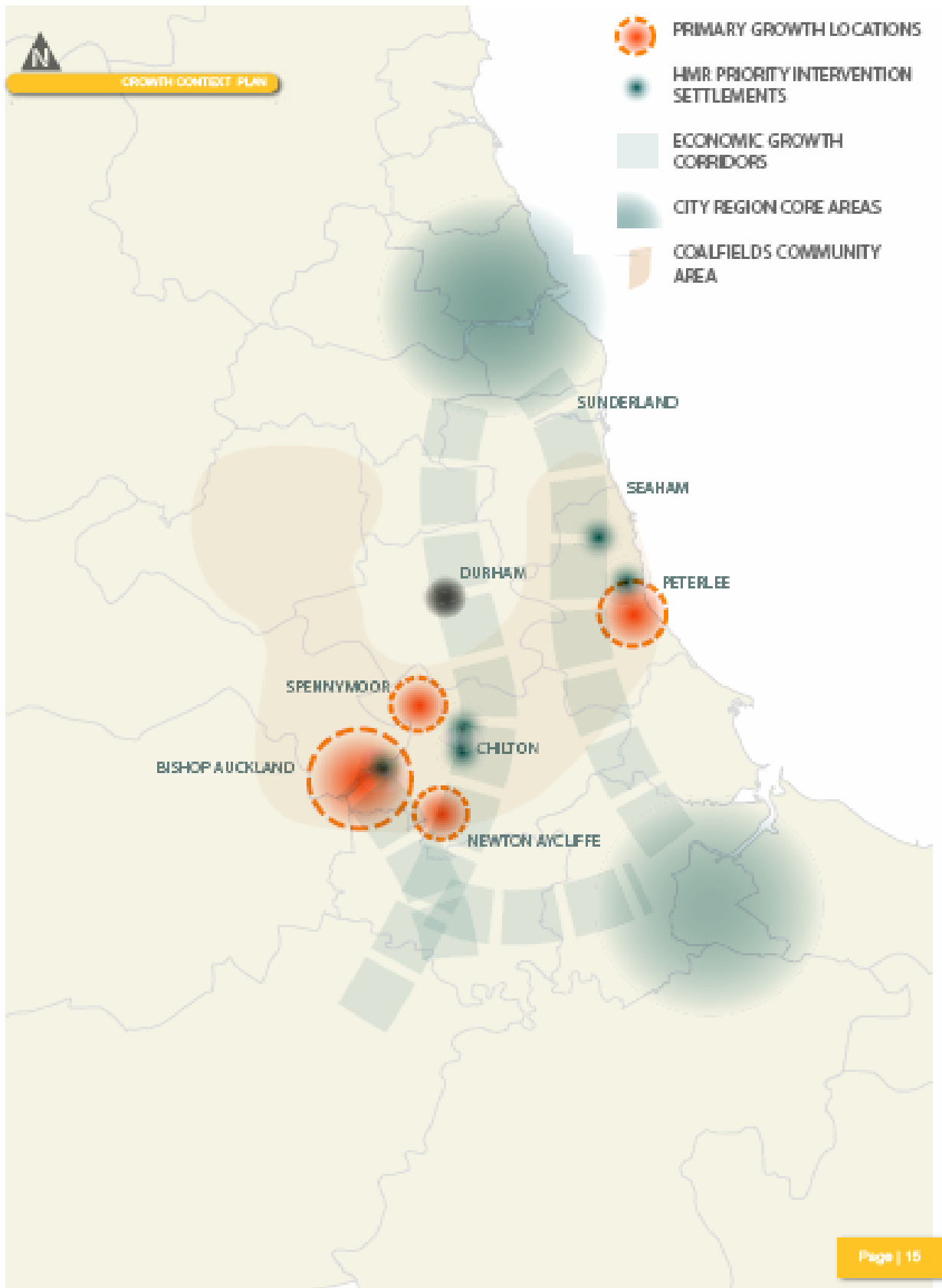
Our Growth Point proposals and delivery structures have been developed to minimise the potential additional public sector funding burden and to achieve best value. A package of funding is already in place to deliver much of the necessary infrastructure to sustainably deliver our proposals for accelerated housing and economic growth.

**Conclusion**

Our proposed South and East Durham New Growth Point sets out ambitious plans to deliver 14,500 net additional homes between 2004 – 2016 equating to 50% above housing provision levels proposed by the North East Assembly in July 2004 for our constituent districts of Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley. At least 30% of new homes will be affordable housing. Our growth proposals are focused on the main towns in the Darlington – Bishop Auckland and A19 East Durham economic growth corridors. With accelerated delivery of nine employment and mixed use sites, investment in existing business locations and town centre regeneration, we intend to deliver an improved local jobs-homes balance and short-distance travel patterns, and increasing proportion of which will be by sustainable modes.



Broad Spatial Depiction of the Durham Growth Point bid



## Wear Valley District Core Strategy: Preferred Option

Following the publication of and consultation on the **Core Strategy: Issues and Alternative Options Paper** in July 2007, the Council has prepared this short document which outlines the preferred policy direction for new development within the district.

The comments and representations<sup>1</sup> received in response to the Issues and Alternative Options paper, together with the findings of a Sustainability Appraisal and the Appropriate Assessment<sup>2</sup> of the alternative options have shaped the preferred options identified in this paper.

The Council considers that, after careful consideration of all the views made by the community and stakeholders, the preferred broad policy direction for Wear Valley as set out in this document, will deliver and distribute new development in a manner which best meets the needs of the current and future population of the district.

The Core Strategy will consist of the following components:

- **Spatial Vision:** Sets out where the district will be in 15 years time – this is what the Local Development Framework is seeking to deliver.
- **Spatial Objectives:** Provides a more detailed framework for the delivery of the Spatial Vision.
- **Locational and Development Strategy:** Sets out how new development will be distributed throughout the district, in order to deliver the Spatial objectives and therefore contribute towards the achievement of the Spatial Vision.
- **Strategic Policies:** Provide a more detailed framework and clear policy direction, which build upon and seek to ensure the effective implementation of the Spatial Objectives.

The following sections of the report present the preferred option and broad policy approach for each of these four components in turn. The Spatial Vision, Spatial Objectives and Locational and Development Strategy are presented in their entirety, in order to provide a clear policy direction. However, it is not considered appropriate to produce detailed policy wording for the Strategic Policies at this stage of policy development. Instead the broad policy direction is presented.

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<sup>1</sup> In total 54 representations were received from individuals and groups within the local community and key stakeholders, such as Natural England and the Environment Agency.

<sup>2</sup> Appropriate Assessment is a requirement of the European Habitats Directive; it identifies the potential for significant adverse impacts upon features of European importance.

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## Spatial Vision for Wear Valley

The Spatial Vision draws upon the issues facing the district and identifies how the district will have changed by the end of the plan period in physical, environmental, social and economic terms. The Spatial Vision is the overarching goal which the Local Development Framework will seek to deliver, through the delivery of the Strategic Objectives, the Locational and Development Strategy and Strategic Policies as contained in the Core Strategy and the other documents comprising the Local Development Framework. The preferred option for Wear Valley's Spatial Vision is:

***“By 2021 Wear Valley will offer an improved quality of life for those who live, work and visit the District. This will be inherited by and continued for future generations and delivered without compromising the district’s environmental assets.***

***People:*** Wear Valley will have a balanced, growing, vibrant and healthy population which is creating a confident and socially inclusive community, motivated by self-worth, in which each individual is able to achieve a collective improvement in the district. Opportunities will be available to all social groups for living in an affordable, decent home within cohesive communities.

***Place:*** Those natural, built, historic and cultural qualities that make the district special and distinctive will be well managed and well protected. Wear Valley will have taken key steps in delivering an environment which can adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change and be making the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources.

***Prosperity:*** The district’s diverse economy will be a major driving force in the sub-regional economy and the district will be witnessing sustained growth in educational attainment, employment and business start-ups. A series of key settlements will offer a range of services, facilities and employment and retail opportunities which meet the needs of the population, well serviced by public transport and physical and social infrastructure.

## Strategic Objectives for Wear Valley

The Spatial Objectives identify how the Spatial Vision will be delivered; they also provide a framework for the formulation of policies to be contained within the Local Development Framework. The preferred options for Wear Valley's Spatial Objectives are:

	Ref	Spatial Objectives: Preferred Option
PEOPLE	SO1	To reduce health deprivation and improve the social well-being of the district's population.
	SO2	To support the provision of and accessibility to existing and new services and facilities that meet the needs of the district's population.
	SO3	To deliver well designed, sustainable, cleaner and safer local environments within the district.
	SO4	To promote equality and inclusive communities within the district.
	SO5	To assist and promote lifelong learning opportunities for the population of Wear Valley and recognise the educational benefits related to culture, conservation activities, environmental assets and tourism.
	SO6	To increase the potential for the district's current and future population to have the opportunity of living in a decent and affordable home and choice of type and tenure.
PLACE	SO7	To minimise the amount of waste produced and encourage sustainable waste management within the district.
	SO8	To maintain and enhance the quality of the district's natural resources, including land, water and air.
	SO9	To protect and enhance the geological, bio-diversity and conservation interests within the district and beyond.
	SO10	To manage the built and natural environment to reduce the causes and minimise the impacts of climate change and protect the functional floodplain.
	SO11	To make sustainable use of natural resources, energy and land.
	SO12	To protect and enhance the quality of the district's landscapes, townscapes and green spaces.
	SO13	To preserve and enhance the district's cultural and historic heritage.
	SO14	To ensure the use of sustainable design and construction throughout the district.
PROSPERITY	SO15	To develop and retain a flexible and higher skilled workforce through training and education.
	SO16	To facilitate the development of an economically sustainable and prosperous area where investment is encouraged and retained and new and existing businesses are supported.
	SO17	To strengthen the role, vitality and viability of the district's towns and villages by protecting and enhancing the services and facilities which they offer whilst respecting their individual character.
	SO18	To reduce the need to travel, provide access to sustainable modes of transport and protect and enhance the district's rights of way and access areas for all those who live, work or visit the district.

## Locational and Development Strategy

### Role of Wear Valley

In determining the locational strategy for the district, it is important to consider and establish the various roles the district plays in the sub-region. The distribution of development throughout the district should be delivered in a manner which supports and enhances these roles.

The following roles gained significant support through the community engagement undertaken in Summer 2007. The Sustainability Appraisal of the various roles identified a number of positive impacts which could be delivered through these roles, especially when pursued in conjunction with one another.

For Wear Valley, three key strategic roles have been identified:

- **South and East Bishop Auckland as a key location for business growth and investment** reflecting the Darlington to Bishop Auckland Growth Corridor as set out in regional and sub-regional and local economic strategies.
- **Bishop Auckland Town: the second major retail, commercial, employment and residential centre in the Durham sub-region** supporting a wider hinterland extending beyond Wear Valley into Teesdale and Sedgfield.
- **Weardale: an internationally and nationally important tourism, recreational, educational and nature destination** including a large proportion of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Eastgate Renewable Energy Village.

In addition, through community engagement a fourth strategic role has been put forward, as follows:

- **A68 as Strategic Route:** The A68 passes through the district from Bishop Auckland to Tow Law, through Northumberland and eventually into Scotland. The road provides a strategic route for tourism and other economic activities and also links the district with Darlington and the A1.

### Role of the district's settlements

Alongside the role which the district plays within the wider area, it is also important to consider and establish the current and potential roles which the key settlements play within Wear Valley, as well as their local sub-area. Such roles will have an important function in considering the distribution of development throughout the district. The resulting preferred option in relation to settlement role, developed from the community engagement and sustainability appraisal, is set out below:

- **Primary Settlements: Bishop Auckland, Crook and Stanhope**  
*All play a primary role, relative to their scale, within the district and their sub-area. They are accessible by alternative modes of transport and offer a range of housing, employment, retail, leisure and community facilities which support the communities within their local hinterlands.*

*The RSS identifies both Bishop Auckland and Crook towns as 'Regeneration Towns'. These are the towns within the district identified as being suitable for sustainable growth. All such development and growth should allow for and deliver the regeneration of these towns.*

*Stanhope is identified within the RSS as the district's only Rural Service Centre, which identifies that development should be delivered to strengthen Stanhope's role in supporting the wider rural area and communities.*

- **Secondary Settlements:** Coundon, Willington, Tow Law and Wolsingham

*These are the settlements which play, or have the potential to play, a secondary, supporting role within the district. They have been identified given their inter-relationships and relative proximity to the primary settlements, or have been identified through the Durham Coalfields Initiative as towns in great need of regeneration. These towns are accessible by modes of transport other than the car but offer a more limited range of housing, employment, retail, leisure and community facilities, than their primary counterparts.*

*These towns are capable of accommodating a smaller level of growth than the primary settlements but it is considered that new development, of an appropriate scale, is important to support and enhance their role as secondary settlements.*

- **Other Settlements:** All other established settlements within the district.

*In general these settlements provide only a limited range (if any) of community facilities and services which only provide for the residents of these particular settlements.*

- **Strategic Site:** Eastgate Renewable Energy Village

*Eastgate Renewable Energy Village, is a flagship project of national importance, and therefore constitutes a Strategic Site which should be identified within the Core Strategy. Eastgate Renewable Energy Village provides a 'one-off' development opportunity, which once fully developed will support the role of Stanhope as Weardale's Primary Settlement, and assist in delivering a sustainable community and sustainable economy within Weardale, making a positive contribution towards the sub-regional economy.*

It is important that these roles are supported and enhanced through the Development Strategy, which will provide the framework for the distribution of development throughout the district. A [Key Diagram](#) for the district is located within [Annex A](#) of this document. It illustrates the key settlements, infrastructure provision and sub-areas within the district.

### **Development Strategy: Preferred Option**

The preferred option for Wear Valley's development strategy, incorporating the above considerations, is set out below. It reflects the results of the community engagement activities which have taken place to date and the sustainability appraisal as well as seeking to deliver a number of local strategies and initiatives currently being implemented within the district. The key differences between the current Development Strategy and the preferred option presented here in this Section are detailed in [Annex B](#).

Given the nature and scale of the district, it is considered most appropriate and sustainable to deliver this through three area based strategies reflecting the distinctive sub-areas within Wear Valley, specifically [Bishop Auckland](#), [Crook](#) and [Weardale](#). This approach will also ensure that the district Development Strategy reflects the locally distinctive character of the three sub-areas.

- **Bishop Auckland Sub-Area**

To reflect the importance of the Darlington to Bishop Auckland Growth Corridor and the role of Bishop Auckland within the County, it is considered appropriate to direct the majority (approximately 50%) of new development

within the district towards this sub area. The South and East Durham Growth Point Bid was been prepared in conjunction with Easington District and Sedgefield Borough Councils and has recently been approved. Therefore accelerated housing and economic growth will be delivered in Bishop Auckland and Coundon, as well as enhancements to current physical and community infrastructure and transport provision.

Bishop Auckland is the most densely populated settlement and includes areas of concentrated economic disadvantage. As well as reflecting the roles of the district, it is important that new development seeks to regenerate and rejuvenate the local communities, providing an improved quality of life and opportunities for its residents.

- **Primary Settlement: Bishop Auckland, including West Auckland and St Helen Auckland**

***Bishop Auckland** is the main settlement within the sub-area, to which the majority of new development and growth should be directed. It is essential that new development maintains and enhances the settlement's role as a major service centre within the sub-region. The Bishop Auckland Urban Renaissance Master Plan provides a stimulus for private sector town centre developments and is a key tool in delivering this role for Bishop Auckland; therefore developments which: increase the quality and quantity of the town centre's retail and service provision; improve existing visitor attractions and key gateways; develop the nighttime economy; and enhance the physical infrastructure and historic environment, are priorities for the town centre, and should be supported. Proposals for the renovation and development of Auckland Castle Park, designed to improve public space and facilities within the town, are also essential to promoting Bishop Auckland's role.*

*As a key settlement within the Darlington to Bishop Auckland Growth Corridor, economic proposals, particularly those which deliver new, high quality and high value employment opportunities, will be promoted and encouraged within the town. This also underpins proposals contained within the Growth Point Bid. The Bishop Auckland - Spennymoor – Newton Aycliffe triangle will be the main focal point for activity to the west of this Growth Corridor. As such sufficient and suitable land to the east and south of Bishop Auckland will be safeguarded and released in a pipeline approach to ensure such economic development and growth can be accommodated within Bishop Auckland in a manner which contributes positively towards the regional economy. In order to facilitate this, it will be vital that a new Prestige Employment Site is identified to accommodate demand for prime office development in addition to the identification of and opening up of a follow on site to South Church Enterprise Park to accommodate demand once the existing site has reached capacity. In order to accommodate the additional demands on the transport network resulting from such development, enhancements to the road network to the east of Bishop Auckland may be required. Furthermore, in order to secure more sustainable travel patterns and to increase the attractiveness of the employment land on offer, the feasibility of a rail halt between Dene Valley and Brack's Farm will be investigated and developed.*

*In addition to renewing and restructuring the existing housing stock within the town, new housing growth, to meet the needs of existing and future residents in line with the Growth Point, will be encouraged on brownfield sites within the settlement, including proposals within the town centre, where they would improve the centre's vitality, vibrancy and physical and historic environment. However, to accommodate the level of new housing growth set out in the successful Growth Point Bid, a sustainable urban extension to the east of Bishop Auckland which also enhances the role of the Dene Valley may be required in the medium term.*



- **Secondary Settlement: Coundon and Leeholme**

**Coundon and Leeholme** have been identified through the Durham Coalfields Partnership as a priority settlement for regeneration and housing renewal. A particular priority within the settlement is to enhance the town's retail and service provision. This may require the creation of a designated local centre within the town. Furthermore, efforts will be made to relocate the existing industrial uses from the local centre on to the employment site within the town

Housing renewal and restructuring are also a priority for Coundon and Leeholme. Proposals which improve the quality of the existing housing stock, including its openness, access routes and local environment will be encouraged. New housing growth, in line with the Growth Point, will also be permitted, where this diversifies the current mix of housing, in terms of type and tenure, with a particular priority being given to the provision of medium sized family housing. It is essential for the successful regeneration of Coundon and Leeholme that both these objectives (housing renewal and new housing growth) should occur concurrently/simultaneously; one should not be pursued in the absence of the other.

Coundon and Leeholme, is the district's closest settlement to the A1 and as such the settlement's supporting role to Bishop Auckland, especially in relation to economic development, must be strengthened. It is in a prime location to provide a strategic employment site in terms of the more intensive and mixed use economic developments, such as those which have a distribution or warehousing element which is accompanied by light industrial or office element; it is envisaged that this will compliment the employment land offer within Bishop Auckland. In order to deliver this an appropriate site will be allocated and brought forward to facilitate economic development and growth of this nature; in the interests of connectivity and promoting the settlements proximity to the A1, this is likely to be to the east of Coundon.

To accommodate the scale of new housing and employment growth directed to Coundon and Leeholme, and to strengthen its connectivity and accessibility within the district and wider area, the route into the settlement from the east is identified as a priority for upgrading. Furthermore, small extensions to the settlement may be required in order to fully accommodate the proposals contained within the successful Growth Point Bid; these should seek to consolidate the existing settlement and build upon the underlying principles set out in the Area Development Framework. Accessibility within the settlement is also a priority; new developments should be developed in a way which maximises pedestrian and cycle access with the local centre and services it provides.

- **Other Settlements: Dene Valley**

Dene Valley is an integral area of the Growth Point, which covers the parts of the district to east of Bishop Auckland. Given the nature of the housing stock within Dene Valley, it has been identified as an area in great need of housing renewal. The settlements which comprise Dene Valley are located close to the eastern edge of Bishop Auckland, and therefore a suitable location for additional growth which can not be accommodated within the Primary Settlement. As with Coundon and Leeholme, it is essential to the sustainability of Dene Valley that housing growth and housing renewal are pursued together. New development should support the local services and facilities located within Dene Valley, including the new school. Specific consideration should also be given to the accessibility, (particularly pedestrian, cycle and public transport) within the Dene Valley and to Bishop Auckland and Coundon.

- **Other Settlements: Escomb, Witton Park, Binchester and Toronto.**

Developments within these settlements should only be permitted where they are appropriate to the scale, role and need of that settlement **or** where there are no suitable, alternative sites (brownfield or greenfield) within Bishop Auckland,

*Coundon and Leeholme or Dene Valley. Furthermore, proposals which support housing market renewal, aim to decrease the vacancy rate or increase the mix of community facilities and services and employment opportunities within these settlements, thus contributing towards the creation of sustainable communities, will be deemed acceptable.*

*Where local need is identified, allocations will be made for new community facilities, services, retail and recreation and leisure purposes. However, given the current housing land supply within the district, and to reflect the policies as set out in the RSS, no residential allocations will be made within these settlements, unless there is a specific, identified local need for affordable housing.*

*All developments permitted within these settlements should be on brownfield sites or satisfy the 'rural exceptions rule' as set out in national planning policy<sup>3</sup>.*

- **Crook Sub-Area**

A significant proportion (30%) of the district's new development will be directed towards the Crook sub-area, which has strong links with Durham City. The sub-area's connection with Durham (the sub-region's main settlement) is essential to the district, and as such new development should build upon, promote and enhance these connections. The strategic route of the A68 enters the district in this sub-area at Tow Law.

The dispersed settlement pattern in the Crook sub-area reflects the nature of the traditional mining community. This accounts for the great number of smaller 'other' settlements identified within this sub-area.

- **Primary Settlement: Crook**

*The market town of Crook offers a good range of community facilities, services and retail opportunities for its community and that of its surrounding hinterland. New development should therefore maintain and enhance the town's existing provision of such services. Opportunities to develop the town centre economy, particularly the range of office and retail opportunities should be explored and facilitated through the identification of appropriate allocations. Environmental enhancement schemes have improved the appearance of the town centre and it is essential that new proposals support, and do not detract from, the work which has been undertaken to date.*

*The settlement has experienced substantial levels of housing growth in recent years, but now offers more limited potential for further major housing growth on brownfield sites within the existing settlement. Where new housing is provided it is essential that this diversifies the existing mix of housing in terms of size, type and tenure. Additional housing growth within the town should enhance the vitality and increase the use of the facilities provided within the identified town centre.*

*Crook has a valuable role to play in providing local job opportunities and should therefore be the focus for new employment opportunities within the sub-area. Developments which therefore retain current and create new job opportunities will be supported and encouraged. Although the traditional economy of the sub-area, which was predominantly mineral extraction and manufacturing, has been in decline, the sub-area still has a strong industrial base which is essential to the district economy; it is also the administrative centre for the district council. It is*

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<sup>3</sup> **Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas** encourages the use of 'Rural Exceptions Sites' to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing for local people. Rural Exceptions Sites, are an exception to the adopted plan and policies, in order to ensure they can be provided in the areas and communities which need them most. A [Supplementary Planning Document](#) may be required to provide guidance specific to Wear Valley.

essential that these economic roles and the job opportunities they provide are maintained and enhanced.

- **Secondary Settlements: Willington, including Sunnybrow, and Tow Law**

**Willington** has a strong inter-relationship with, and plays a vital role in supporting, Crook. As the district's closest key settlement to Durham City, Willington is well situated to accommodate any economic growth and development which cannot be accommodated within the sub-regions main town (ie Durham City). Willington therefore has a key role to play in delivering high quality jobs within the district, and thus diversifying the job opportunities within the sub-area and wider district.

The sub-area's only secondary school is located within Willington, which emphasises the town's supporting role. However, Willington offers a more limited range of community facilities, services and jobs than Crook, but opportunities exist to enhance the town's local centre. Willington is capable of accommodating housing growth which can not be accommodated within Crook. Small scale residential proposals which meet local need will be permitted on brownfield sites within the town.

**Tow Law**, situated on the A68, offers economic links to Scotland but has been identified through the Durham Coalfields Partnership as a priority settlement for regeneration. Given the local reliance upon traditional and declining industries within Tow Law, developments which seek to diversify the local economy and provide additional employment opportunities will be supported and encouraged. Proposals which contribute towards housing market renewal within this settlement will be also considered acceptable. The Area Development Framework for Tow Law identifies that until the areas of low demand and vacancy within the existing housing stock have been addressed, the town is not a priority for new housing growth.

Actions to enhance the centre of Tow Law, diversify the range of community facilities, services and shops and enhance the physical environment are required; developments which help deliver this will therefore generally be supported. A particular priority for the town is the establishment of a central core and focal point, such as a town square, which will also encourage people to stop in the settlement and use the facilities and services on offer.

- **Other Settlements: Howden-Le-Wear, Fir Tree, Hunwick/Lane Ends, North Bitchburn, Billy Row, Stanley Crook, Sunnyside, Roddymoor, Oakenshaw and Helmington Row**

Developments within these settlements should only be permitted where they appropriate to the scale, role and need of that settlement **or** where there are no suitable, alternative sites (brownfield or greenfield) within Crook, Willington and Tow Law. Furthermore, proposals which seek to increase the mix of community facilities and services and employment opportunities within these settlements, thus contributing towards the creation of sustainable communities will be deemed acceptable.

Where local need is identified, allocations will be made for new community facilities, services, retail and recreation and leisure purposes. However, given the current housing land supply within the district, and to reflect the policies as set out in the RSS, no residential allocations will be made within these settlements, unless there is a specific, identified local need for affordable housing.

All developments permitted within these settlements should be on brownfield sites or satisfy the 'rural exceptions rule' as set out in PPS7<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> **Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas** encourages the use of 'Rural Exceptions Sites' to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing for local people. Rural Exceptions Sites, are an exception to the adopted plan and policies, in order to ensure they can

- **Weardale Sub-Area**

Weardale is the most rural sub-area within Wear Valley. To reflect the rural nature of Weardale, whilst enabling the rural community to meet their needs and aspirations, 20% of the district's new development and growth will be accommodated within Weardale. The west of the sub-area is located within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has clear links with the service centres of Alston and Hexham, outside of the district. Weardale has the potential to become an internationally and nationally important tourism, recreational, educational and nature destination. The Strategic Site of Eastgate Renewable Energy Village is a flagship project to assist in delivering this.

- **Primary Settlement: Stanhope**

*Stanhope is identified as the district's only Rural Service Centre in the RSS. The town plays a key role in supporting Weardale's communities. Given the level of community services provided within the settlement, in comparison to Weardale's other settlements, it is deemed to be the most appropriate settlement to accommodate new housing growth. However, given the topographical constraints facing Stanhope, it is recognised that economic growth may have to be accommodated within the sub-area's secondary settlement.*

*Stanhope's Market Town Initiative is in its infancy, but seeks to enhance and develop the town's role as a key market town and service centre within this rural community. Development which supports and enhances the role of Stanhope as the rural service centre and the objectives of the Market Town Initiative will therefore be supported. Retail proposals for both comparison and convenience goods of an appropriate scale will be permitted within the identified town centre; new community services and facilities for Weardale should also be directed to Stanhope.*

- **Strategic Site: Eastgate Renewable Energy Village**

*Eastgate Renewable Energy Village is identified as a **Strategic Site** which plays a pivotal role in delivering the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives for Wear Valley. The Eastgate Renewable Energy Village is a flagship development of national importance located to the west of Stanhope; a key aim of which is to contribute towards the delivery of a sustainable community and economy within Weardale and contribute positively towards the sub-regional economy. The development will act as a stimulus for the delivery of high-quality, high-skilled employment, diversifying Weardale's current employment opportunities.*

*Once developed in line with the Masterplan, Eastgate Renewable Energy Village will build upon and support Stanhope's Market Town Initiative and provide a supporting role to Stanhope in terms of the leisure, recreation and employment opportunities. The rail connection will dramatically improve the accessibility of the Dale, making a vital connection to Bishop Auckland, Darlington and therefore the national rail services.*

- **Secondary Settlement: Wolsingham**

*Wolsingham, as the gateway to Weardale, plays a supporting role to Stanhope, especially in economic and educational terms. Given the topographical constraints facing Stanhope, Wolsingham will have to accommodate new growth which cannot be delivered in Weardale's primary settlement. In particular, this relates to new employment opportunities which will help diversify the rural economy. In the longer term Wolsingham will also play a key economic role as a follow on to Eastgate Renewable Energy Village. This role will be enhanced and supported through the*

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be provided in the areas and communities which need them most. A [Supplementary Planning Document](#) may be required to provide guidance specific to Wear Valley.

*rail connection. New housing growth will only be suitable if it cannot be provided for in Stanhope; smaller scale housing proposals will be acceptable on brownfield sites where there is an identified local need.*

*New community facilities and services and retail uses, which enhance the supporting role Wolsingham plays to Stanhope, will be deemed acceptable within the identified town centre.*

*Wolsingham, sitting just west of the A68, has good transport links with the rest of the district and wider area. In the longer term the extension of the Bishop Auckland to Eastgate railway will enhance the town's accessibility and connectivity, making it the most appropriate settlement to support and accommodate much of the sub-area's economic development and growth.*

- **Other Settlements: Frosterley, St John's Chapel, Eastgate Village, Ireshopeburn, Edmundryres, Rookhope, Westgate, Cowshill, Wearhead and Witton-Le-Wear**

*Developments within these settlements should only be permitted where they are appropriate to the scale, role and need of that settlement or where there are no suitable, alternative sites (brownfield or greenfield) within Stanhope or Wolsingham. Furthermore, proposals which seek to increase the mix of community facilities and services and employment opportunities within these settlements, thus contributing towards the creation of sustainable rural communities, will be deemed acceptable. Given that a number of these settlements fall within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and/or have Conservation Areas, new development should be designed to reflect the locally distinctive character and features within these settlements.*

*Given the current housing land supply within the district, to reflect the content of PPS7 and to not detract from the roles of Stanhope and Wolsingham, new residential development should only be permitted in these settlements where it meets a specific, identified local need. The only residential allocations made within these settlements will be for affordable housing.*

*All developments permitted within these settlements should be on brownfield sites, wherever possible, or satisfy the 'rural exceptions rule' as set out in PPS7<sup>5</sup>.*

All settlements named above within the three sub-area Development Strategies will have 'Limits to Development' drawn to reflect the criteria as contained in [Annex C](#).

<sup>5</sup> [Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas](#) encourages the use of 'Rural Exceptions Sites' to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing for local people. Rural Exceptions Sites, are an exception to the adopted plan and policies, in order to ensure they can be provided in the areas and communities which need them most. A [Supplementary Planning Document](#) may be required to provide guidance specific to Wear Valley.

## Strategic Policies: Planning for People

### Strategic Policy A: Meeting Local Community Needs

There is a national, regional and local commitment to developing strong, vibrant, mixed, sustainable communities; this can only be achieved by meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion and creating equal opportunity for all citizens<sup>6</sup>.

This Strategic Policy seeks to contribute towards developing local communities as described above by meeting local community needs in the following areas:

- Achieving a housing mix;
- Providing affordable homes;
- Accommodating the needs of gypsy and travelling communities;
- Providing open space and sport and recreation facilities; and
- Delivering community facilities.

In doing so, this Strategic Policy builds upon the Development Strategy and contributes towards the delivery of the following Strategic Objectives: **SO1, SO2, SO4, SO6, SO17 and SO18.**

#### • **Achieving a Housing Mix: Preferred Policy Approach**

National Planning Policy requires housing requirements, in terms of house type, size and tenure, to be established, based on evidence through the Local Development Framework. The preferred option for satisfying this requirement is:

*Set out in the Core Strategy the likely overall proportions of households that require market housing and affordable housing, the likely profile of household types requiring market housing and the size and type of affordable housing required. This approach would be more flexible without having to amend the Major Allocations document to reflect changes in housing need. The Strategic Policy should be applied to all allocations, mixed use developments and windfall proposals.*

*Targets in terms of tenure, type and size will be drawn from the sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment once complete.*

In terms of the direction the policy should take, the preferred option is a combined approach, as set out below:

*The Council will direct improvement schemes and investment towards settlements/areas of low housing demand to encourage vacant dwellings to be brought back into use. The option will involve directing resources to areas of low demand and/or facilitating other developments (eg retail, community facilities and employment) to take place which will improve the sustainability and market appeal of these settlements. This in turn should result in increased interest and investment in the housing stock provided within the settlement.*

*In tandem with the above, small scale residential developments within existing settlements will be encouraged where they will provide a greater diversity of housing types within that settlement or area. Equally, proposals which would not*

<sup>6</sup> **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development** available to download from [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

*provide diversity in terms of housing mix will be discouraged. This will be of particular importance in the smaller and more rural settlements.*

- **Providing Affordable Homes: Preferred Policy Approach**

It is necessary to develop 'site size' thresholds in order to ensure affordable homes are delivered through privately developed housing sites. The preferred approach for developing such thresholds is:

*Establish a sliding scale of thresholds whereby smaller sites are required to provide a smaller proportion of affordable dwellings. Sites of a larger size would be required to provide a greater proportion of affordable housing, subject to local viability. This approach would enable the affordable homes required in the smaller or more rural settlements (where development sites are generally smaller) to be effectively delivered.*

In conjunction with this approach, it is necessary to develop targets which identify the proportion of affordable homes to be delivered on each site. The preferred policy approach for developing and implementing such proportions is:

*Geographical targets to be based upon the level of need as identified through the evidence base, specifically the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Areas identified as being in greatest need would require a higher proportion of affordable housing to be provided through appropriate developments within those areas, where this proves financially viable.*

*As this may not always deliver affordable housing where need is greatest, monitoring is essential. Annual Monitoring would identify whether affordable housing was being delivered in the areas where it was needed. If this is not the case, appropriate management action could be identified and pursued.*

It will be necessary to produce a **Supplementary Planning Document** to provide guidance in terms of identifying the delivery mechanism, the location of the provision (ie on-site or off-site) and requirements in terms of the type and size of affordable housing required locally. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment and viability information will play a key role in informing this work.

- **Accommodating the Needs of Gypsy and Travelling Communities: Preferred Policy Approach**

The Core Strategy must set out a criteria based policy against which site allocations and planning applications for new gypsy and traveller sites can be fairly assessed. This policy simply relates to the identification of new sites; policies relating to improving the quality of existing sites will be addressed elsewhere within the Core Strategy. No new criteria were proposed through community engagement. The criteria to be included are therefore:

1. *The site is an extension to an existing gypsy or traveller site;*
2. *The site is located within or close to a primary or secondary settlement, and as such has good access to local and essential community facilities;*
3. *The site is able to provide a settled base which reduces the need for long distance travelling; and*
4. *The site provides a suitable soft landscaping and planting belt to minimise the visual impact of the site and maintain local amenity; sites with high or hard boundaries which separate the site from the local community will not usually be acceptable.*

It should be made clear, as with any allocation identification/application determination process, the policies within the Generic Development Control Policies document must also be satisfied.

• **Providing Open Space and Sport and Recreation Facilities: Preferred Policy Approach**

The Local Development Framework must establish local targets for the provision of new open space and sport and recreation facilities. These standards should reflect the needs of the existing and future population. In terms of the type of development which should have to contribute towards the provision of such facilities, the preferred option emerged as:

*Require developers of residential and significant commercial or industrial development to provide some form of open space and sport and recreation facilities to ensure that future residents and new employees have suitable access to such facilities.*

In terms of the 'development size' threshold which would trigger such provision, a combined approach emerged as the preferred option, as set out below:

*Require all residential developments, regardless of number of dwellings provided to provide some form of open space and sport and recreation facilities.*

*For significant commercial and industrial developments, establish a threshold based upon the total increase in number of employees as the trigger. This will require additional viability assessment and preferred options work.*

It will be necessary to develop a [Supplementary Planning Document](#) to provide guidance in terms of identifying the delivery mechanism, the location of the provision (ie on-site or off-site) and more detailed requirements in terms of nature and scale of the contribution. The Open Space Strategy and viability information will play a key role in informing this work.

• **Delivering Community Facilities: Preferred Policy Approach**

In addition to open space and sport and recreation facilities, the planning system can also help address deficiencies in other community facilities, to meet local need. As the alternative options presented do not prejudice one another, it emerged as the preferred option to pursue all five in combination.

- 1. Work with community groups to develop a network of linked facilities;*
- 2. Identify those community facilities in need of improvement and facilitate the required improvements;*
- 3. Promote the dual-use of community buildings and facilities;*
- 4. Promote and support the dual-use of private sport, recreational and leisure developments to maximise their contribution to local communities; and*
- 5. Require a financial contribution from major residential developers towards the provision of a network of facilities, where significant local need can be demonstrated and/or the proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact.*



## Strategic Policy B: Delivering a Sequential Approach to Selecting Allocations

A Sequential Approach prioritises sites according to their geographical position, land status and potentially other considerations. It is a mechanism to ensure that the most suitable sites for development, which have the greatest benefit to the local communities, businesses and environment, are developed before less suitable sites.

In doing so, this Strategic Policy builds upon the development strategy and contributes towards the delivery of the following Strategic Objectives: SO2, SO3, SO6, SO10, SO11, SO14, SO16, SO17 and SO18.

Policy 4 of the adopted RSS sets out a sequential approach to the identification of new allocations to be identified in the Local Development Frameworks. Given the diverse nature of the region and of the district, it is considered necessary to adopt a locally distinctive application to the adopted regional sequential approach. The preferred option for the local application emerged as:

*The sequential search is to be applied when selecting new development allocations on a sub-area basis, with the urban areas being identified as the Primary and Secondary settlements within the respective sub-area.*

*Where there is an identified need within a given sub-area, one 'urban-area' within that sub-area could be prioritised over the others. This would mean brownfield and greenfield sites within and adjoining the 'prioritised' settlement must be considered prior to brownfield sites within the other urban areas within that sub-area. This could be for one, a selection or all development types.*

In addition, it was considered appropriate and more effective to include a number of additional criteria within the sequential approach. These criteria are:

- 1. The ability of the site to actively build or contribute towards creating mixed, sustainable communities, including retaining a diversity of uses within a settlement or neighbourhood;*
- 2. Proximity of the site to community services, public transport, cycling and walking routes; and*
- 3. The delivery of an environmentally sustainable development: the potential of the site to deliver a high proportion of embedded renewable energy, facilitate sustainable design or deliver a greater proportion of walking, cycling or public transport use for example.*

## Strategic Policies: Planning for Place

### Strategic Policy C: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

Climate change has moved up the political agenda in recent years; it is now seen as the greatest challenge facing the country. Since the publication of the Issues and Alternative Options Report, the Government has released Planning and Climate Change – an Annex to Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development. This provides clear policy direction which removes the need for a number of the detailed policies suggested in the Issues and Alternative Options Report.

This Strategic Policy seeks to mitigate and adapt to climate change through the following mechanisms:

- Increasing the district's renewable energy generation capacity;
- Requiring energy efficient developments throughout the district;
- Maximising the use of sustainable resources;
- Reducing the need to travel by car; and
- Enabling the district to adapt to climate change.

In doing so, this Strategic Policy builds upon the development strategy and contributes towards the delivery of the following Strategic Objectives: [SO1](#), [SO3](#), [SO7](#), [SO8](#), [SO9](#), [SO10](#), [SO11](#), [SO12](#), [SO14](#), [SO17](#) and [SO18](#).

#### • **Increasing the district's renewable energy generation capacity: Preferred Policy Approach**

Reducing the district's carbon emissions is essential in order to deliver national targets and achieve the Economic Strategy's aim for the district to have a carbon neutral economy by 2030. Increasing the district's renewable energy generation capacity plays an essential part in delivering these targets. The preferred approach emerged as:

*Establish on-site energy generation targets for new development based on firm viability evidence. Such targets should vary depending upon the size, nature and use of the development and ensure that a significant proportion of the energy supply for substantial new developments is delivered through renewable or non- or low carbon energy sources. In combination with the above, support will be given to proposals for new renewable and non- and low carbon energy supply systems to existing developments, to maximise the contribution of the existing built environment.*

*Also encourage and facilitate opportunities for utilising and expanding on existing and creating new renewable energy supply systems, identifying broad locations or specific sites where schemes will be acceptable in principle.*

#### • **Requiring energy efficient developments throughout the district: Preferred Policy Approach**

In addition to renewable and non- and low carbon energy supplies, carbon emissions can be reduced through the design, construction and materials of new developments. Building Regulations will play a large role in delivering national targets in relation to this, however, the planning process also presents an opportunity to contribute towards such targets.

*Encourage, facilitate and support proposals which would improve the energy efficiency and reduce the carbon emissions produced by existing buildings and any proposed extensions or alterations to them.*

*Secure the sustainable design and construction of new buildings by requiring developers to design and construct their developments in a sustainable manner using sustainable, local materials and encourage them to meet the requirements of a design standard of their choice at a level specified by the Council.*

In order to provide additional guidance and information in relation to sustainable design, construction and materials appropriate to Wear Valley it will be necessary to produce a [Supplementary Planning Document](#).

- **Maximising the use of sustainable resources: Preferred Policy Approach**

Planning and Climate Change, an Annex to Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, provides sufficient information and policy direction in relation to this matter. There is no need to include a policy within the Core Strategy.

- **Reducing the need to travel by car: Preferred Policy Approach**

In addition to directing new development towards the settlements which offer a range of services, facilities and infrastructure to best support it, as set out in the Locational and Development Strategy above, there are other policy approaches that the Council could adopt to reduce the need to travel by private car. The preferred approach has emerged as:

*Promote walking and cycling as a safe and healthy alternative to the car and support schemes which would improve the community's ability to travel by these means and encourage and support innovative solutions to public transport across the district and promote competitive alternatives to the car for those who live, work and visit the district.*

- **Enabling the district to adapt to climate change: Preferred Policy Approach**

As well as mitigating the impacts of climate change, the district, its communities, economy and natural and built environment must be able to adapt to climate change. In addition to the policies contained in Planning and Climate Change the preferred approach for doing so is:

*Minimise the threats of flooding by restricting unnecessary development in the floodplains, and areas prone to non-fluvial flooding and work with partners to formulate and implement strategies such as Flood Catchment Management Plans. This may require mapping key or sensitive areas, flood defence mechanisms or schemes or requiring contributions from developers to make the necessary improvements to the functional floodplain where the proposal would increase flood risk within the district. This approach would also minimise the impact of damage to the natural and built environment, agriculture and water resources through the implementation of proactive mitigation measures.*

## Strategic Policy D: Protecting and Enhancing the district's Environment

The Government and Council are both committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural environment in both urban and rural areas. The planning process plays a fundamental role in delivering this commitment. The condition of our surroundings has a direct impact upon our quality of life. Furthermore, the conservation and improvement of the natural and built environment can result in social and economic benefit for local communities.

This Strategic Policy seeks to protect and enhance the district's environment by:

- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation;
- Protecting and enhancing landscapes and townscapes;
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment; and
- Protecting and making prudent use of natural resources.

In doing so, this Strategic Policy builds upon the development strategy and contributes towards the delivery of the following Strategic Objectives: SO1, SO3, SO5, SO6 – SO14 and SO17.

- **Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation: Preferred Policy Approach**

The Core Strategy should embrace an integrated approach to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geological conservation. The preferred approach for doing so emerged as:

*Establish a strategic framework for the protection, restoration or creation of protected and priority habitats and species, as set out in the County Durham Biodiversity Action Plan and features of geological conservation interest. Identify on the proposals map designated sites and broad areas of interest.*

*In particular, promote and facilitate the reversal of habitat fragmentation and species isolation, particularly in the Local Biodiversity Target Zone in the west of the district.*

- **Protecting and enhancing landscapes and townscapes: Preferred Policy Approach**

Wear Valley has a diverse landscape and townscape of varying value and quality which has been shaped and influenced through natural processes and human and economic activities over a number of centuries. The high scenic value of the west of the district is reflected through the national designation of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The preferred approach for protecting and enhancing the quality of these diverse landscapes and townscapes within Wear Valley is:

*Promote and facilitate integrated management initiatives to sustain nationally, regionally and locally valued landscapes and townscapes within the district, for example by identifying them on the proposals map, and reflecting the objectives and policies as contained in the North Pennines Management Plan and the County Durham Landscape Strategy.*

*Establish criteria for the identification of landscape areas in need of restoration or other environmental improvement schemes;*

*Support the establishment of a strategic network of green infrastructure that links key features of environmental, community and economic value across the district, promoting their contribution towards landscapes and townscapes, biodiversity, recreation and leisure and the wider sustainable development agenda.*

- **Conserving and enhancing the historic environment: Preferred Policy Approach**

Wear Valley is steeped in features and areas of historic, architectural and cultural value. For the purposes of this policy area, these are considered to all fall within Wear Valley's historic environment. The preferred approach for conserving and enhancing the historic environment emerged as:

*Identify locally distinctive areas and characteristics that provide a context for locally distinctive developments, encourage developments to contribute towards a sense of place and support the refurbishment and re-use of appropriate dis-used or under-used buildings and incorporate them into local regeneration schemes.*

*Promote the regeneration benefits that conservation and heritage can have and deliver any area-based regeneration initiatives which build upon the district's heritage and culture. Maximise the conservation benefits that businesses, education and tourism can deliver in relation to the historic environment and support appropriate proposals.*

*Support proposals which contribute towards the implementation of Conservation Area Management Plans and develop criteria to prioritise their preparation and implementation.*

- **Protecting and making prudent use of natural resources: Preferred Policy Approach**

The preferred approach for protecting and making the prudent use of natural resources emerged as:

*Air and Water*

*Maintain the current levels of air and water quality, directing potentially polluting developments away from the more sensitive areas and features, such as the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation Areas.*

*In addition, seek to improve areas of poorer air and water quality; this will require the formulation of a criteria based policy to identify triggers for such action.*

*Land*

*Adopt a district-wide target of 65% of all new development to be delivered on previously developed land. However, it will be appropriate to adopt geographical variations which reflect the availability of brownfield sites within the three sub-areas.*

*Efficient use of land will also be delivered through the adoption of targets to secure residential developments of an appropriate density. A flexible approach, reflecting the characteristics of the three sub-areas and specific housing need will be developed in line with the criteria set out in national policy, as opposed to a blanket adoption of the statutory minimum requirement of 30 dwellings per hectare.*

## Strategic Policies: Planning for Prosperity

### Strategic Policy E: Delivering a Sustainable and Prosperous Economy

The district's economy operates from a narrow employment base. The Council aims to diversify this so that the district's economy is able to provide a range of jobs in key growth sectors. In order to deliver this, this Strategic Policy seeks to:

- Deliver a diverse and competitive local economy;
- Deliver a strong rural economy;
- Tap into the district's tourism potential; and
- Create vibrant towns and villages.

In doing so, this Strategic Policy builds upon the development strategy and contributes towards the delivery of the following Strategic Objectives: SO1, SO2, SO5, SO7, SO8, SO10, SO11, SO13, SO14, SO15, SO16, SO17 and SO18.

#### • **Deliver a diverse and competitive local economy: Preferred Policy Approach**

Wear Valley has a small economy which continues to suffer from declining employment in the traditional sectors. There is therefore the need to diversify the district's economy and facilitate economic growth to enable the district's economy to contribute towards the regional economy. The Issues and Alternative Options Report presented a number of complimentary options; the preferred option emerged as a combined approach of the following:

*Work in partnership with other local and regional agencies to support and facilitate the development of flagship proposals and key employment sites and to ensure the timely delivery of key infrastructure, such as services and broadband, to sites and areas where there is an identified need.*

*Encourage and facilitate proposals which contribute towards an increase in enterprise and entrepreneurial activity or boost the productivity of local businesses. Build upon the objectives of the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative.*

*Reflect the Economic Strategy's aim for the district to have a carbon neutral economy by 2030,. This should be delivered by encouraging and supporting proposals for new economic investment which are innovative and 'green' in terms of their self-sufficiency and design and their use of science, local materials, goods, labour and services and ensuring that renewable energy and sustainable design and construction play a key role in new economic developments and proposals.*

*In addition to the above, it will be necessary to adopt a pipeline approach to the release of suitable and developable employment sites in order to stimulate market interest and meet the requirements of the changing economic needs of the district.*

#### • **Deliver a strong rural economy: Preferred Policy Approach**

In recent years the district's rural economy has experienced a number of set backs. The Renewing Weardale Strategy emerged as the Council's and key stakeholders' response to such events. It is important that the Local Development Framework supports and builds upon the Renewing Weardale Strategy to deliver a strong rural economy to help sustain the district's rural communities. The preferred option in relation to this has emerged as:

*Bring forward and promote the development of Eastgate Renewable Energy Village as the key driver of sustainable economic growth in Weardale and the wider district, and support proposals linked to the Eastgate development. Eastgate Renewable Energy Village will be contained within the Core Strategy as a Strategic Site.*

*Support and enhance the district's traditional rural economy by supporting well-conceived agricultural, farm diversification, equine related and other rural based enterprises where they contribute towards sustaining the rural economy and community; and*

*Reflect the economy based policies within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan.*

- **Tap into the district's tourism potential: Preferred Policy Approach**

Despite its considerable natural and cultural assets, opportunities for outdoor activities and its abundant wildlife, biodiversity and heritage, the district does not enjoy a high profile as a visitor destination. This Strategic Policy seeks to tap into the district's potential as a tourist destination. The preferred option has emerged as:

*Maximise the advantages which tourism can bring to the district's settlements by acknowledging the role it can play in supporting essential services and community facilities and in regeneration or mixed-use schemes, especially in the district's more rural areas.*

*This should be facilitated by building upon the tourist potential of the environmental, historical and cultural assets of Weardale and Bishop Auckland in particular, and reflected through appropriate policies and allocations; and*

*In addition, develop links within the district and to and between other tourism destinations throughout the region, to promote the district's tourism offer and potential.*

- **Create vibrant towns and villages: Preferred Policy Approach**

The Development Strategy will play a key role in creating vibrant towns and villages. The preferred option which emerged (as set out below) clearly reflects many aspects contained within the preferred option for the Locational and Development Strategy.

*Regenerate and enhance Bishop Auckland and develop its position as a key service sector for the county and facilitate the delivery of the Bishop Auckland Urban Renaissance Master Plan including supporting and enhancing the town's evening economy;*

*Reflect the Economic Strategy's commitment to delivering the Stanhope Market Town's Initiative; and*

*Tap into the regeneration benefits which retail and other commercial developments can bring to towns and villages by protecting the range of services, facilities and job opportunities they offer and by directing retail developments towards those towns identified as being in need of revitalisation.*

## Strategic Policy F: Declaring Area Action Plans

Area Action Plans are key planning documents which can form part of the Local Development Framework, if there is an identified need. National Planning Policy establishes the circumstances within which Area Action Plans can be declared.

A Strategic Policy relating to the declaration of Area Action plans will help to deliver the development strategy and contribute towards the delivery of the following Strategic Objectives: SO2, SO3, SO5, SO11, SO12, SO13, SO15, SO16, SO17 and SO18.

The preferred option for declaring Area Action Plans emerged as follows:

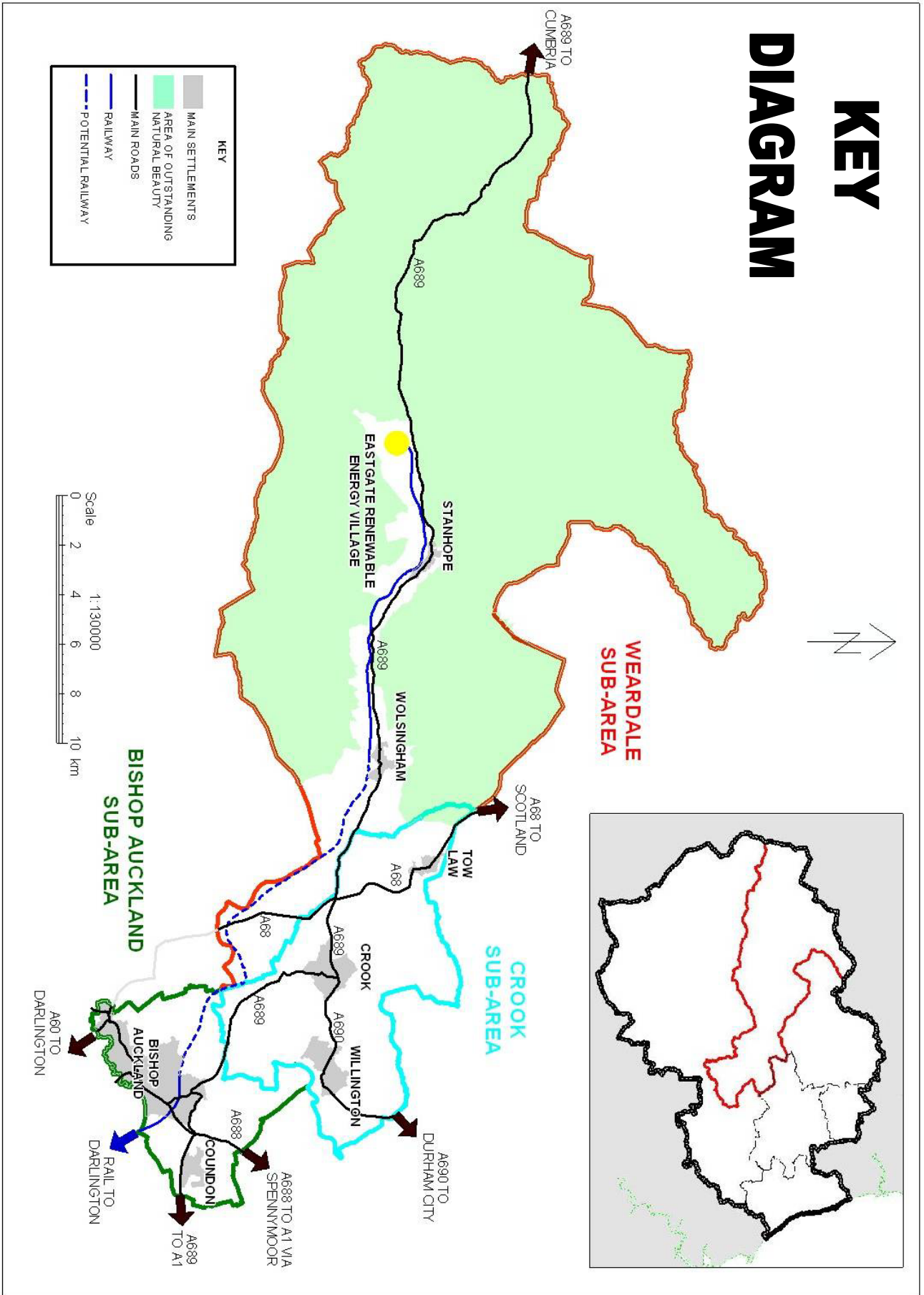
*Area Action Plans will be pursued in the following priority order:*

- 1. Protecting areas particularly sensitive to change;*
- 2. Delivering planned growth areas;*
- 3. Stimulating regeneration;*
- 4. Focusing the delivery of area based regeneration initiatives; and*
- 5. Resolving conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressures.*

*Where an area meets more than one of these criteria it should become the priority.*



# Key Diagram



## Key differences between the current and proposed development strategies

Key differences between the proposed and the current development strategy, as set out in Part One of the Wear Valley District Local Plan:

- The proposed Development Strategy is based on the three sub-areas within the district to ensure a locally distinctive approach which reflects local character and issues is delivered;
- The proposed Development Strategy reflects the priority awarded to Bishop Auckland, Crook, Willington and Stanhope as areas for growth or rural Service Centres for the district as established in the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- There is no longer a 'blanket approach' to the way in which the settlements within the three tiers of the settlement hierarchy are addressed. Development will be distributed and allocated in terms of the role, scale, character and needs of each settlement;
- The roles of Stanhope, Wolsingham and Tow Law are enhanced in the new Development Strategy to reflect the locational and sequential strategy as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy and to ensure the specific issues within these settlements are addressed;
- A local needs based approach, led by the evidence base, is adopted in the 'other settlements' within the proposed Development Strategy. New growth is only to be directed towards these settlements where it cannot be accommodated in the primary and secondary settlements within the sub-area; and
- The proposed Development Strategy specifies the proportion of new development to be directed towards each of the three sub-areas, based on the scale and nature of the sub-areas, the views that emerged at the consultee workshops held at the start of the Local Development Framework process, and reflecting the successful Growth Point bid.

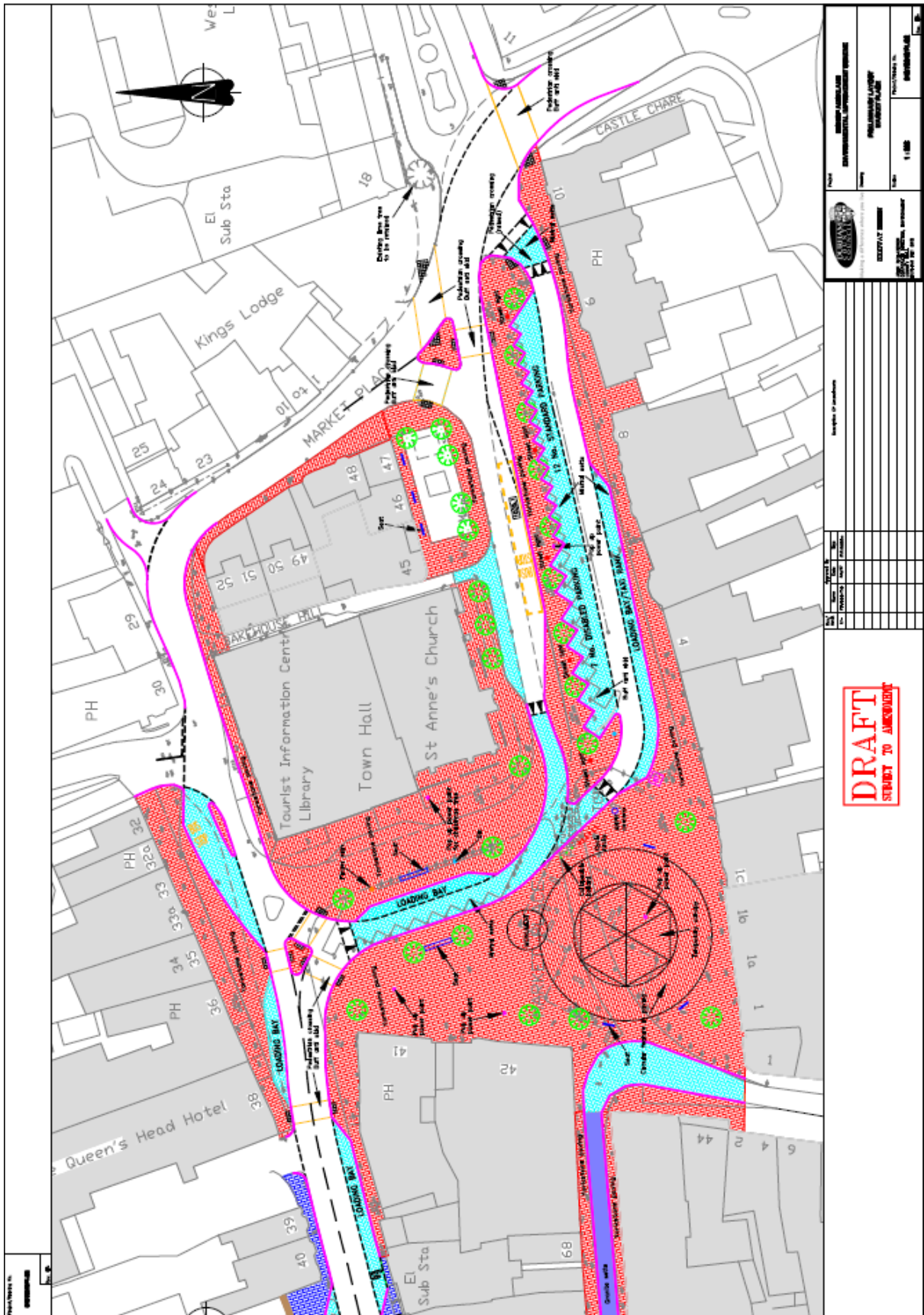
It is also proposed that a [Supplementary Planning Document](#) be prepared which sets out what will be considered an appropriate scale of development within the 'other settlements', how to consider cumulative impacts and monitoring implications.



## Criteria for determining the 'Limits to Development'

	Criteria
1.	<p><b>Position of settlement in hierarchy</b>            'Limits to Development' should only normally be established for those settlements where development is to be acceptable in principle; these settlements are the settlements specifically named within the three sub-area Development Strategies.</p>
2.	<p><b>Lines of communication</b>            Boundaries should be on the side of the built-up area so excluding roads, paths, railways and other lines of communication;</p>
3.	<p><b>Physical features</b>            Boundaries should follow physical features, field boundaries or curtilages, although this may not always be practicable.</p>
4.	<p><b>Land with planning permission</b>            The boundaries should include land with extant planning permission, whether or not development has commenced.</p>
5.	<p><b>Site allocations</b>            Boundaries should include allocated sites which have not yet obtained planning permission, unless there are sound planning reasons to justify a change from this approach.</p>
6.	<p><b>Areas of open land on the edge of built up areas</b>            A "25 metres rule" should be applied, whereby the maximum garden length is 25 metres. If the curtilage is just beyond 25 metres this should normally be used instead. Where a narrow row of gardens are different lengths the mean length of 25 metres should be used.</p>
7.	<p><b>Large institutional buildings and associated grounds</b>            In relation to institutional buildings, such as hospitals, schools and village halls, the boundaries should be drawn tightly around existing buildings excluding playing fields, sports pitches and hard standings, unless they are enclosed by the built-up area.</p>
8.	<p><b>Farm Buildings</b>            All farm buildings on the periphery of the settlement should be excluded from the built-up area unless they are seen to have development potential in association with their proximity to the urban area.</p>
9.	<p><b>Caravan sites</b>            Caravan sites on the edge of settlements will be excluded from the built-up area, unless there is a specific intention to allow development for other purposes.</p>

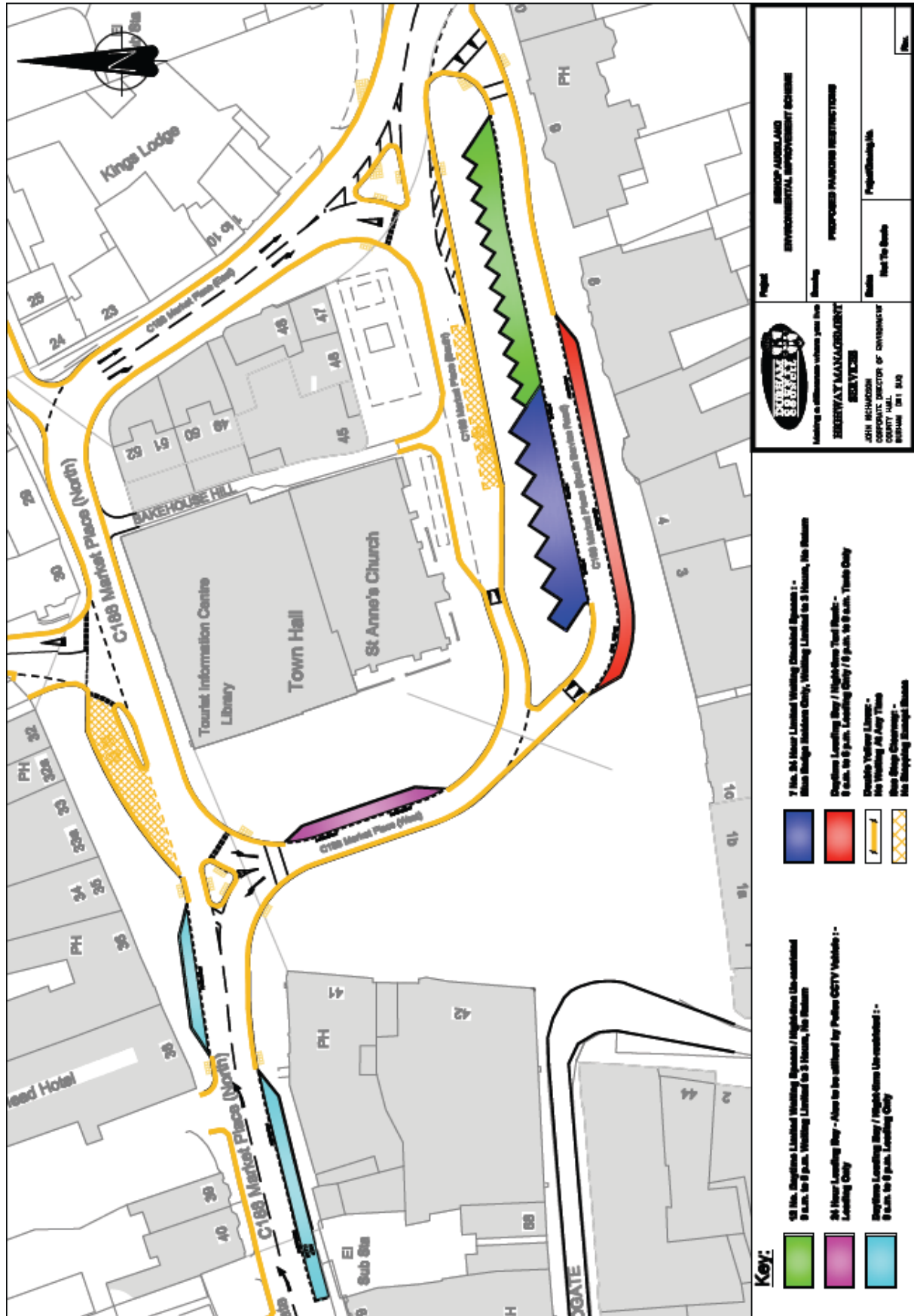




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Checked by	WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT
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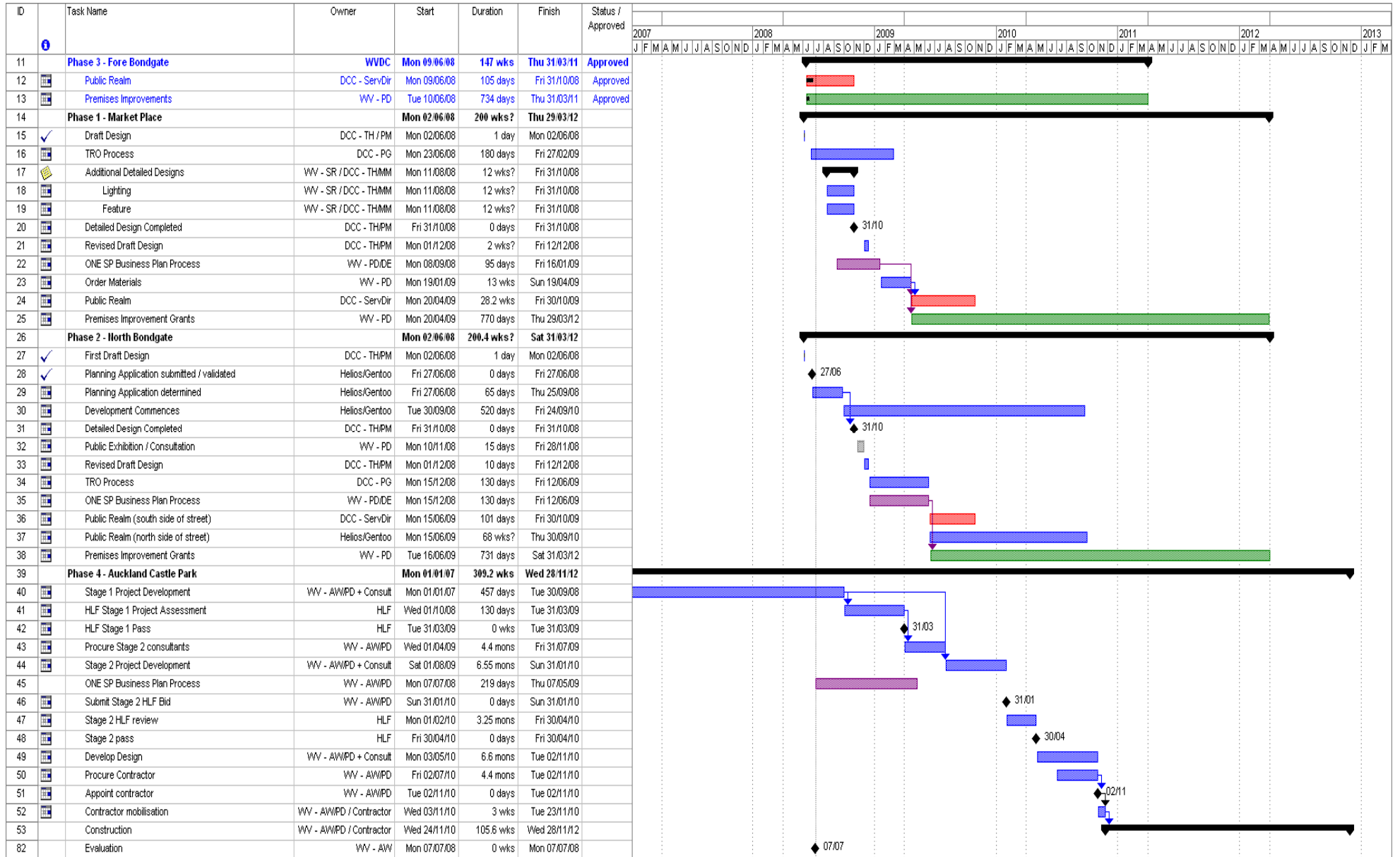
**DRAFT**  
STREET TO AMBULATORY



**Key:**

- 24 Hr. Buses Limited Waiting Spaces / Night-time Un-restricted 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Waiting Limited to 3 Hours, No Bikes
- 24 Hour Loading Bay - Also to be utilized by Police CCTV Vehicle Loading Only
- Buses Limited Bay / Night-time Un-restricted 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Loading Only
- 7 Hr. 24 Hour Limited Waiting Spaces 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Loading Only / 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Trade Only
- Pedestrian Loading Bay / Night-time Trade Only 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Loading Only / 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Trade Only
- Double Yellow Lines - No Waiting At Any Time
- Bus Stop Clearway - No Stopping Except Buses
- Cycle Lane

 <p><b>PURBAY &amp; ASSOCIATES</b>  <small>Leading in solutions wherever you are</small></p> <p><b>SEWERAGE MANAGEMENT</b>  <small>REX V.I.C.</small></p> <p><b>JOSH WILKINSON</b>  <small>CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT</small>          COMPANY HALL          800/444 181 840</p>	<p><b>Project</b> BAKESOP AUBURN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME</p> <p><b>Drawing</b> PROPOSED PARKING IMPROVEMENTS</p> <p><b>Date</b> 16th Feb 2016</p> <p><b>Prepared by</b> J.W.</p>
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# ANNEX 9



## Auckland Castle Park Outline Proposals



- 1 Conservation and conversion of Lodge to provide Castle Lodge Gateway Centre.
- 2 Upgrade park entrance. Restore iron railings and gates along entrance drive.
- 3 Consolidation of Walled Garden retaining wall.
- 4 Restore stone steps and recessed arch for public access and reinstate gate onto driveway.
- 5 New Car Park.
- 6 Play Provision.

- 7 Footpath upgrade:
  - Main Route Park Entrance to Deer Shelter and Trevor's Bridge.
  - Improve footpath links into Auckland Walk and other dedicated footpaths.
  - Wishing Temple Walk/Ramble.
  - New link to footpath leading to Binchester.
- 8 Temple- site interpretation.
- 9 Recreate footbridge over Gearless at bottom of Broad Walk.

- 10 Restore Trevor's Bridge and produce record drawings.
- 11 Restore kissing gate, and replace fence at Trevor's Bridge.
- 12 Further investigate Ice House and provide grille for public viewing. Conserv.
- 13 Restore culvert to Coundon Burn and railings.
- 14 Rebuild footbridge over Coundon Burn and remove vegetation.
- 15 Reinstate north-south footpath axis from Pyramid to Coundon Burn and restore crossing over Coundon Burn.

- 16 Produce record drawings of the Pyramid.
- 17 Restore farm bridge access.
- 18 Provide park furniture, signage and interpretation including waymarkers for park features and footpaths.
- 19 Interpretation and Education.
- 20 Arts Strategy.
- 21 Preparation of 10 year Management and maintenance Plan.





**WEAR  
VALLEY**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Visioning for the Wear Valley  
Working Neighbourhoods Fund  
2008-2011**

**FINAL REPORT**  
July 2008

**Prepared by**

Kevyn Smith  
Steve Camm  
**The KSA Partnership**  
**2008**

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# 1. Introduction and context

## The context for this report

### *1.1 The KSA Partnership was appointed in June 2008 to:*

- **Evaluate funded Neighbourhood Renewal Projects (NRF) 2006-08** to determine their impact on the economic and employment agenda in Wear Valley, identify those interventions that have proved most effective and determine how the targeting, coordination and delivery of programmes can best be supported
- **Evaluate the fit of these projects with the Regional Employability Framework**, identify gaps in provision and highlight and prioritise the issues to be addressed in moving forward with the Working Neighbourhood Fund 2008-11.
- **Facilitate and support the LSP in shaping a vision and identifying priorities for the Working Neighbourhoods Fund 2008-11** in Wear Valley including opportunities for commissioning activity across multiple local authority areas.

## Wear Valley

### *1.2 A Picture of Wear Valley:*

- Wear Valley covers a large geographical area (195 square miles) over half of which is in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The main towns of Bishop Auckland and Crook in the east are close to regional communications networks but most of the rural west is more remote.
- It is sparsely populated with diverse urban and rural communities. Most of the 62,300 population live in the urban east of the district.
- Agriculture and tourism are the main industries in the rural parts of the district whereas engineering and manufacturing are the key industries in the urban east.
- Unemployment and levels of deprivation are relatively high compared to other areas. The health of the local population is poor and many who claim benefits do so because of ill health.
- Worklessness is a significant problem in this community as the data in tables 1 to 6 (provided by Wear Valley District Council) illustrates. From 2002 to 2007 there has been a significant improvement and Wear Valley has moved from Amber/Red to Green in Government Office for the North East assessments.

Table 1: Economically Inactive Working Age Population

	2003		2004		2005		2006		2007	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Great Britain	7,656,700	21.7	7,691,500	21.8	7,667,900	21.7	7,696,500	21.7	7,644,700	21.5
North East	404,000	26.5	390,500	25.6	385,300	25.3	377,900	24.8	362,600	23.8
County Durham	89,000	29.6	88,400	29.6	79,400	26.6	77,900	26.1	67,000	22.5
Wear Valley	13,000	34.8	11,400	31.2	8,800	24.2	8,800	24.2	7,800	21.6

Table 2: Incapacity Benefit (IB) Claimants (Nov 2007)

	2005		2006		2007	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Great Britain	2,771,420	7.4	2,717,840	7.3	2,673,240	7.2
North East	178,290	10.9	170,970	10.5	164,520	10.1
County Durham	38,900	12.3	36,860	11.9	35,540	11.4
Wear Valley	4,790	12.8	4,830	12.8	4,670	12.4

Table 3: Duration of IB Claimants in Wear Valley (May 2007)

Duration	Male	Female	Total
Less than 6 months	0	0	385
6 months up to 1 year	0	0	265
1 year and up to 2 years	0	0	380
2 years and up to 5 years	0	0	980
5 years and over	0	0	2820
Column Total	0	0	4830

Table 4: Lone Parent Claimants (Nov 2007) (DWP benefit claimants-working age Group)

Area	Lone Parent Claimants
Great Britain	2
North East	2.3
Wear Valley	2.6

Table 5: Job Seekers Allowance (May 2008)(ONS Claimant Count)

Area	Job Seekers Allowance Claimants
Great Britain	2.2
North East	3.1
Wear Valley	2.9

Table 6: Employment Rate – Working Age (Sept 2007) (ONS Annual Pop Survey Oct 2006-Sept 2007)

Area	Employment rate - working age (%)
Great Britain	74.3
North East	71.5
Wear Valley	73.6

- The statistics below further illustrate the scale of the employability agenda within the District of Wear Valley, with skills attainment being particular low and is well known as a barrier for those wanting to return/join the labour market:

- 12.4% of the working age population in Wear Valley claim Incapacity Benefit, compared to 10.1% at a regional level and 7.2% nationally (Nov 2007).
- In 2007, only 48% of 16 year olds achieved 5+ GCSEs at grades A\*-C, national average of 56%.
- Skill levels are also lower in the District in relation to NVQ level 2-4 attainment (Jan 2006-Dec 2006):

**NVQ1+**

Wear Valley – 79.7%      NE – 79.3%      GB – 77.8%

**NVQ2+**

Wear Valley – 60.5%      NE – 64.1%      GB – 63.8%

**NVQ3+**

Wear Valley – 40.4%      NE – 42.8%      GB – 45.3%

**NVQ4+**

Wear Valley – 19.6%      NE – 22.7%      GB – 27.4%

- In April 2008 Wear Valley/Teesdale had 251 young people in the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) category.
- 15.6% of the district's working age population have no qualifications, compared to a national average of 13.8% (Jan 2006-Dec 2006)



### *1.3 Factors to overcome in Wear Valley:*

- **Deprivation.** Wear Valley is the most deprived rural area in the country but things are improving. Nine Super Output Areas are in the top 10% most deprived in England for Multiple Deprivation. There are significant pockets of income and employment deprivation.
- **High worklessness.** Fewer people are on benefit than two years ago but large numbers receive either Jobseekers Allowance or Incapacity Benefit.
- **Low aspirations and attainment.** Educational attainment is below the national average and typically young people have low aspirations. But, young people's attitudes are shifting and there are more learning and skills opportunities available to people of all ages.
- **Access to services.** Improving transport has been a priority in improving access to services.

## National and local strategy

### *1.4 Changes to benefits arrangements*

Changes in benefit arrangements being introduced in the near future in line with the Welfare Green Paper will create the impetus of more people to move into employment including:

- Employment support for those currently on incapacity benefit
- More intensive Job Seekers Allowance in first year
- Better of in work credits
- Changes to family benefit for single parent families

### *1.5 Working Neighbourhoods Fund*

The following key themes have been interpreted from the Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF) guidelines:

- **Targeting areas of high worklessness** and ensuring a renewed focus on worklessness.
- **The need for collaboration** from local government, employers, Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council and local communities in designing and delivering local solutions that work. (In County Durham this could also potentially include collaborations across districts where needs are similar).
- **A focus on improving skill levels and getting people back to work** because this is key to improving their lives and tackling poverty.
- **An expectation that Local Strategic Partnerships use WNF to support Local Area Agreements** especially in tackling worklessness and increasing enterprise.

- **The need for innovation** to get as many people as possible into work.
- **The need to mainstream successful WNF funded initiatives.**

### 1.6 Regional Employability Framework

The Regional Employability Framework (REF) provides a framework for partners to support an individual's journey to work. It is clear about:

- Significantly increasing employment in the region
- Reducing the number on benefits
- Targeting those who are furthest away from the labour market and overcoming the significant barriers they face in entering learning and employment and supporting them to remain there and progress.
- Partners to work together to deliver more coherent provision to people who are workless.

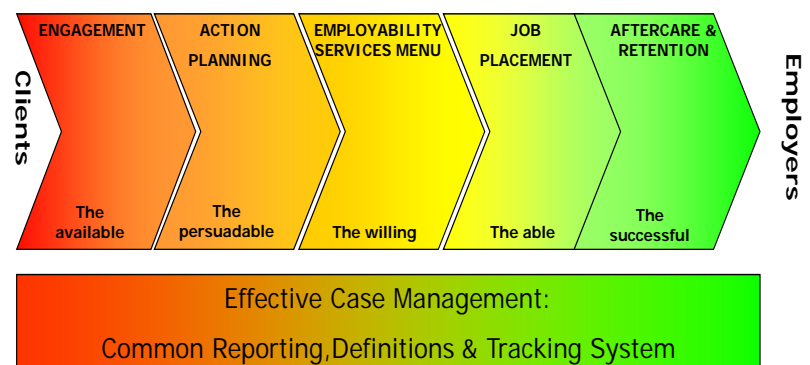


Figure 1: The Regional Employability Framework

### ***1.7 County Durham's Local Area Agreement***

WNF provision must be in line with Local Area Agreement priorities. Relevant indicators are:

- **NI 151** Overall employment rate
- **NI 152** Working age population on benefits
- **NI 164** proportion of working age population qualified to Level 3 or above
- **NI 175** Access to services by public transport
- **NI 79** Achievement of level 2 by age 19
- **NI 117** 16-18 NEETs
- **NI 171** New business registration rate
- **NI 173** Flows on to incapacity benefit from employment
- **LOCAL** Number of people with a mental health problem progressing from employment support into education, training, volunteering and employment

There are also a number of statutory and early year's education indicators.

In addition 2008 will see movement towards a Unitary Authority for County Durham in which the current administrative Boundaries for Wear Valley will disappear. Consideration needs to be given to the operation of Working Neighbourhood Funding within this wider County context.

## 1.8 Sustainable Community Plan for Wear Valley 2030<sup>1</sup>

Selected Outcomes from the plan relevant to building a commissioning approach to WNF to tackle worklessness include:

- **Residents of all ages actively influence policy and service development and implementation.** Activities include a Participation Strategy agreed by LSP partners, a Protocol for Community Engagement at the neighbourhood level and various community engagement mechanisms (e.g. website, newsletters).
- **Fewer super output areas in the worst 10% nationally.** This will require improved targeting of interventions and alignment with Neighbourhood Profiles and Local Area Agreement.
- **More people with qualifications including basic skills.** To be achieved through community based learning and training programmes and employer engagement programmes. Supported using resources including LSC, Adult and Family Learning and Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI).
- **More Modern Apprentices** lead by Children's Trust
- **Reducing worklessness.** Targeting those on Job Seekers Allowance or Incapacity Benefit in the most deprived areas and aiming to improve skills and access to employment.
- **More sustainable new business starts** supported by the Enterprise Agency for Teesdale and Wear Valley.
- **Increase in job opportunities** including improvements to existing infrastructure to attract new companies into the dale and support existing ones to grow.
- **Improved sustainable transport** that helps residents access services

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<sup>1</sup>Wear Valley LSP – Sustainable Community Plan for Wear Valley 2030 (Nov 2007)

Other notable sustainable community plan outcomes focus on health and wellbeing, affordable homes and crime which are all linked to worklessness.

## 2. Delivering Neighbourhood Renewal Fund 2006-08

### *2.1 How was NRF funding used?*

The levels of deprivation and economic performance of Wear Valley releases resources aimed at tackling worklessness and economic regeneration. Between 2006 and 2008 significant investment was made through funding available under Neighbourhood Renewal.

Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) was to contribute towards to addressing the National Floor Target relating to employment rate which in 2006 stood at 60.9 in Wear Valley compared to a national average of 74.2% and by 2007 stood at 73.3% in Wear Valley compared to a national average of 74.3%.

In 2005 and 2006 Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership commissioned NRF worklessness spend through a call for project proposals. Management and monitoring of the approved projects was done on a neighbourhood basis and community based "Neighbourhood Arrangements" were developed for this purpose. At inception, the 2006-2008 programme was assessed by representatives from each of the Local Strategic Partnership thematic groups and was re-active to the bids coming forward.

The programme was delivered by a range of organisations, working in an informal partnership under the 'Choices' brand.

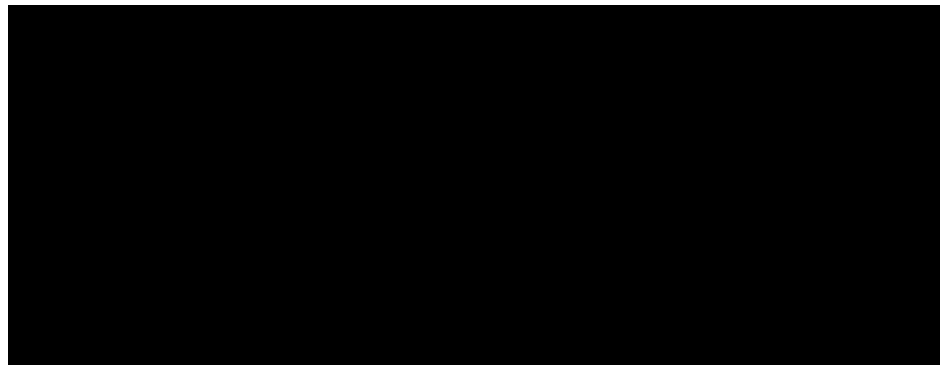
A district wide co-ordinating body, the Wear Valley Employability Forum chaired by the deputy Chair of the LSP emerged initially on an informal basis to co-ordinate project implementation and to

help organisations working on employability to provide a joined up seamless programme of activities.

The coordinating body developed an initial framework for implementation (a forerunner of the Regional Employability Framework) that helped to align programme activity and refocus project activity and delivery took place.

In the event, the apportionment of NRF funding was as follows:

[Table 7 Final apportionment of NRF Funding](#)

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The NRF programme ran in conjunction with a range of other related programme activity. A total of 58 projects received either Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Safer Stronger Communities Fund – Neighbourhood Element or Liveability Funding during the period. A total of 34 projects were NRF funded. The overall spend profile for worklessness related project funding as at 31st March 2008 (LSP7/7) was as follows:

[Table 8 Overall spend profile for worklessness related project in Wear Valley as at March 2008](#)



<u>Funding Stream</u>	<u>Allocation</u>	<u>Claim</u>
NRF	£2,335,206	£2,335,206
NRF 2006/7 Carryover	£189,148	£189,148
SSCF	£581,000	£581,000
SSCF 2006/7 Carryover	£5,836	£5,836
Liveability	£1,130,000	£1,130,000
Liveability 2006/7 Carryover	£28,945	£28,945
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,270,135</b>	<b>£4,270,135</b>

## *2.2 What were the priorities and how were they decided?*

Economic and employment aspects of deprivation were identified as a priority and were the major drivers for funded interventions.

## *2.3 Performance and impact of projects 2006-08*

NRF performance information is summarised in table 9.

Points to note:

- **Performance was achieved or exceeded in almost every case.**
- **High Performers:**
  - Routeway to Employment (ILM achieved 86 / target 75 and into work achieved 36/ target 25)
  - Encouraging Enterprise (job opportunities achieved 111.5/ target 30)
  - Wear Valley Employment Team (Job entry achieved 257/ target 90)
  - Learning to Work (first steps 271/200, basic skills achieved 245/ target 200, level 2 achieved 84/ target 50, and Family Learning achieved 65/ target 30)
- **Short fall:**

- Vibrant Industrial Estates (jobs created achieved 28/ target 30)
- Employer Engagement (referrals achieved 47/ target 50)
- Learning to Work (volunteering achieved 108/ target 120 and job search 72/140)
- Tow Law Renewal (employment rate achieved 8/ target 11 and Level 2 achievement achieved 37/ target 50)
- Learning with Sport (Level 1 accreditation achieved 95/ target 155)

Table 9 Performance of NRF Programmes 2006-08



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#### ***2.4 What added value was secured from NRF?***

Evaluation of the 2006-08 NRF programme (based on a review of project documentation, performance data and interviews with LSP and delivery partners) indicates:

- There has been a direct impact on floor targets relating to employment rate as the tables in annex 1 illustrate.
- The employability focus of Community led initiatives has been strengthened through the work of the Wear Valley Employability Forum.
- The Wear Valley Employability Forum emerged as a working delivery partnership capable of coordinating delivery across the LSP area underpinned by a signed memorandum of understanding.
- Provision for independent Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) was put in place.
- The programme has become more impact focused and performance related as the progress was reviewed and targets revised through the Wear Valley Employability Forum.
- A common framework for delivery was established. This preceded the Regional Employability Framework, aligns with it and provided a sound foundation for commissioning when projects were reviewed for continuation.
- Interim arrangements for 2008-10 were commissioned based on performance and contribution – as a precursor to a full commissioning approach

#### ***2.5 Continuation of NRF projects April – October 2008***

Progress on NRF projects was reviewed by the Wear Valley Employability Forum in the light of performance. Performing projects were selected for continuation under Working

Neighbourhood Funds initially for a 6 month period and targets agreed. This provided time to support development of a full commissioning model and explore the possibility of, and opportunities for links to a cross district approach to some aspects of delivery.

### WNF continuation project portfolio

The following project portfolio was carried forward April – October 2008 under working neighbourhoods:

Table 10 Working Neighbourhoods Fund Continuation Project Portfolio

Project	Allocation	Output 08-09	Lead Organisation
Routeway to Employment	250176	1) 60 participants 32 job entries 10 moving into further training or education from the project	GWD
		2)16 participants 9 job entries 3 moving into further training or education	
Workspace Investment	43000	1175 sq m improved floorspace 20 Job opportunities created	WVDC
Vibrant Industrial Estates	10000	60 Investment enquiries	WVDC
Encouraging Enterprise	25000	25 Job opportunities created	WVDC
Business Development	67000	6 events; 100 businesses attended 40 members 15 potential business starts 2 Programmes 100 businesses supported 25 businesses with measureable performance improvement 15 jobs created	EAWVT
Employer Engagement	80000	2 advisers 250 opportunities with employers 3 options from LEP programme being progressed	EAWVT
Action Team for Jobs	67000	80 Job Entries	WVDC
Learning to Work	158000	70 Accessing first step learning 40 ready to progress to level 1 60 registered to volunteering 30 volunteers into placement	BaColl
Tow Law Renewal	20625	15 people achieving level 2 literacy 15 achieving level 2 numeracy 15 referrals to IAG	TLCA
Learning with Sport in Wear Valley	51000	25 referrals to IAG 50 people accessing level 1 & 2 3 people into work 1 thematic event 4 events held in target SOAs	2D
Coundon Community Transport	14500	Deliver people to training-1000 person trips to or from training delivery of driver training recruitment event x 1 event 3 driver qualifications participants of driver training event to be referred to IAG	CLCP
Dene Valley Community Transport	29420	Deliver people to training-1000 person trips to or from training delivery of driver training recruitment event x 1 event 3 driver qualifications participants of driver training event to be referred to IAG	DVCT

## 3. Evaluating what worked and what needs to work better?

### *3.1 Employability Stakeholder views on what worked in delivering the NHR worklessness programme 2006-08*

In discussion, Local Strategic Partnership partners and delivery and strategic partners (including Jobcentre Plus) commented on the following features:

- **Individualised support is the key to success.** Things worked best when we were focussed on the needs of people rather than programme outcomes.
- **The partnership model to delivery adopted by the Wear Valley Employability Forum (WVEF) contributed significantly** both to better alignment of projects, greater achievement of impact, output targets and deployment of funding. This led to targets being exceeded and funds fully deployed.
- **Through the WVEF, projects were refined and changed** as gaps, overlaps and performance improvement needs were identified. This flexible approach strengthened performance and helped to tailor investment.
- **Engagement targets were exceeded.** Effective engagement was founded on good sustainable relationships with people. There are a number of useful community level mechanisms able to support this, including Community Partnerships. Community Partnerships are well placed to build such relationships and support people at an individual level when things don't work out. Coordination and support for Community

Partnership involvement through the Community Network had been useful.

- **The Wear Valley Employment Team worked well** in managing the interface with Jobcentre Plus and in providing alternative mechanisms for community engagement.
- The creation of a partnership **mechanism to provide independent Information Advice and Guidance** linked to project activities and national quality standards such as the Matrix standard level was very useful.
- **Investing in local community partnership** capability to engage and provide solutions tailored to local experience and skills worked well.
- The **links to wider programmes of investment** (learning and skills, disadvantaged neighbourhoods, enterprise and business support) were made through members of the WVEF members and LSP, although this is an area where more could be done. The involvement of Connexions was useful in this respect.
- The Enterprise Agency was able to **strengthen employer involvement through tailored packages of support** (Human Resources advice, staff planning, recruitment support, contracts, links to Jobcentre Plus and advertising jobs) replicating the features of Jobcentre Plus incentives packages and Local Employer Partnerships for small companies.
- Partners generally felt that the **delivery of employability support programmes both within NRF and through mainstream programmes was well catered for**. The priorities lay in sustaining quality here and focussing on the engagement and aftercare aspects of the Regional Employability Framework.

### *3.2 Stakeholder views on things to work at*

A number of areas were identified by partners where more could be done to ensure greater impact with WNF. These included:

- **Ensuring that sustainable jobs and tackling worklessness are the primary drivers for funded activity.** This is the priority focus of Working Neighbourhoods Fund and also the key that unlocks progress on other outcomes in the Local Area Agreement (crime, health and wellbeing).
- **People are suspicious of programmes,** it takes time to build up trust and confidence and we need to recognise that people may need a few go's before they get to something that works for them.
- **Accessing quality independent Information, Advice and Guidance and effective intensive support.** There were co-ordination problems and referrals were an issue. It is crucial that clients receive advice that propels them into the most appropriate activity in the array of activities on offer. Providers and people in communities need an up to date awareness of what is available. The service needs to:
  - Be independent and of high quality
  - Match clients with the most appropriate activities for them
  - Work for the client not the delivery organisations
  - Ensure that only most vulnerable clients need intensive support workers
  - Provide expert up-to-date benefits advice
  - Recognise most clients use project staff for support



- **Strengthening the role and contribution of community groups** to take responsibility for helping to increase the numbers of people from their community who are in work. This will fundamentally improve the cohesion and capacity of the community, improve the social conditions and reduce crime & anti social behaviour.
- **Improving referral between partners and provision.**  
The links between the levels of the employability framework, between individual strands of activity and contribution, and better work on WNF and other programmes and mainstream provision needs to be strengthened.
- **The focus should be on better engagement, placement and sustainability in employment.** There is sufficient choice of programmes once people engage with Jobcentre Plus. Development should focus on assisting more clients through existing programmes, and on Job Placement, aftercare and retention.
- **Models for employer engagement through Jobcentre Plus Local Employer Partnerships work well for large companies. Small companies are not fully engaged.** Jobs created by local businesses are not being accessed by people at the local level. The focus needs to be on improving engagement with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and increasing the volume of job opportunities accessed locally.
- **Ensure an effective and coordinated commissioning process**  

The approach needs to separate funding decisions from coordination of delivery. It also needs to combat:

  - Different funding streams set up by different organisations to do the same work in the same area.

- Funding lead in times which are usually too short to allow a proper commissioning process so that programme design phase suffers.
- Funding streams which often have too short a duration so that programmes are just getting bedded in when they are stopped.
- **Links with other community interest partners at the strategic level.** There is significant opportunity to align work on employability with work on housing, health, skills and to better exploit the community structures in these areas to support the employment agenda.
- **Breaking the funding culture.** Wear Valley has been supported with economic and community regeneration funds including SRB, NRF and other initiatives and parts of the district now receive WNF. It depends on this funding because opportunities to mainstream programmes are limited once external funding stops. Projects therefore become dependent on continuation funding from new initiatives.
- **Delivering through a period of change and uncertainty.** Wear Valley is one of seven districts in County Durham currently moving to unitary status bringing uncertainty and change for organisations but not for the challenges facing local residents which remain the same.

### ***3.3 How projects in Wear Valley contribute to the REF***

Building on the Regional Employability Framework and similar frameworks in Sedgefield and East Durham, a Wear Valley Employability Framework has been developed to provide a framework for commissioning in Wear Valley. The portfolio of continuation projects has been mapped against this framework, impact outputs suggested and possible areas for development identified.

The map of continuation projects against the Wear Valley Employability Framework is set out in Figure 2. Figure 3 again uses the Wear Valley Employability Framework and summarises how the outputs of the continuation projects map against it. Finally it will be important to position the WNF investment against other mainstream activity and funded programmes such as Single Programme so that it adds value. Figure 4 presents an initial map of these mainstream and other funded activities which focus on worklessness in Wear Valley again linked to the employability framework.

*Figure 2 : Fit of the continuation projects to the Regional Employability Framework*

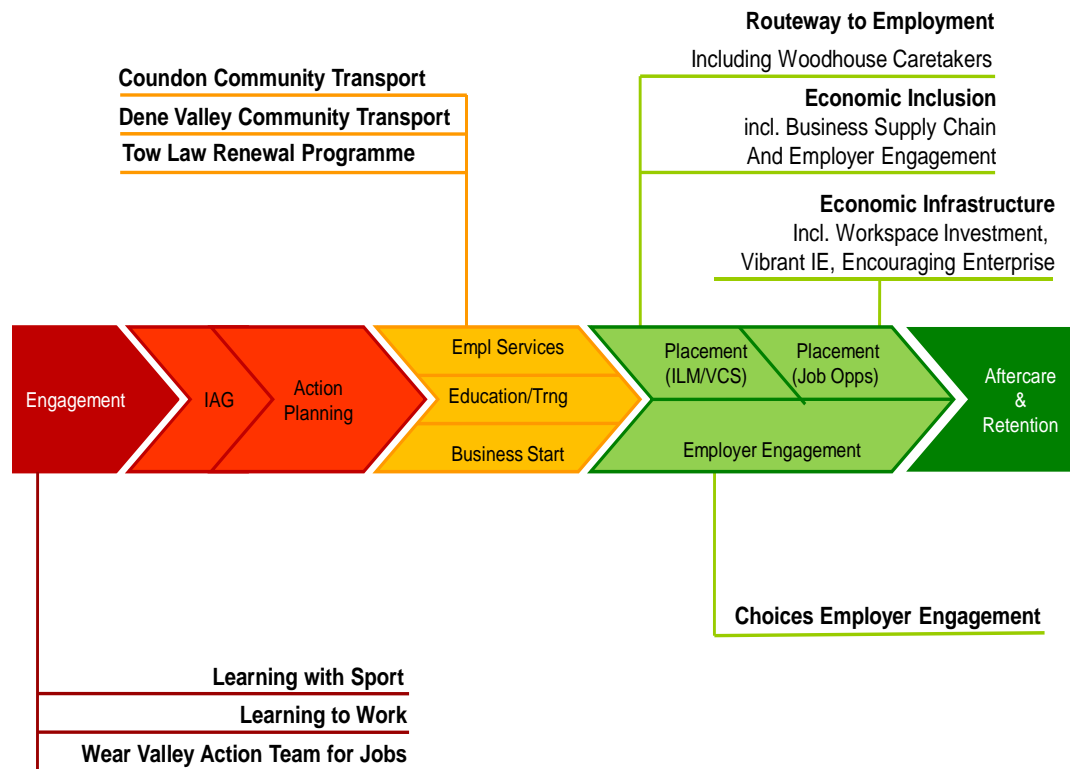
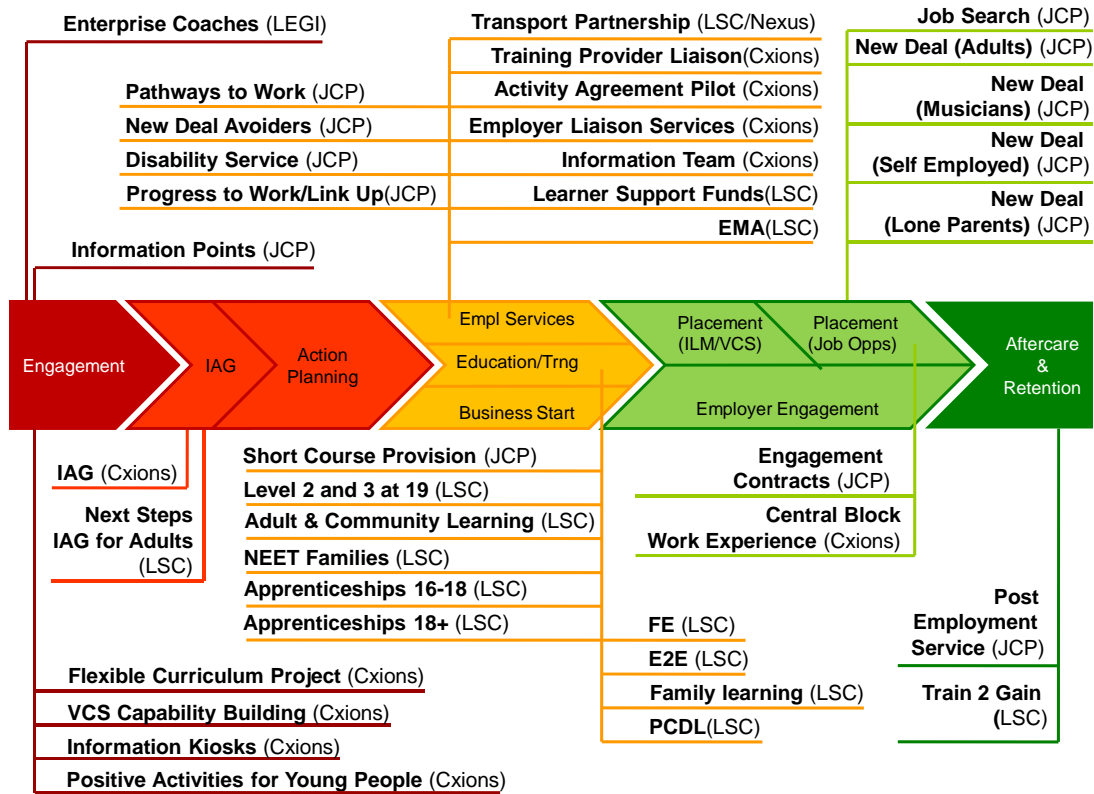


Figure 3: Outputs of the continuation projects against the Regional Employability Framework

	Engagement	IAG	Action Plan	Empl Ser	Edu/Trng	Bus start	ILM	Job Opp	Employer	Aftercare				
Engagement	Learning with Sport in Wear Valley	2D	1 thematic event	25 referrals to IAG	50 people accessing level 1				3 people into work					
			4 events in SOAs										20 people accessing level 2	
	Action Team for Jobs	WVDC						80 job entries						
Engagement	Learning to Work	BAC	50 people completing first step learning	40 ready to progress to level 1	progression to level 1 and 2 accessing learning			40 accessing volunteering						
			40 ready to progress to level 1										access to volunteering Family learning job search CVs	
Engagement			15 referrals to IAG	15 people achieving level 2 literacy							TLCA	Tow Law Renewal	Employability Services	
Engagement			15 referrals to IAG	15 achieving level 2 numeracy										
Engagement			1000 person trips	all participants referred to IAG	3 driver qualifications							Coundon Community transport		
Engagement			1000 person trips	all participants referred to IAG	3 driver qualifications							Dene Valley Community Transport		
Engagement			60 participants		10 places		32 Job entries					GWD	Route way to employment	Placement (ILM/VCS)
Engagement			16 participants		3 places		9 job entries 5 beneficiaries engaged							
Engagement							25 job opportunities	20 job opportunities created 1175 sqm new floor space 60 investment enquiries ????? Job opportunities 25 job opportunities				WVDC	Economic Infrastructure	Placement (ILM/VCS)
Engagement						15 potential business starts	15 jobs created	6 events / 100 businesses involved	15 jobs created	6 events / 100 businesses involved		EAWVT	Economic Inclusion	Placement (Job)
Engagement								250 opportunities from employers	2 advisers employed			EAWVT	Employer Engagement	Employer Engagement

**Figure 4** Linking Mainstream and other provision to address worklessness in Wear Valley to the Wear Valley Employability Framework



**NOTE: Funding Source is identified in brackets:**

- LSC** Learning and Skills Council
- JCP** Jobcentre Plus
- Cxions** Connexions
- LEGI** Local Enterprise Growth Initiative

### *3.4 Gaps and things to think about*

Whilst a great deal has been achieved, a number of gaps and things to think about have been identified by partners and through our own analysis of the implementation model.

- A strategic commissioning approach is needed which focuses on getting results and building capacity. It needs to be separated from the programme delivery partnership which formed to support performance management and coordination.
- The Wear Valley Employability Forum has been very good at supporting coordination and focussing on project performance. Partners like Connexions who work across Districts have commented that it worked better here than elsewhere. However, because this arrangement emerged to meet the need for coordination partner involvement was patchy at the start. Sustaining and consolidating this arrangement would help WNF delivery and provide a focal point for others to engage with WNF in Wear Valley.
- Whilst community partnerships exist these need to be strengthened and better aligned with the need to improve engagement at community level. The Community Network has a key role to play but so do other organisations with community level structures like Connexions, housing, health and economic regeneration.
- Working Neighbourhoods Fund is very clear about the outcomes to be achieved. Commissioning needs to be clearer on get results which affect employability and employment. This has important implications for the engagement with community level partnerships.
- Both providers and workless people need better and up to date awareness of what options are available locally. Coordinating the delivery of quality independent information, advice and guidance needs to be addressed. The approach needs to be proactive and focussed on

progression. IAG is needed and needs to be effective at every stage throughout the journey to employment

- Whilst the NRF programmes achieved their outputs, everyone commented that referrals needed to be better. This links to the point above and emphasises the need for effective coordination and programme monitoring by the Wear Valley Employability Forum. It also requires that links to mainstream and other funded programmes are improved.
- Success comes through a sequence of small steps, some of which work whilst others don't. People need to be guided and supported in this journey. Some people will require intensive support, other less so. Targeting intensive support needs to be focussed on progression and used where it is most needed. A common approach to recognising and assessing levels of need would help coupled with better tracking of people so we don't lose people who fall out of the system or get lost in moving between one sort of support and the next.
- Fundamental to success is access to real jobs and employer engagement. More could be done to extend models for involving small and medium sized companies and to strengthen the role and contribution to worklessness of the public sector as a major employer. Cross area employer engagement activity and guaranteed interview schemes linked to pre-employment preparation could be used more.
- Evidence from elsewhere suggests that access to affordable office accommodation for start ups has a useful impact in creating new jobs.
- Finally, whilst the emphasis is properly on engagement, more effective aftercare support for individuals and employers once people enter employment is needed.

## 4. Moving forward

In this section we draw together the analysis, mapping and development of a Wear Valley Employability Framework to suggest how a commissioning model might work. We have tested the approach widely with delivery partners (those involved in the WVEF) and strategic partners such as Jobcentre Plus, Wear Valley LSP and Wear Valley District Council. To date everyone has been supportive of the approach and sees it as an appropriate way forward.

### *4.1 Vision for WNF in Wear Valley*

We suggest the vision for WNF in Wear Valley be founded on:

- Enabling workless people in Wear Valley to access opportunities and build the skills that lead to sustainable employment that is right for them.
- Focussing on:
  - Getting people back to work (because this is key to improving their lives, tackling poverty and delivering the Local Area Agreement) and improving skill levels.
  - Accessing work opportunities some of which may not be in the area in which people live and therefore exploring cross district coordination.
  - Non-priorities are to do with activity that is adequately covered by mainstream funding or other funding programmes, continuation funding for the sake of it, costs to prop up unnecessary infrastructure, and projects which don't impact directly on an individual's journey to employment.



- Providing a coordinated programme which emphasises engagement into pathways to employment and is informed by community needs.
- Investing through a commissioning model focussed on impact outcomes (not through-put measures) which is
  - Flexible
  - Adds value and aligns with other funding sources
  - Builds capacity
  - Drives achievement and
  - Enables workless people to get the best results they can from the resources available.
- Building on what is already working, funding quality in delivery, those in the best position to deliver the support needed and building capacity for the future
- Supporting and integrating employability and self employment routes
- Focusing on performance and results

#### ***4.2 Key Features of a proposed Wear Valley***

##### ***Employability Framework funded through WNF and other funding sources.***

The following key areas of activity can be identified from the Wear Valley Employability Framework. If accepted they provide the basis for a commissioned programme in Wear Valley using WNF but also provide the basis for mapping the contribution of WNF programmes against that of other funded programmes.

They are as follows:

### **Effective individual engagement at community level**

- Strengthening engagement into pathways to work at the community level including:
  - Contribution of community partnerships to engagement.
  - Giving people the confidence and motivation to be referred (IAG/job vacancies/skills training)
  - Targeted interventions such as WVET (???)
  - Aligned community activity focussed on employment within housing and health

### **Good independent information advice & guidance**

- Provision and coordination of independent quality IAG

### **Quality training to development employment skills**

- Entry level skills training
- Skills and employability training leading to achievement of job related skills linked to job opportunities
- Self employment training leading to achievement of skills linked to job opportunities and business start

### **Employability support which impacts directly on individual access to employment**

- Targeted services to enable individuals to overcome barriers to gaining and sustaining employment including:

- Childcare
- Transport
- Individual support
- Tackling Incapacity Benefit worklessness including:
  - working with GP surgeries

### **Accessing job placement, interim employment and volunteering placement linked to pathways to long term job opportunities**

- Accessing employment and work experience through interim labour markets and volunteering placement leading to progression into sustainable jobs
- Guaranteed interview scheme for public sector employment

### **Establishing more sustainable job opportunities accessible to local people**

- Working with employers to create more accessible job opportunities
- Tailoring business development and economic regeneration investment to create jobs for local people
- Providing aftercare and working with individuals and employers to sustain people in jobs

### **Tracking individual progress and providing intensive support to those who need it most**

- Adopting Hanlon, or similar, as a means to track individual progress
- Providing one to one intensive support to those who need it most, particularly at the points of transition in the employability framework – from engagement to IAG,

from IAG to placement or learning, from placement or learning to work, and in sustaining employment once it has been achieved

**Delivering an integrated programme of employability support, performance managing the programme of investment, and providing the mechanism for coordination of delivery ensuring employability activity is led by community needs**

- Establishing a strategic commissioning group on behalf of LSP and Accountable Body which
  - Involves strategic partners covering Local Authority, LSP, Jobcentre Plus, Health, Housing, Skills, Economic Regeneration
  - Positioning WNF to complement not duplicate or replace mainstream funded provision
    - Ensuring that WNF aligns with and adds value to mainstream provision and other programmes. Not funding areas well covered elsewhere:
      - Jobcentre Plus mainstream provision
      - Business start support
      - 14-19 IAG through Connexions
- Coordination of delivery and performance through Wear Valley Employability Forum
  - Reviewing performance and optimising the impact of programmes
- Coordinating community involvement through Community Network, Community Partnerships and other programmes with strong community networks.

### ***4.3 What is expected of a Commissioning Strategy***

The commissioning strategy will need to fulfil the following requirements:

- Collaboration to maximise impact and add value
- Stretching targets and proactive management of performance by the LSP
- Focussed on quality and those in the best position to deliver
- Means for rewarding engagement and progression (Further they progress the greater the reward)
- Only use WNF to support Local Area Agreement targets and the Regional Employability Framework
- Robust plans for mainstreaming from day one
- Cross-district commissioning where it benefits Wear Valley residents
- Builds on what has worked so far, plays to strengths and creates new opportunities e.g. voluntary and community sector in engagement, training providers in delivering training, employers in providing employment
- Freedom and flexibilities to encourage innovation
- Creates work opportunities especially the need for more jobs

### ***4.4 Output measures***

Commissioning would be focussed on addressing gaps and getting results across the employability framework particularly at the individual engagement and employer engagement ends of the framework with a particular focus on maximising progression and

entry into sustainable employment. Key output measures would be:

### Engagement

- (i) Engagement of people in target groups (see section 4.5 below) moving into recognised employment pathways including:
  - People accessing IAG and completing an action plan

### Employability

- (ii) People completing first step learning and progressing to levels 1 and 2
- (iii) People completing initial training who then enter occupational training
- (iv) People achieving level 1 and 2 vocational qualifications including apprenticeships

### Job search and work experience

- (v) People entering job search provision
- (vi) People entering job placement, interim employment, volunteering leading to pathways to work

### People into jobs

- (vii) Jobs created as a result of inward investment, economic regeneration and business development
- (viii) Job opportunities accessible locally
- (ix) People in work/sustainable employment

### Enterprise and New Business Start

- (x) People accessing new business start
- (xi) New businesses created

The outputs relate to the Wear Valley Employability Framework as a whole. WNF commissioned activity need to align with other programmes and focus in areas where the programme can add value e.g. funding through LEGI addresses business start support. In this case WNF could focus on engagement and incorporation of enterprise routes into initial information advice and guidance.

#### *4.5 Target groups*

- People on Incapacity Benefit
- People living in the most deprived Super Output Areas in Wear Valley
- Unemployed who are not yet receiving benefit
- Those not in education, employment or training at 17+ and 18-24 year olds unemployed for less than 6 months
- 25+ year olds unemployed for less than 18 months

#### *4.6 Commissioning strategy*

Funding would be linked to themed work packages led by key partners (working with others) with funding linked to output measures:

- **WORK PACKAGE 1 - Engagement – outputs**
  - (i)
    - Supporting engagement, motivation, confidence building, to the point of accessing IAG, entry for a job vacancy, entry to skills training, volunteering, ILM or other recognised opportunity

- **WORK PACKAGE 2** – Information Advice and Guidance – outputs (i)
  - Providing independent, coordinated, and quality assured delivery of IAG
- **WORK PACKAGE 3** - Employability – outputs (ii), (iii), (iv) (v), (vi) (x)
  - commissioning and coordinating a range of a range of work, ILM, and volunteering placements linked into pathways to work
- **WORK PACKAGE 4** – People into Jobs / Employer Engagement – outputs (vii), (viii), (ix) (xi)
  - A range of measures focussed on creating job vacancies and job opportunities locally and in encouraging employers to employ local people
- **WORK PACKAGE 5** - Mentoring and progression support – outputs (i), (v), (vi), (ix)
  - Providing cross cutting intensive support for individuals with the greatest need as they as progress towards sustainable employment
- **WORK PACKAGE 6** – Innovation / Individual support to maximise pathways to work – outputs (iv, ix)
  - Providing an unallocated flexible fund for targeted interventions including individual



support when a small amount of funding would help an individual access work.

- **WORK PACKAGE 7 - Programme coordination – outputs (i), (v), (vi), (viii), (ix)**

Providing the means to provide strategic links; coordinate implementation; monitor, review and optimise performance management.

- ***Commissioning Group***
  - Linkage to other mainstream provision
  - Strategic commissioning
  - Comprises WVDC, LSP, JCP and others who can add strategic value by aligning core services to the employability agenda (Housing, Skills, Health, Economic Regeneration)
- ***Wear Valley Employability Forum***
  - WNF coordination, performance management and scrutiny
  - (Progression support)
- ***Community Engagement Partners***
  - Coordination and performance of Community Engagement
  - Intelligence to ensure interventions are community led and effective

This is represented graphically in table 11.

### **The Commissioning Process**

The commissioning process would be led by the Commissioning Group and would commission work packages

with agreed output measures utilising a combination of core funding and performance related funding. The features of the approach are:

- Funding differentiated to favour engagement, job related outcomes and progression
- Results orientation and focus on employment outcomes through performance related payments with mechanisms to realign funding where performance is not achieved
- Commissioning through a small number of contracts linked to work packages and core providers / delivery partnerships
- Core funding to assist with programme management and cash flow but always ensuring that interventions focus on those hardest to help (rather than just easily won outcomes). Where appropriate, through put measures and milestones could be recognised as part of the contract for core funding but would not trigger performance payments
- Continuation programmes are based on NRF which has performed. They are part of a working model. These should now be reviewed and extended within the new framework provided they can confidently deliver impact outcomes as identified.
- Commissioning undertaken by accountable body with an agreed approach to scrutiny and performance monitoring
- Flexibility sustained through regular performance reviews



## 5. Recommendations for Implementation

We see three stages for the LSP in moving forward the approach

### 1 August Meeting - Confirming the Intent

- It is important to get early agreement from the LSP to the proposals and approach for WNF developed with partners and described in this report.

**RECOMMENDATION 1**– LSP is asked to confirm the overarching vision/intent of Wear Valley Employability Framework, the commissioning approach and the work package structure based on 7 work packages as a basis for focussing the WNF programme

- It is also important to put the finishing touches to the commissioning model. This is best done by those directly involved at a strategic level or through the accountable body. WVDC is preparing an initial quantification of outputs for discussion and agreement.

**RECOMMENDATION 2** – The Accountable body working with the Chair of the LSP Employability Group, JCP and other partners as appropriate defines the detail of the work packages, agrees the outputs to be achieved and makes final recommendations on the approach to be adopted for the September LSP meeting

- The LSP should take early steps to create the supporting infrastructure for WNF. We think this should include a Commissioning Group. Continuation of the Wear Valley Employability Forum as a means to coordinate partner
-

engagement and appointment of a coordinator to support programme and partner coordination

**RECOMMENDATION 3** – LSP agrees in principle to:

- The formation of a Commissioning Group including (as a minimum) the Chair or Vice Chair of the LSP, Jobcentre Plus and the Accountable Body.
- Continuation of the Wear Valley Employability Forum as a means to coordinate partner involvement
- Use of WNF to support appointment of a coordinator. The post would need to be independent, linked to the LSP and therefore part of the staffing structures of the Accountable Body.

## **2 September Meeting - Adopting the Action Plan**

- By now LSP partners should be in a position to agree the delivery arrangements for the Wear Valley Employability Framework and the detailed Action Plan for WNF delivery.

**RECOMMENDATION 4** – LSP reviews and adopts the refined WVEF Action Plan at its September meeting

- The Commissioning Group should be given the responsibility for developing and implementing the detailed commissioning and governance arrangements by October 2008 including; mechanisms for contracting with delivery partners, performance management framework and reporting arrangements
-

**RECOMMENDATION 5** – Commissioning is linked to work packages. Delivery partners/partnerships are invited to negotiate and commit to delivering outputs from one or more work packages. Regular reporting and review arrangements are agreed.

### **3 Post September - Putting the strategy into action**

Future decisions include:

- Extending the Wear Valley Employability Framework and commissioning model developed here to support the full range of employability funded programmes within Wear Valley including Single Programme other funding programmes
- Aligning the programme in Wear Valley with a wider County Durham programmes and seeking where appropriate economies of scale
- Developing and supporting aligned programmes delivered by others in housing, health and skills

**RECOMMENDATION 6**– Once commissioning is complete, the Commissioning Group develops a joint strategy for employability with partners in health, housing, skills and regeneration.

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## Annex 1

### Performance against Floor Targets and Local Targets in Wear Valley March 2008

<i>Progress against floor targets</i>						
	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	On target?
<b>Employment Rate</b>						
National Rate	74.2%	74.3%	74.5%	74.3%	74.3%	
North East	68.6%	68.5%	70.3%	70.5%	71.2%	
Wear Valley Rate	60.9%	64.0%	72.1%	71.9%	73.3%	↑
<i>Source: Nomis (ONS annual pop survey)</i>						
<i>Narrowing the gap</i>						
<b>JSA Claimant Count – aged 50 &amp; over</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
National						
North East	16.8%	17.0%	16.3%	16.2%	16.1%	15.6%
Wear Valley	17.0%	17.1%	17.0%	16.0%	16.1%	14.9%
<i>Source: Nomis (ONS Claimant Count)</i>						
<b>Benefit Claimants – Lone Parents</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	
National Rate						↑
North East	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%	2.2%	2.1%	
Wear Valley Rate	2.8%	2.6%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	
<i>Source: Nomis (DWP benefit claimants)</i>						
<b>Employment Rate – BME Adult Population</b>					No target set.	
National Rate	57.0%	57.4%	58.1%	58.9%	Unable to source data	
Wear Valley Rate	-	-	-	-		
North East Rate	51.5%	49.2%	52.5	55.3%		
<i>Source: FT Interactive/DWP Annual LFS</i>						
<b>Employment Rate – People with No Qualifications</b>	<b>2001/02</b>	<b>2002/03</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	
National Rate						↑
North East Rate	16.5%	15.6%	15.1%	14.3%	13.8%	
Wear Valley Rate	19.7%	18.4%	18.0%	15.6%	14.3%	
<i>Source: Nomis (ONS Jan –Dec2006)</i>						
<b>Neighbourhood Level Employment</b>						
No. of Neighbourhoods (SOAs) below District Rate	-	-	-	11	8 May 08	9
Gap between worst performing Neighbourhoods and Wear Valley employment rate	-	-	-	28.1%	20% May 08	31%

*Progress against local targets*

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	On target?
<b>Incapacity Benefit</b>						
National Rate	7.7%	7.7%	7.5%	7.4%	7.2%	↑
North East Rate	11.8%	11.5%	11.0%	10.6%	10.2%	
Wear Valley Rate	13.4%	13.3%	13.0%	12.8%	12.5%	
<i>Source: Nomis (DWP benefit claimants)</i>						
<b>JSA Claimant Count Rate</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	
National Rate	2.4%	2.4%	2.7%	2.6%	2.2%	↑
North East	3.2%	3.1%	3.3%	3.4%	3.2%	
Wear Valley Rate	2.9%	2.9%	3.3%	3.3%	2.9%	
<i>Source: ONS (March 2007)</i>						
<b>Self employment rate:</b>		<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	
National Rate	-	9.0%	9.1%	9.2%	9.3%	↓
North East Rate		5.4%	5.8%	6.3%	6.6%	
Wear Valley Rate		7.9%	8.7%	10.2%	7.6%	
<i>Source: Nomis (Annual pop survey)</i>						
<b>Business Stock</b>	WV 9.3% increase in business stock 2002-2006; North East 9.6%; GB 8.1%					
<i>Source: Nomis (Vat registrations/de-registrations)</i>						
<b>VAT Registered Businesses</b>	<b>Wear Valley (No's)</b>	<b>Wear Valley (%)</b>	<b>North East (%)</b>	<b>Great Britain (%)</b>		
Registrations	130	8.1	9.4	9.4	↓	
De-registrations	115	7.2	7.0	7.4		
Stock	1,600	-	-	-		
<i>Source: DTI Small Business Service 2006</i>						

\*Caution is advised in the use of VAT registrations as an indicator of business stock as a large number of our businesses are 'micro-businesses' and below the VAT threshold.





**Wear Valley Employability Framework (WVEF) Action Plan  
Work Package 1 - Engagement**

AIM	OUTCOME	ACTIVITY	TARGET	DATE
To supporting engagement, motivation, confidence building, to the point of accessing information, advice and guidance (IAG), entry for a job vacancy, entry to skills training, volunteering, ILM or other recognised opportunity	(i) Engagement of people in target groups (see section 4.5) moving into recognised employment pathways including: People accessing IAG and completing an action plan	Closed call - 2D - community delivery - WVDC - employment team		

**Work Package 2 – Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)**

AIM	OUTCOME	ACTIVITY	TARGET	DATE
To provide independent, coordinated, and quality assured delivery of information, advice and guidance (IAG)	(i) Engagement of people in target groups (see section 4.5) moving into recognised employment pathways including: People accessing IAG and completing an action plan	Open call		

### Work Package 3 - Employability

AIM	OUTCOME	ACTIVITY	TARGET	DATE
To commission and coordinate a range of, ILM, and volunteering placements linked into pathways to work	(ii) People completing first step learning and progressing to levels 1 and 2 (iii) People completing initial training who then enter occupational training (iv) People achieving level 1 and 2 vocational qualifications including apprenticeships (v) People entering job search provision (vi) People entering job placement, interim employment, volunteering leading to pathways to work (x) People accessing new business start	Open call		

### Work Package 4 – People into jobs / Employer engagement

AIM	OUTCOME	ACTIVITY	TARGET	DATE
To provide a range of measures focussed on creating job vacancies and job opportunities locally and in encouraging employers to employ local people	(vii) Jobs created as a result of inward investment, economic regeneration and business development (viii) Job opportunities accessible locally (ix) People in work/sustainable employment (xi) New businesses created	Open call		

### Work Package 5 – Mentoring and progression support

AIM	OUTCOME	ACTIVITY	TARGET	DATE
To provide cross cutting intensive support for individuals with the greatest need as they progress towards sustainable employment	(i) Engagement of people in target groups (see section 4.5) moving into recognised employment pathways including: People accessing IAG and completing an action plan  (v) People entering job search provision  (vi) People entering job placement, interim employment, volunteering leading to pathways to work  (ix) People in work/sustainable employment	Open call		

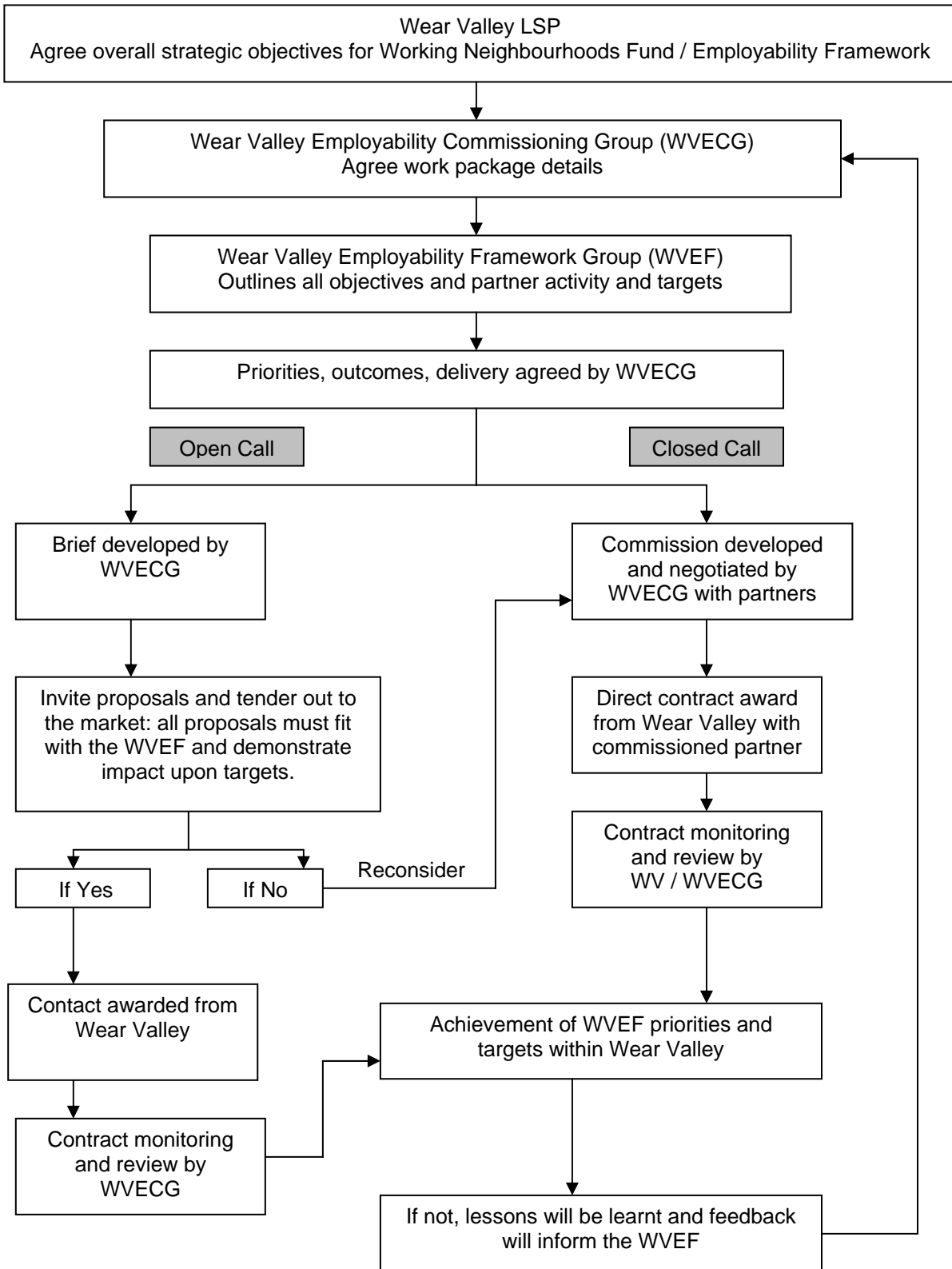
### Work Package 6 – Innovation / Individual Support to maximise pathways to work

AIM	OUTCOME	ACTIVITY	TARGET	DATE
To provide an unallocated flexible fund for targeted interventions including individual support when a small amount of funding would help an individual access work	(iv) People achieving level 1 and 2 vocational qualifications including apprenticeships  (ix) People in work/sustainable employment	Open call		

**Work Package 7 – Programme co-ordination**

AIM	OUTCOME	ACTIVITY	TARGET	DATE
<p>To providing the means to provide strategic links; coordinate implementation; monitor, review and optimise performance management</p>	<p>(i) Engagement of people in target groups (see section 4.5) moving into recognised employment pathways including:                      People accessing IAG and completing an action plan</p> <p>(v) People entering job search provision</p> <p>(vi) People entering job placement, interim employment, volunteering leading to pathways to work</p> <p>(viii) Job opportunities accessible locally</p> <p>(ix) People in work/sustainable employment</p>	<p>Closed call                      - WVDC as accountable body</p>		

**Working Neighbourhoods Fund - Commissioning Process**



**WOODHOUSE CLOSE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

**SUBMISSION TO LSP**

**SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND**

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# WOODHOUSE CLOSE COMMUNITY PARTENRSHIP

## SUBMISSION TO LSP

### SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND

The following provides a summary of how the partnership arrived at a submission to the LSP, how they see the potential allocation and monitoring processes operating, and enclosed are details of the specific interventions as part of an overall Neighbourhood Management strategy for the Woodhouse Close area.

Fuller explanations can be furnished, however we have kept these background notes to a minimum. Partnership members will be happy to elaborate on any of the content as requested.

#### **Agreed Process**

- The partnership asked all organisations working in the area contribute to an audit of current projects that impacted upon the area and addressed some key issues within the safer, stronger communities' parameters. These activities were to those demonstrated as needed within the community either via consultative feedback or in relation to tackling national/local issues (**APPENDIX 1**).
- Partners were asked to show what the current situation was with regard to delivery and resources (**APPENDIX 2**).
- Partners were asked for the outputs they would like to include and outcomes they would deliver.

#### **Audit**

- Partners prioritised interventions that most effectively tackled SSC issues (**APPENDIX 3**).
- Interventions with insufficient funding were further highlighted to form a submission to the LSP for SSCF as part of one whole package.
- The remaining interventions would form the basis of a Woodhouse Close Partnership strategic delivery plan and would continue to be monitored at future partnership meetings.



## Commissioning of SSC funding

- Partners are requesting that should the LSP endorse the enclosed approach, management representative's work with the chair and representatives of the partnership to apportion funding to the individual interventions within the overall neighbourhood package.
- The criteria for funding to be agreed between these representatives, for allocation to each intervention which will include desired outcomes and outputs and the overall impact of the individual intervention within the whole package, i.e. how important each in terms of the cohesiveness of whole.
- This approach is designed to lend impartiality to the allocation of funds. Representatives will be able to make judgements as to the importance of projects within the whole model however they feel that it is important to test these judgements against external criteria for allocation.

## Ongoing Management

- Partners would continue to meet to monitor the interventions at regular partnership meetings and use this opportunity to compile monitoring reports to the LSP against agreed outputs
- Partnership meetings would also monitor all other none SSCF interventions and seek opportunities to add value to SSC funded activity
- A crucial output to be monitored will be; the move towards sustainable funding, mainstreaming or suitable exit strategies for individual interventions within the 18 month funding period.

The above outlines a Neighbourhood Management model for the Woodhouse Close Estate which relies on Partner organisations to create a cohesive 'virtual' structure which can effectively monitor and deliver against SSCF and other funded initiatives with streamlined administration functions.



## APPENDIX 1

### KEY ISSUES WE WERE SEEKING TO ADDRESS

- Issue 1** Dealing promptly with the environmental damage that local people associate with crime and anti social behaviours
- issue 2** Improve the management of the estate as a whole to meet the liveability outcomes in terms of housing and estate management.
- Issue 3** Address the high level of worklessness on the estate through provision of skills training
- Issue 4** Address worklessness through provision of supported employment programmes.
- Issue 5** Improve access to health provision
- Issue 6** Reduce crime by providing support to those at risk of participating in drug and substance misuse.
- Issue 7** Reduce young people at risk of involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Issue 8** Inform, engage and involve all sections of the community in service development.
- Issue 9** Increase the percentage of residents who feel their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds and communities can live together harmoniously.
- Issue 10** Reduce the proportion of vulnerable households living in non-decent accommodation. Ensure housing meets needs.
- Issue 11** Reduction of numbers of households at risk of homelessness because of debt, tenancy breakdown, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence or family breakdown by providing early support.

**APPENDIX 2 PARTNER EXISTING INTERVENTIONS**

Name of organisation	What activities you or any of your staff do that impact on any of the above issues	What funding you have in place, where it comes from, how long it will be in place for relating to the activities	i.e. how many people you expect to impact on, how many activities there will be etc.	What you expect to result from your activities i.e. reduce number of incidents of reported crime.	Issues tackled
<b>Bishop Auckland College</b>	Training Provision tailored to addressing worklessness. Job search. CV prep. Work Experience. Basic skills (Maths/English). Learning Mentor Support. Impartial Advice and Guidance. Targeted Intervention to Sign Post to appropriate support and help.	Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and limited LSC Core Funding. Interim Working Neighbourhood Funding (until October 2008)	Engagement leading to 1st Step Learning. Progression to Level 1 and 2. Opportunities to gain work experience within a preferred vocational area. Sign posting residents to appropriate provision. Employability Training.	Increase in training opportunities enabling residents to access provision which enhances employability skills. Increase in numbers gaining Maths/English and first Level 1 and 2 qualifications. Outreach advice and guidance increased awareness of local opportunities for training and/or employment.	3
<b>Bishop Auckland College</b>	Return to Work programmes available in premises within Wear Valley area. Transport/expenses provided to relevant locations. Free childcare available. Multi agency approach to employability skills. Basic skills (English/Maths). Impartial advice and guidance offering CV prep and job search. Sign posting to appropriate provision.	NRF. Limited LSC Core Funding. WNF (until 30 September 2008)	Engagement leading to 1st Step Learning. Progression to Level 1 and 2. Opportunities to gain work experience within a preferred vocational area. Sign posting residents to appropriate provision. Employability Training.	Increase in training opportunities enabling residents to access provision which enhances employability skills. Increase in numbers gaining Maths/English and first Level 1 and 2 qualifications. Outreach advice and guidance increased awareness of local opportunities for training and/or employment.	4

Name of organisation	What activities you or any of your staff do that impact on any of the above issues	What funding you have in place, where it comes from, how long it will be in place for relating to the activities	i.e. how many people you expect to impact on, how many activities there will be etc.	What you expect to result from your activities i.e. reduce number of incidents of reported crime.	Issues tackled
<b>Groundwork West Durham &amp; Darlington</b>	Estates Renaissance working in conjunction with Wear Valley District Council and other Funders to deliver a programme of environmental improvements across the Woodhouse Close Ward. Work has been completed in Proudfoot Drive, Howard Close and continues in Ford Way. Further work as identified. Supporting programme of activities to raise pride in the local neighbourhood and satisfaction with where I live was carried out through the Wholesome 9 Yards project and the Garden Doctors scheme	Liveability funding for scheme now complete however outstanding projects (Ford Way) still await completion and money in place for this. Funding will be sought for other projects as required			
<b>Bishop Auckland College</b>	Variety of different programmes to engage and support young people currently disengaged from learning and/or employment who are more at risk of being involved in crime. Held at main College site or outreach in Woodhouse Close.	Limited LSC funding is available but is prescriptive and does not cover associated costs. Occasional and irregular funding streams from various sources are available on an ad hoc basis which stifles continuity and provision of a seamless service.	Engaged in learning activity which is tailored to individual need and focuses on retention and stimulation before progressing to mainstream activity. Extra curricular activities/sport are offered but could be expanded to offer a wider and more extensive choice.	Reduction in NEETS. Corresponding reduction in anti social behaviour. Stimulate interest in training which contributes to the reduction of crime and anti social behaviour.	7

Name of organisation	What activities you or any of your staff do that impact on any of the above issues	What funding you have in place, where it comes from, how long it will be in place for relating to the activities	i.e. how many people you expect to impact on, how many activities there will be etc.	What you expect to result from your activities i.e. reduce number of incidents of reported crime.	Issues tackled
<b>Bishop Auckland College</b>	Attendance and participation in local focus groups to consult and shape provision according to local need. Review curriculum to encompass local need.	NRF and WNF support infrastructure enabling attendance at meetings and development and communication of new initiatives.	Increased community involvement to shape provision according to the needs and requirements of local residents.	Increased community awareness of advice and training opportunities available.	8
<b>Dale &amp; Valley Homes</b>	Issues 1 and 2 - Estate Inspections are carried out on a monthly basis to identify issues such as fly tipping, property damage. Estate Caretakers undertake works to improve environmental issues such as fencing, overgrown waste land	Existing budgets which are reviewed annually	All Council estates within the WV District	Increased customer satisfaction in the neighbourhoods in which they live	1,2
<b>Dale &amp; Valley Homes</b>	Issue 8 - we have a Community Involvement Section which supports all residents groups throughout the district. We are currently developing a Neighbourhood Charter which we hope to extend throughout the district. We have and promote various involvement mechanisms such as focus groups, mystery shoppers	Existing budgets which are reviewed annually	All customers of D&V Homes	Increased customer satisfaction in the neighbourhoods in which they live	8
<b>Dale and Valley Homes</b>	Issue 11 - Provide a free money advice service to all customers of D&VHs. This service has recently been enhanced by us entering into a contract with CAB for them to provide advice & assistance to 40 customers	From existing budgets. This will be reviewed annually.	CAB will carry a minimum of 40 cases at any one time. Our in house service carries a caseload of		10

Name of organisation	What activities you or any of your staff do that impact on any of the above issues	What funding you have in place, where it comes from, how long it will be in place for relating to the activities	i.e. how many people you expect to impact on, how many activities there will be etc.	What you expect to result from your activities i.e. reduce number of incidents of reported crime.	Issues tackled
<b>Dale and Valley Homes/WVD C</b>	Issue 11 - We have established an At Risk Panel which reviews cases whereby the customer is or is likely to face eviction for whatever reason. The Council's Homeless Officer is a member of the panel. Appropriate support mechanisms will be put in place.	From existing budgets. This will be reviewed annually.	This service is available to all customers of D&VH (4,300)	Reduction in the number of families becoming homeless within the Wear Valley district.	11
<b>Dale and Valley Homes</b>	Issue 10 - all homes within the WV District will become decent by 2012	From existing budgets and government funding	4,300 customers	All properties will meet the Decent Homes Standard	10
<b>Wear Valley District Council - a members of the Wear and Tees Community Safety Partnership</b>	We have a partnership plan which includes activities to address issues 6 - 9 inclusive	Crime and Disorder Fund - WVDC, Basic Command Unit Funding (police) and Area Arrangements all to end 2009.	Not possible to give numbers as we are funding youth engagement projects, burglary reduction projects etc.	Reductions in house burglary, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour and wounding	

Name of organisation	What activities you or any of your staff do that impact on any of the above issues	What funding you have in place, where it comes from, how long it will be in place for relating to the activities	i.e. how many people you expect to impact on, how many activities there will be etc.	What you expect to result from your activities i.e. reduce number of incidents of reported crime.	Issues tackled
<b>Auckland Youth and Community Centre</b>	Crèche - providing services for agencies so that barriers are removed for parents and carers to attend meetings and training courses. This service is provided both in the centre and off site when requested. When possible this project employs local people from the Wear Valley area.	Self financing - paid per session	No.... of parents carers engaged in meetings, i.e. Sure Start. No..... of parents involved in training	More parents and carers involved in service delivery. More parents accessing further education training in numeracy, literacy, child care etc. Not only does this service meet some of the issues as mentioned but impacts on ECM -KIP'S 'Support Families. Long term benefits of those involved - confidence building more likely to seek employment and training, and further their involvement in community development and services. The provision is not just for Woodhouse Close as it has been access by agencies and organisation across Wear Valley.	3,5,8,9
<b>Auckland Youth and Community Centre</b>	Out of School Child Care - providing affordable child care for working or those in further education parents/carers. 3:00 till 6:00 and full child care in school holidays. Transport provided for school pick-ups, snacks provided for both school and holiday care. This service operates 5 days a week. Within the service there are also opportunities for work experience for schools, college and training providers.	Funding comes from fees charged and out-side trusts and foundations.	No. registered for 40 children 4 to 12 years which could be equivalent to 40 families in employment. No... of work placement opportunities. No of schools supported (wrap around care)	Parents retained in employed, and barriers removed for those going into employment. Not only does this service meet some of the issues as mentioned but impacts on ECM - KIPS.	3,4,8, 11



Name of organisation	What activities you or any of your staff do that impact on any of the above issues	What funding you have in place, where it comes from, how long it will be in place for relating to the activities	i.e. how many people you expect to impact on, how many activities there will be etc.	What you expect to result from your activities i.e. reduce number of incidents of reported crime.	Issues tackled
<b>Auckland Youth and Community Centre/DCC education in the Community</b>	Youth- providing a drop-in at the centre, and an after school service within two schools delivering a range of activities for 11 to 19 years old across Bishop Auckland. Health Drop-in on a Monday evening delivery C Card. The youth provision operates across the Bishop Auckland area using communities' centres.	Staff involved in the provision of youth service are employed via Durham County Council Education in the Community based in the Centre	No. of drop-in sessions, No. of young people participating in activities. No... of young people accessing health drop-in.	Young people actively engaged in a number of informal educational opportunities. ECM- KIP's 'Support families, Places to Go'	1,3,5,6,7,8,9
<b>Auckland Youth and Community Centre</b>	Debt advice-providing a drop-in provision for residents of Woodhouse Close, to seek help with debt enquiries, sign posting to other services i.e. housing, court, credit union etc	At present funded through SSCF until Sept 08 There may be the potential for voluntary hours?		Reduce number of families and individuals in debt,	11
<b>Auckland Youth and Community Centre/Durham County Council</b>	Tindale Community Supported Allotment Gardens - Growing Together- supporting the Tindale community allotment through volunteering opportunities, supporting other agencies involvement, working with a number of adults with learning difficulties.	Staff are employed through Adult and Children Services Durham County Council based at the Centre	No of adults with Learning Difficulties having the opportunity to be involved with community activities. The project through the staff also supports other agencies, Sure Start, Ground Work, Green Gym etc	This project provides the opportunities for volunteering, training and placements	3,7
<b>Auckland Youth and Community Centre/Bishop Auckland College</b>	Community Learning - various community learning opportunities. Basic Computer, Sign language etc	Tutors employed via Bishop Auckland College - course will continue through College as long as funding is available	No. of resident engaged in learning activities	This project allows the residents to further their skills, whether this be for training, employment or pleasure	3,4

**APPENDIX 3 KEY INTERVENTIONS**

Name of organisation	What activities you or any of your staff do that impact on any of the above issues	What funding you have in place, where it comes from, how long it will be in place for relating to the activities	i.e. how many people you expect to impact on, how many activities there will be etc.	What you expect to result from your activities i.e. reduce number of incidents of reported crime.	Issues tackled
<b>Durham &amp; Darlington Fire &amp; Rescue Service</b>	Firebreak Course	Neighbourhood Element 2006/07 Neighbourhood Element 2007/08, Stronger Safer Communities Neighbourhood Element 2008/09	2 Firebreak Courses run in 2007/08. A third course will run starting Sept 08.	Reduction in deliberate primary and secondary fires on Woodhouse Close estate. Reduction in overall ASB.	7
<b>Auckland Youth and Community Centre</b>	<b>After school</b> - providing a drop-in provision for children aged 4 to 13 years across 4 wards including Woodhouse Close, St Helen's and Henknowle using various community centre's and school. The staff involved in the project also works in partnership with other services to deliver activities for families. Supports other groups providing play, supports residents and community groups to deliver fun days and will line manage the new Play Worker Coundon	At present funded though Children's Fund till November 08, further funding depends on assessments being carried out by Local Children's Board. Pending application from Children in Need August 08	No. of children at present engaged in activities 200. No. of sessions (2 hours per sessions) 245 per year. No. of families 7 engaged in development of Holidays Activities Committee Wear Valley. No.... of volunteering opportunities. No... of employment opportunities. No....of people gaining qualification in Play	Integrated working to deliver activities which have an impact on the lives of children, young people and their families. Through the project there are also opportunities for volunteering for the wider community which has and could lead to employment and qualification in Play Work. Not only does this service meet some of the issues as mentioned but impacts on ECM -KIP'S, Play Strategy, Family Support etc.	1,3,4,7,8
Name of organisation	What activities you or any of your staff do that impact on any of the above issues	What funding you have in place, where it comes from, how long it will be in place for relating to the	i.e. how many people you expect to impact on, how many activities there will be etc.	What you expect to result from your activities i.e. reduce number of incidents of reported crime.	Issues tackled

		activities			
<b>Auckland Youth and Community Centre/ Wear Valley District Council</b>	<b>Community Physical Activities Co-ordinator and assistant</b> -offer opportunities in sport activities across the 4 wards for children and young people 5 to 19 years old. The service also gives opportunities for placement, training and employment.	Employed via Wear Valley District Council based in the Centre	approx. 300 young people per week participating in activities. No. of people on placements. No. of people on training. No. of people employed	Young people involved in sporting activities.	1,2,3,5,6,7
<b>WOODHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH</b>	<b>WOODHOUSE CLOSE PLAY GROUP</b>	Neighbourhood element Liveability funding, funding runs out in Sept 08	Employment placements Training opportunities Parental choice Opportunity for parents/carers to attend training during childcare session	Raising awareness of the Arts Using the Arts as a tool for change Inspiring people to look beyond their environment Supporting people to explore opportunities they may not have thought possible	1
<b>WOODHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH</b>	<b>WOODHOUSE ARTS PROGRAMME</b>	Neighbourhood element Liveability funding, funding runs out in Sept 08	Engagement of residents young people community groups and schools Employment of local artists Training for local residents	Raising awareness of the Arts Using the Arts as a tool for change Inspiring people to look beyond their environment Supporting people to explore opportunities they may not have thought possible	3

Name of organisation	What activities you or any of your staff do that impact on any of the above issues	What funding you have in place, where it comes from, how long it will be in place for relating to the activities	i.e. how many people you expect to impact on, how many activities there will be etc.	What you expect to result from your activities i.e. reduce number of incidents of reported crime.	Issues tackled
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<p><b>Auckland Youth and Community Centre</b></p>	<p><b>Auckland Youth &amp; Community Centre, community co-coordinator</b>  Role includes management of the centre and staff on a daily basis, bringing together various organisation and agencies in an integrated team to provide services that address the needs of the whole community of Woodhouse Close and Surrounding areas. Supports agencies both statutory and voluntary to delivery and engage the wider community in their service and provision, predominantly across Bishop Auckland, but sometimes includes the whole Wear Valley. Sign posts and refers residents to other agencies and organisations, seeks volunteering, training and employment opportunities for residents of Woodhouse Close either through services within the centre or through the networks. Development of a partnership approach to the delivery of services has not only made the centre a hub for services for the residents but also for agencies and organisation has an information centre. Delivers training for Dale and Valley Holmes for residents groups in Committee skills, book keeping and risk assessments. Partner on the Crime and Disorder Partnership, Community Network, Communities of Interest (Vice Chair), Local Children's Board member and Lead ' Place to Go.....', Wear Valley Learning Partnership, PCT Health and Well being, Wear Valley Play Partnership, Woodhouse Close Children's Centre (Chair), Alcohol sub group. Woodhouse Close Partnership.</p>	<p>Funded through SSCF till September 08, without the funding the post will no longer exist. In turn will leave an uncertain future for the other services housed at Auckland Youth and Community Centre.</p>	<p>Placement opportunities for schools, colleges, universities, training provide. Employment of local residents in Child care, Play, Youth, Kitchen and Administration. Integrated working for the delivery of services. A base for other organisation to work from. No. of meeting attended 10. No. of residents groups supported 4. No. of services supported 10+. Engagement of residents decision making opportunities 100+. No. of residents groups trained 6+ The centre itself has supported 196 young people in the last 12 months involved in activities with attendances totalling 2680 and 281 sessions being delivered over the period</p>	<p>All of the work undertaking via the worker impacts on all of the above issues and many more either through direct services being developed or influencing service delivery through meetings attended. By managing the centre it provides a facility for services to be delivered, it gives a focal point for the residents, children and young people and is a point of contact for agencies and organisation to gather of disseminate information.</p> <p>Future outcomes to include the Increase in capacity within the local community of those willing to lead on community projects in particular management of AYCC. This will skill people for management roles as well as using those skills for the benefit of the community itself.</p>	<p>Issues 1- 11</p>
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Name of organisation	What activities you or any of your staff do that impact on any of the above issues	What funding you have in place, where it comes from, how long it will be in place for relating to the activities	i.e. how many people you expect to impact on, how many activities there will be etc.	What you expect to result from your activities i.e. reduce number of incidents of reported crime.	Issues tackled
WOODHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH	FURNITURE RECYLCING PROJECT	Neighbourhood element Liveability funding, funding runs out in Sept 08	Unwanted furniture and household goods recycled to families on low income. Partnering with Social Services, CAB and woman's refuge to help furnish properties – at no cost – to vulnerable members of the community responding to crisis situations, fire flood and domestic violence.	Improving the home environment A practical way of increasing self worth creating a more stable and secure home life.	

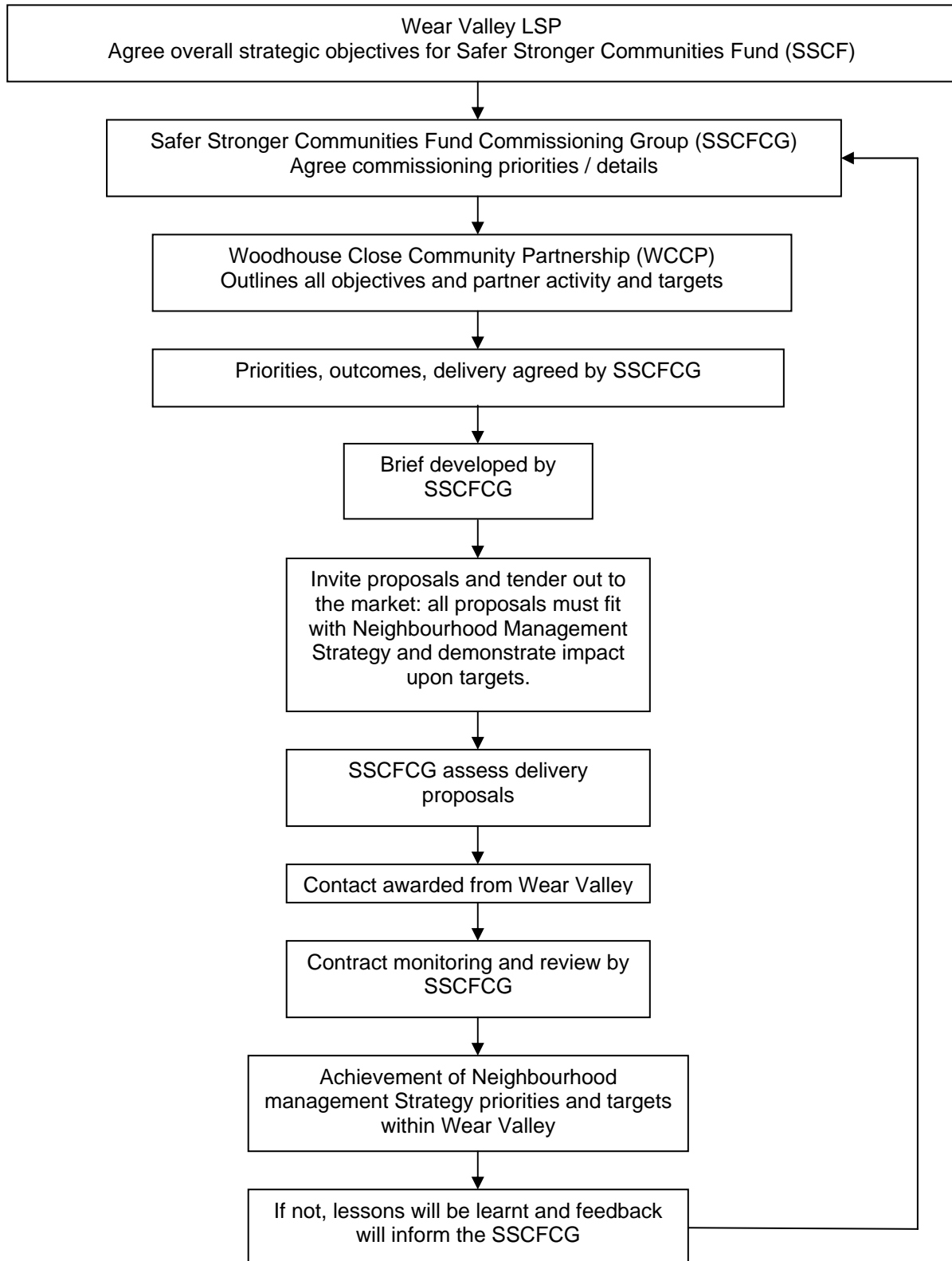
Name of organisation	What activities you or any of your staff do that impact on any of the above issues	What funding you have in place, where it comes from, how long it will be in place for relating to the activities	i.e. how many people you expect to impact on, how many activities there will be etc.	What you expect to result from your activities i.e. reduce number of incidents of reported crime.	Issues tackled
Groundwork West Durham & Darlington	<b>Environmental Improvements within Woodhouse Estate</b>	None in place – Gwk work to secure funding from a variety of sources when needs identified. WVDC have matched funding in previous years on larger scale schemes. The particular funding we would like to secure is a fund for small scale improvements that would tackle key community safety issues i.e. low rail fencing of open land to prevent vehicles driving over and gate-it schemes.	As identified by Partner organisations and community but an average scheme impacts upon 20-30 families in near vicinity with additional benefit to foot-users across the estate.  Would envisage 3-5 schemes at a cost of £3-£5k each	Reduction of reported crime and reduction of incidents also as each project will include an element of educational activity we would see wider benefits in ‘satisfaction with where I live’	1,2,6,7,8
Woodhouse Close Community Partnership	<b>Link Fund</b>	A contingency fund to be used in agreement by the full partnership for any activity that supports the priority interventions within the delivery plan.	Area wide impact	To be identified as intervention is brought forward	All issues

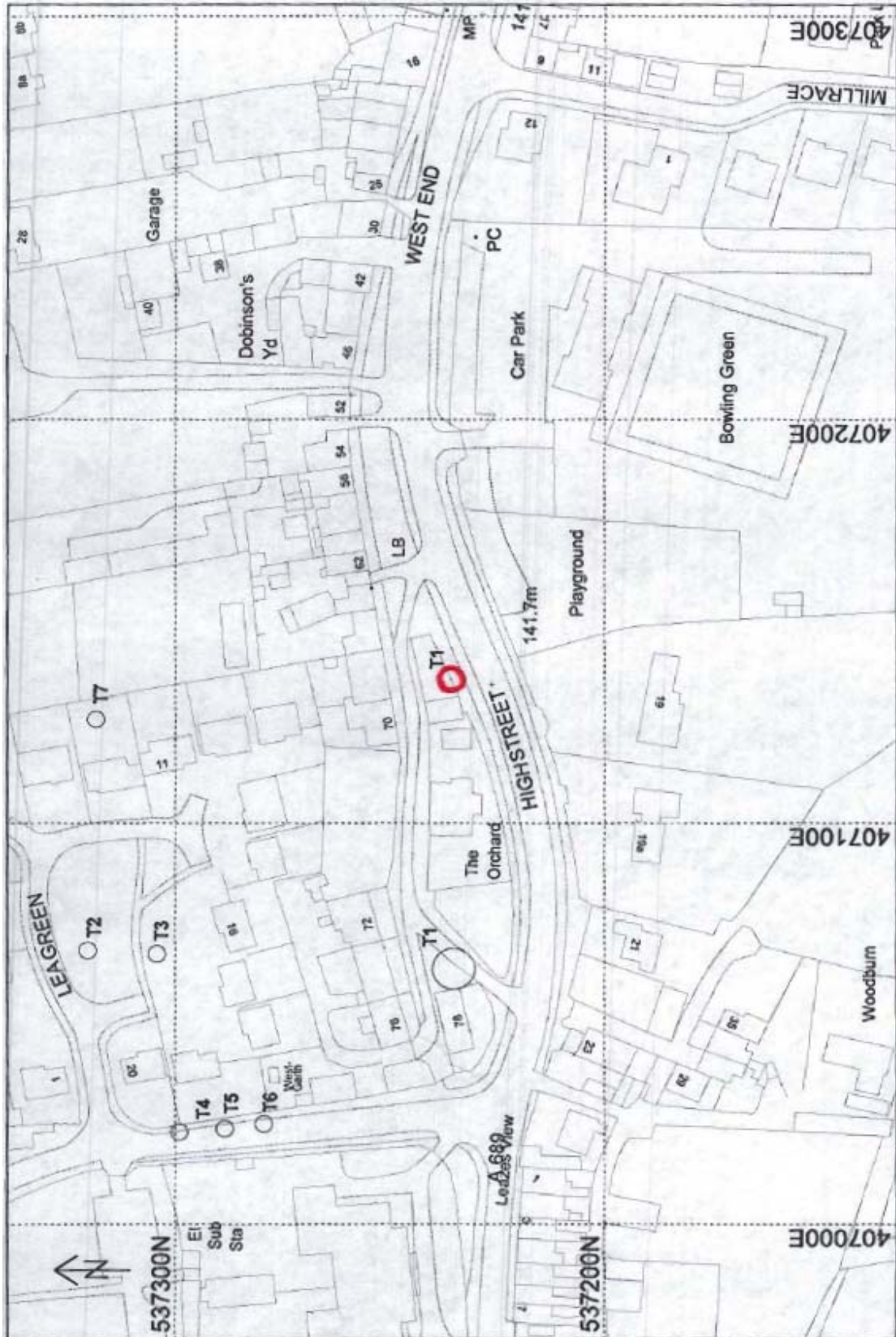
	Woodhouse Close North		Woodhouse Close Central		Woodhouse Close South	
	ID2007 % of SOAs in England	ID2004 Comparison	ID2007 % of SOAs in England	ID2004 Comparison	ID2007 % of SOAs in England	ID2004 Comparison
Employment	9.33%	Less	0.08%	More	5.84%	More
Income	16.61%	Less	0.58%	More	14.08%	Less
Health	4.87%	More	0.17%	More	5.11%	More
Education	13.52%	Less	0.06%	More	9.28%	Less
Housing	32.79%	More	78.56%	More	77.86%	More
Crime	16.90%	Less	6.90%	Less	18.89%	Less
Environment	89.75%	Less	71.70%	Less	87.95%	Less
IMD	13.15%	Less	0.22%	More	11.63%	Less





**Safer Stronger Communities Fund - Commissioning Process**





OS map reference NZ0737SW scale 1:1250

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ANNEX 17

**PERFORMANCE AGAINST  
BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE AND LOCAL INDICATORS**

**Development and Building Control / Planning and Environmental Policy**

Indicator	Description	Target 2008/09	Performance		Achievement 2008/09				Variance from target/comment	
			2007/8	2006/7	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4		
NI157	Processing of planning applications:									
	• Major	60	69.5	82	75					☺
	• Minor	65	82.5	81	70					☺
	• Other	80	90	90	87					☺
NI154	Net additional homes provided	270	560	587	100					•
NI155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)				Annually					•
NI159	Supply of ready to develop housing sites				Annually					•
NI170	Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years				Annually					•
LP2 (ex Bv106)	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land.	60%	83.25	67.12%	83%					☺
LP-R5	Percentage of householder applications determined within 8 weeks	85	90.67	93	91.74%					☺
LP-R8	Percentage of industrial/economic applications determined within 8 weeks	80	77.78	76	83.33%					☺
LPI 6	Percentage of applications vetted and approved within 5 weeks	85	59	57	45%					☹
LPI 7	Percentage of inspections undertaken in 1 working day	100	100	100	100%					☺
LP-R12	Percentage of alleged breaches responded to within 15 working days	100	83.47	84	98.15%					☺

## Public Protection

Indicator	Description	Target 2008/09	Performance		Achievement 2008/09				Variance from target/comment	
			2006/7	2007/8	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4		
NI182	Satisfaction of businesses with local authority regulation services	Data not currently avail			Annually					1
NI183	Impact of local authority trading standards services on the fair trading environment	Data not currently avail			Annually					2
NI184	Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law	Data not currently avail			Annually					
LP-CS11	Percentage of food premises due to be inspected that were inspected		100%	100%					** resources to deal with smokefree implementation will be redirected to these areas.	
LP-CS12	Percentage of health and safety premises due to be inspected that were inspected		100%	100%						
LP-CS13	Percentage of authorised processes due to be inspected that were inspected	100%	100%	100%	100%				Annual figure	

## Economic Regeneration

Indicator	Description	Target 2008/09	Performance		Achievement 2008/09				Variance from target/comment	
			2007/8	2006/7	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4		
NI151	Overall employment rate (Working-age)	71%	70.4%		*				Annual	
NI152	Working age people on out of work benefits	18.5%	18.7%		18.7%				Annual	
NI153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods	48.8%	49.8%		49.5%				Annual	
NI171	New business registration rate	Data not available until 2009							Annual	
NI172	Small businesses in an area showing employment growth	Data will be calculated by Central Government on behalf of all local authorities								
NI173	Flows on to incapacity benefits from employment	Data not currently available							Annual	
EC4	a more diverse profile of employment by industrial category	9%	8.8%		8.8%					☹
LPI -EC1	Responded to workspace enquiries within 3 working days	100%	100%	95%	100%					☺
LPI -EC2	Process grant applications within 8 weeks	100%	100%	100%	100%					☺
LPI -EC3	Jobs created through business grants and other assistance	70	110	116	45					☺
LPI -EC4	Occupancy rates of WVDC (or jointly owned) factory units & workshops	95%	92%	85%	88%					☹
LPI-EC5	Issue at least 10 press releases	20	31	29	8					☺
Climate Change										
NI186	Per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area		-	-					Annual	
NI187	Tackling fuel poverty - people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating		-	-					Annual	
NI188	Planning to adapt to climate change	Level 1	-	-					Annual	

\* Query outstanding re indicator

## QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

## APPEALS

Appeal	Decision	Reason
3/2006/0815 Proposed erection of one and a half storey detached dwelling with attached garden shed, greenhouse and parking spaces at land between Love's Folly and No. 2 Wear View, Crawleyside Bank, Crawleyside, Stanhope	DISMISSED	The Inspector considered that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proposal would have a detrimental effect on the creation of sustainable patterns of growth in the local area, having regard to national, regional and local policies of development restraint outside established settlements with a good range of local facilities.</li> <li>2. The proposal would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the countryside, with special reference to the landscape quality of the area.</li> <li>3. The proposal would result in some potential harm to the safety of highway users.</li> </ol>
3/2007/0300 Proposed demolition of barn and erection of dwelling house and associated garage/garden storage building at land rear of 54-57 Front Street, Sunnyside.	DISMISSED	The Inspector considered that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not every brownfield site is suitable for residential development.</li> <li>2. Sunnyside is not a main urban area. It does not possess the characteristics likely to commend it for the development envisaged under the emerging policies of the RSS.</li> <li>3. If the appeal proposal were allowed, the decision would serve to undermine a carefully considered resolution of the Council designed to update the interpretation and operation of the "saved" policies with the aim of bringing them more into line with the emerging parts of the "new" Development Plan system.</li> <li>4. The proposal would constitute unacceptable development in an unsustainable location beyond the village limit.</li> </ol>
3/2007/0434 Proposed change of use from bakery and coffee shop to adult gaming centre at part of ground floor, 58 Newgate Street, Bishop Auckland.	ALLOWED	The Inspector considered that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Given that there are no external alterations proposed the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the Bishop Auckland Conservation Area.</li> <li>2. The evidence demonstrated that the nature of amusement centres, particularly those involving amusement with prizes machines, is that they are likely to attract both dedicated customers and those on more general shopping trips. In terms of their contribution to pedestrian flows and the general level of activity and expenditure, amusement centres display similar characteristics to many Class A1 uses.</li> <li>3. The proposal would represent only a modest extension to the existing amusement centre and it would not result in an undue concentration of such uses in the primary shopping area. The</li> </ol>

		proposal would contribute positively to the variety of uses within the primary shopping area.
3/2007/0903 Proposed erection of bungalow with attached double garage at land adjoining (east of) 14 Steels Houses, West Roddymoor	DISMISSED	<p>The Inspector considered that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proposed bungalow would not be within the development limits of any settlement. The dwelling was not required for the purposes of agriculture or forestry, or any other activity that would justify a rural location. The proposal is in conflict with Local Plan policy.</li> <li>2. Due to the location of the site, it would be likely the occupants of the dwelling would make trips by car for a wide range of purposes, including employment, education, shopping, health care and leisure. The proposed development would not be consistent with the Government's objectives, as set out in PPG13, of reducing the need to travel, especially by car; and promoting accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling. Also the proposal conflicts with Government policy as set out in PPS3 to ensure new housing is developed in suitable locations which offer a range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.</li> </ol>
3/2007/0456 Proposed removal of condition no. 12 of 3/98/329 to allow 24 hours opening, at ASDA supermarket, 6 South Church Road, Bishop Auckland	ALLOWED	<p>The Inspector considered that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Condition 11 (night time noise limit) was not proposed to be changed. The acoustic evidence presented on behalf of ASDA was a comprehensive and robust analysis of the existing situation. There was no evidence that at present the operation of the store is causing significant or widespread noise problems, or that the relevant restrictions in the planning permission were being breached. The applicant's assessment of the likely effects of unrestricted opening on local noise levels is reliable. There will be only a limited night time trade. Car parking would take place 90m and more from the nearest houses and conditions volunteered by ASDA would ensure no noise nuisance to local residents.</li> <li>2. Extended opening hours would not lead to unacceptable behaviour by youths outside the store.</li> </ol> <p>The application was allowed with conditions including a restriction on Sunday opening to 10:00-16:00 hours.</p>



<p>3/2007/0651 Proposed two semi-detached stone dwellings, land adjacent to 6 Low Dowfold, Crook</p>	<p>DISMISSED</p>	<p>The Inspector considered that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The site was well outside the development limits of Crook. The proposal would not accord with national, regional or local housing policies relating to sustainable development.</li> <li>2. The proposed development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the Crook Conservation Area. The dwellings would result in an extension of suburban-type development on a currently open area, in a prominent location.</li> <li>3. The proposed development would be significantly detrimental to the safety of existing highway users and future occupiers of the proposed dwellings. The proposed access would have inadequate visibility splays and there would not be sufficient parking provided within the site.</li> </ol>
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## COMPLAINTS

Origin of Complaint	Allegation	Response
<p>1. Stage 1 Resident</p>	<p>Requests for answers ignored. Questions in respect of an extension to a neighbouring property that has been granted planning permission. Questions also in respect of enforcement action to be taken against the complainant.</p>	<p>All queries answered.</p>
<p>2. Stage 1 Resident</p>	<p>Annoyed the Council has ignored legal advice and decided to carry on fighting the ASDA appeal, wasting Council Tax Payers' money.</p>	<p>Informed the complainant that the Development Control Committee considered they had made the right decision to refuse extended opening hours.</p>
<p>3. Stage 1 Resident</p>	<p>Concerned that a letter to the Environment and Regeneration Department had been recorded as an objection when all he had wanted was to express some reservations.</p>	<p>An apology was made. Agreed the letter had been wrongly reported as an objection.</p>

4. Stage 1 Resident	Complaint about a fence to be erected outside of house.	The Council considered that the fence would provide the necessary privacy between properties on Gent Road and be visually acceptable.
5. Stage 2 Resident	Concerned about glare off the roof of a recently approved dwelling to the rear of the complainant's property.	Explained that the development has been built in accordance with the approved plans. The occupier of the house was asked to consider taking action to address the problem.
6. Stage 1 Applicant	Complaint about the way an application has been handled.	Explained ways of overcoming the objections to the submitted proposals in order for the application to be granted planning permission.