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Michael Laing Chief Executive

10th July 2007

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Meeting of the **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **WEDNESDAY, 18th JULY 2007** at **6.00 P.M.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To consider the Minutes of the last Meeting of the Committee held on 13th June 2007 as a true record. Copies previously circulated
3. To consider the revision of the Abandoned Vehicles Policy and Practice. 1 - 10
4. To consider the situation regarding the events calendar 2007/2008. 11 - 17
5. To consider the draft Play Strategy. 18 - 54
6. To consider the "Waste Strategy for England" issued by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. 55 - 58
7. To receive information regarding the financial performance of partnerships of the Strategic Community Department. 59 - 66
8. To consider such other items of business which, by reason of special circumstances so specified, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive

Members of this Committee: Councillors Mrs Bolam, Mrs Carrick, Gale, Mrs Hardaker, Harrison, Hayton, Kay, Kingston, Laurie, Murphy*, Miss Ord, Perkins, Mrs Pinkney, Seabury*, J Shuttleworth, Ward and Zair.

*ex-officio, non-voting capacity.

Chair: Councillor Kingston

Deputy Chair: Councillor Laurie

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



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

18 JULY 2007

Report of the Director of Strategic Community
ABANDONED VEHICLES POLICY AND PRACTICE

purpose of the report

To advise Committee of the revision of the Council's abandoned vehicles policy and accompanying procedure guide.

background

- 1 The procedure for dealing with abandoned vehicles has been revised to take into account the provisions of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, and the new management arrangements following the Council's restructure.

policy

- 2 The Council's policy will be to respond to all reports of abandoned vehicles by investigating such reports within 2 working days, making whatever enquiries are necessary to establish the abandonment of such vehicles and the status of the land, issuing the requisite notices as is appropriate subject to the outcome of those enquiries, then to make arrangements for the vehicle's removal by an approved contractor, where it will be held to await disposal by the County Council.

procedure

- 3 The procedure now incorporates:
 - guidelines for investigation
 - guidelines for removal
 - provisions for disposal

financial implications

- 4 No additional financial expenditure has been identified.

human resource implications

- 5 No human resource implications have been identified.

legal implications

- 6 Local authorities are under a duty under Section 3 of the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978, (as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005) to remove a vehicle, which is abandoned in their area, on public land.

performance indicators

- 7 The Council is measured on its performance in dealing with abandoned vehicles by the following Best Value Performance Indicators:
- BV218a - % of abandoned vehicles investigated in 24 hours
 - BV218b -% of abandoned vehicles removed in 24 hours following investigation

outcomes for customers

- 8 Customers will benefit from having a policy that is modern, clear and has been consulted upon. They will also benefit from clear standards of service and consistent regulation.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 That the Abandoned Vehicles Policy and Procedure be approved.
- 2 That the Policy and Procedure be updated as appropriate to reflect changes in legislation, guidance and good practice.

Officer responsible for the report
Michael Laing
Strategic Director for the Community
Ext 281

Author of the report
Alan Northcote
AD Neighbourhood Management
Ext 321

Wear Valley District Council Abandoned Vehicles Procedures Guide

Introduction

1. The Council can deal with vehicles, which are identified as abandoned:
 - On "roads" (i.e. a highway or road to which the public has access; this will include adopted highways, footpaths, and estate access roads) See Page 2 for definitions of roads, highways and carriageways.
 - On land in the open air (with the consent of any occupier of such land) See page 4 for definition of occupier.
2. The principal legislation is to be found in the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 (RDAA) and this deals with the abandonment of **motor** vehicles. Other vehicles are dealt with by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA). The flowchart attached deals with the abandonment of **motor** vehicles as defined below.

Motor Vehicles - Refuse Disposal Amenity Act 1978

3. The term "motor vehicle" includes:
 - Mechanically propelled vehicles intended or adapted for use on roads whether or not it is in a fit state for such use
 - Any trailer intended or adapted for use as an attachment to such a vehicle
 - Any chassis or body with or without wheels, appearing to have formed part of such a vehicle or trailer (e.g. vehicles with flat tyres, wheels removed or broken windows)
 - Anything attached to such a vehicle or trailer
 - Caravans

Vehicle Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

4. The term "Vehicle" includes:
 - Any vehicle, whether or not it is in a fit state for use on roads.
 - Any chassis or body, with or without wheels, appearing to have formed part of such a vehicle and any load carried by, and anything attached to, such a vehicle.
5. Any vehicle which does not come within the definition of a Motor Vehicle within the RDAA 1978 requires a prescribed notice, delivery to the occupier in a prescribed manner and objection from the occupier in a prescribed manner.

Abandoned

6. There is no legal definition. The following characteristics are generally common to abandoned vehicles and one or more of the following will be taken into account when deciding whether a vehicle is abandoned:
 - Untaxed

- No current vehicle keeper on the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's (DVLA) record
 - Stationary for a significant period of time (If there were litter, long grass or weeds under the vehicle, this could indicate that it had not been moved for some time.
 - Lacking one or both of its number plates
 - Significantly damaged or vandalised, run down or un-roadworthy i.e. flat tyres, rusty brake discs, broken windows, mouldy exterior or interior
 - Absence of number plate(s)
 - Open or unlocked doors making the vehicle insecure
 - Containing items of waste such as tyres
 - Burnt out
 - Obscure location i.e. middle of field
 - Has been "hot-wired"
7. A vehicle should not be considered abandoned purely for failing to display a valid tax disc. DVLA records keeper and taxation details and these should be checked on-line using either the registration number or vehicle identity number (VIN).

Highway

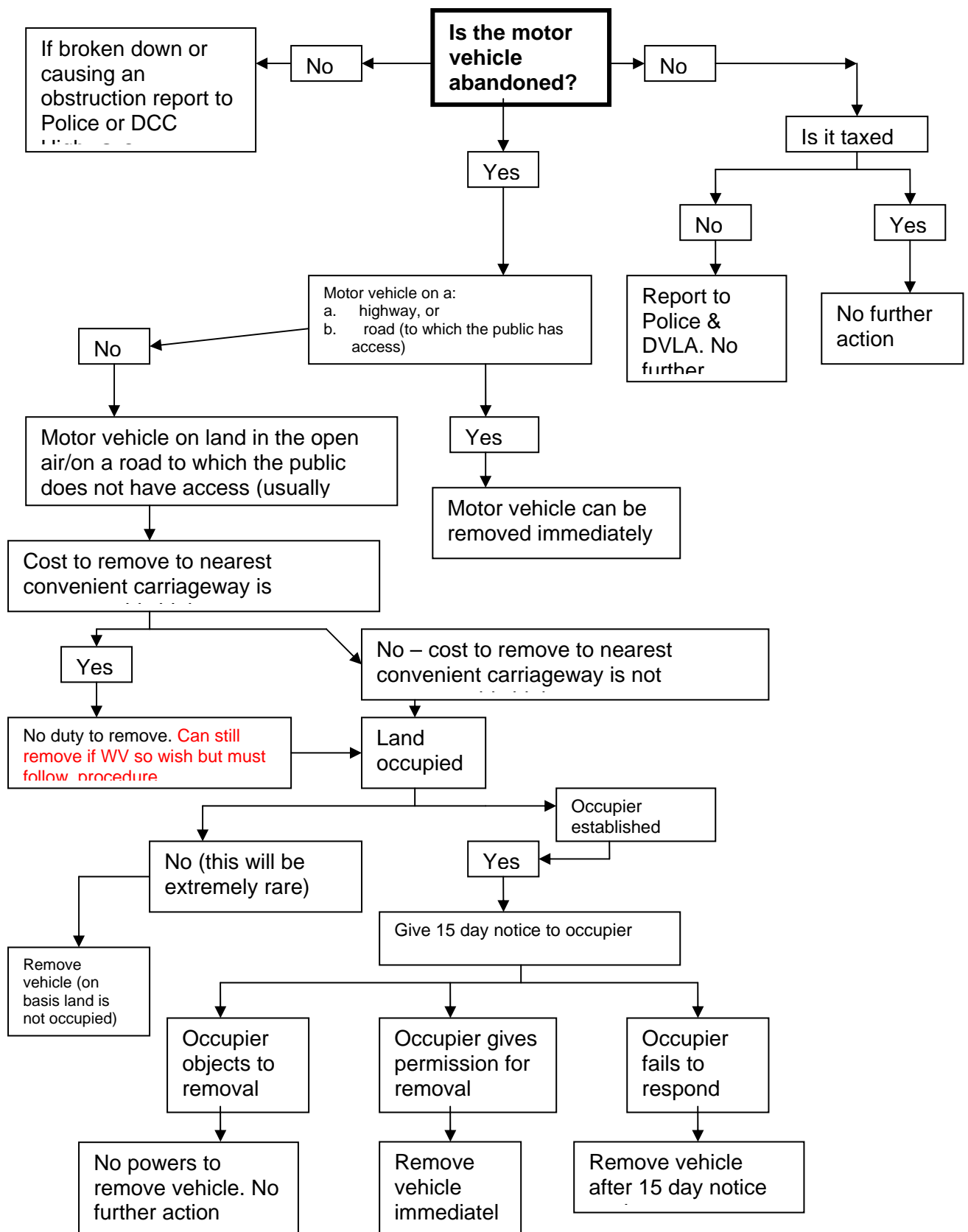
8. It is a road in respect of which there is an established right for the public to pass and re-pass, includes public footpaths and bridle ways as well as all "roads" as defined by the Road Traffic Act 1961. This does not include a car park.

Road

9. A road is any highway and any other road to which the public has access. A road does not have to be a highway. The road must be accessed by the public as members of the public not as persons having a special interest to cross over it. This does not include a car park.

Carriageway

10. A way constituting or comprised in a highway, being a way (other than a cycle track) over which the public have a right of way for the passage of vehicles.
11. The procedures for removal and disposal of motor vehicles are set out in the flow chart attached.
12. The main changes that the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 brought about with regard to abandoned vehicles are:
- It enables all abandoned vehicles to be removed from any road as soon as they are identified, including roads on private housing estates.
 - There is no longer a requirement for the Council to wait until the licence on an abandoned vehicle has expired.
 - Abandoned vehicles that are only fit for destruction will be destroyed immediately, with no obligation to trace the vehicle's keeper
 - Those that do not display a licence and number plate will also be disposed of immediately, with no obligation to trace the keeper.



Notes on the Removal of abandoned vehicles

Powers of Entry

Section 8 of the RDDA states that any person authorised in writing by a local authority may at any reasonable time enter any land for the purposes of investigating whether a motor vehicle is abandoned or for the removal of such abandoned vehicle. Relevant officers must also be authorised to do so in writing.

15 day Notice

If a motor vehicle has been identified as abandoned under section 3 of the RDDA 1978 and is on land in the open air/ on a road to which the public does not have access (usually private land) and the occupier of the land has been established, they can be served a 15 day notice.

A notice must be served on the person who appears to be an occupier of the land on which the vehicle is situated (there is no prescribed notice required but it should follow a similar format to the prescribed notice required by RTRA1984. Legal Services can carry out a search of the Land Registry which will reveal the owner of the land if the land is "registered land" which means sold since December 1989. The occupier has 15 days from the day when the notice is given to the occupier to object. Service of the notice is not prescribed but it should follow the prescribed method detailed in Regulation 8 of the Removal and Disposal of Vehicles Regulations 1986: Addressing the notice - the notice must be addressed to either:

- The person who appears to be the occupier by name, or
- "The occupier of [enter description of land- e.g. that land shown edged red on the attached plan]"

Occupier

There is no legal definition. An occupier will include:

- the owner
- the tenant
- the licensee or person who has possession of and control over the property.

On identification of the land, Legal Services can carry out a search of the Land Registry, which will reveal ownership details (if the land is registered).

Delivering the notice can be carried out by either:

- Delivering it personally to the person who appears to be the occupier; or
- By leaving it at his/her usual or last known place of abode; or
- Sending it in a prepaid registered letter, or by recorded delivery service, and addressed to him/her at his/her last known place of abode; or
- Where the occupier is a company the delivery must be addressed to "the secretary" of the company; or
- By affixing the notice to some object of the land and addressed "Important - This Communication affects your property"

If a vehicle has been identified as abandoned under RTRA 1984 then:

- The form of notice must be in a prescribed form (as attached) if the vehicle does not fall within the meaning of a motor vehicle of RDDA 1978.
- Addressing the notice - the notice must be addressed to either:
- The person who appears to be the occupier by name, or
- "The occupier of [enter description of land -e.g. that land shown edged red on the attached plan]"

The occupier and service of the notice are as set out above. Objection by the occupier must be made in writing and made within 15 days of the day when the notice was served and:

- sent by post addressed to the authority or
- left at their office.

Recovery of Expenses where vehicle removed under Section 3 RDDA 1978

There are prescribed charges for:

- Removal (£105)
- Storage (£12 per period of 24 hours or part thereof) Durham County Council are responsible for this.
- Disposal (£50) Durham County Council are responsible for this.

These costs can be recovered as a simple contract debt (so enforcement through County Court)

Best Value Performance Indicators

The Government have set two BVPI's for abandoned vehicles:

- BVPI 218a - Percentage of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours of them reported.
- BVPI 218b - Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the Council is legally entitled to remove the vehicle.

Summary of removal procedure

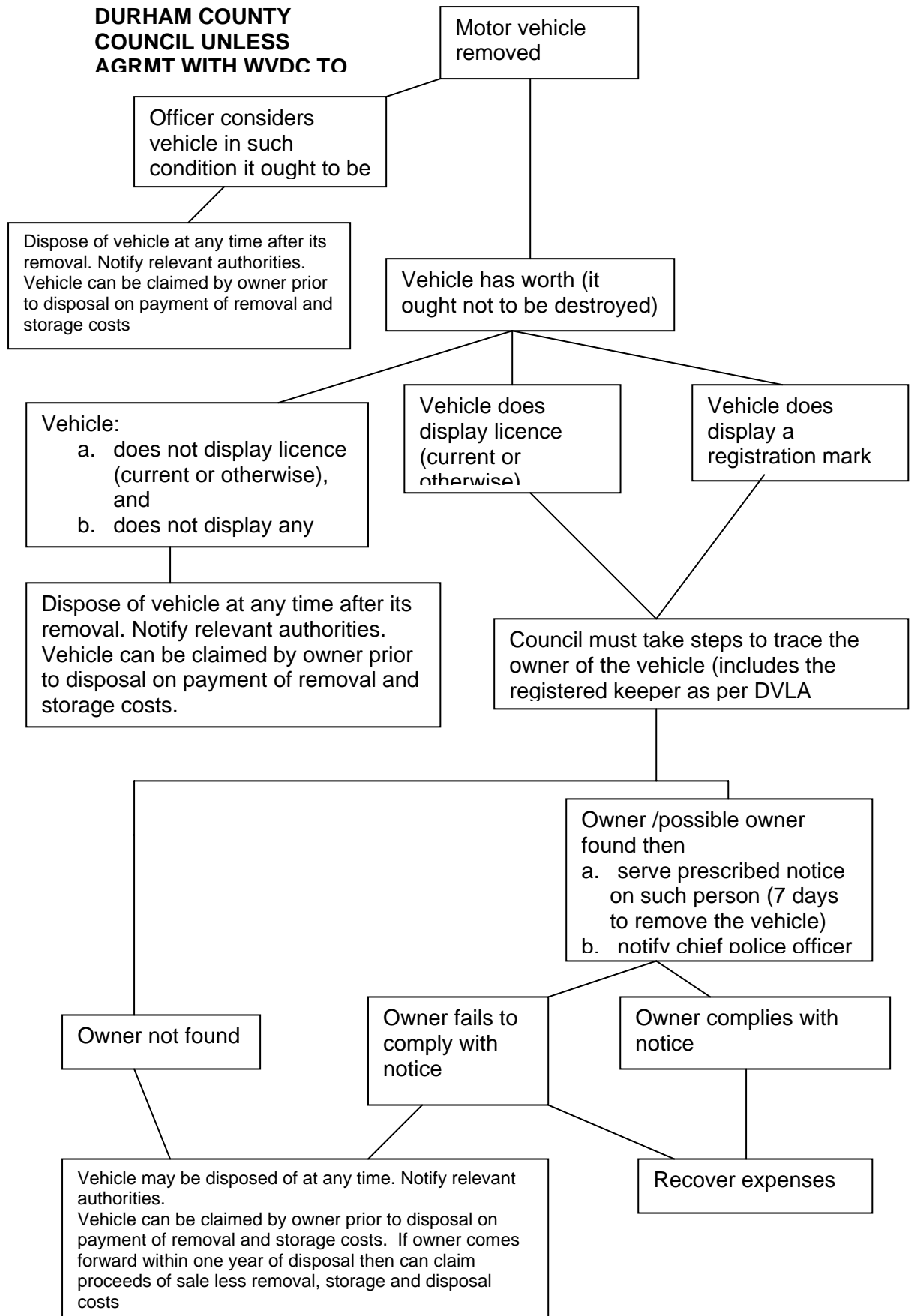
If, in the officer's opinion, the vehicle does NOT meet the criteria of an abandoned vehicle:

- If it is broken down or causing an obstruction the police or Durham County Council Highways Department should remove the vehicle and no further action is required.
- If it is not taxed report to DVLA and no further action is required.

If in the officer's opinion, the vehicle DOES meet the criteria of an abandoned vehicle:

- If the vehicle is on the "road" or on land forming part of a highway the vehicle can be removed immediately (See disposal procedure).
- If the vehicle is NOT on the "road" or on land forming part of a highway, but is on land which is occupied, then a fifteen day notice is given to the occupier (this does not have to be fixed to the vehicle).
- If the occupier gives permission for the vehicle to be removed then it will be removed immediately (see disposal procedure).
- If the occupier objects, the objection must be resolved between the council and the occupier.
- If the occupier does not object then the vehicle will be removed after expiry of the fifteen day notice (see disposal procedure)

**DISPOSAL POWERS –
DURHAM COUNTY
COUNCIL UNLESS
AGRMT WITH WVDC TO**



Notes on the disposal of abandoned vehicles

Where the word dispose is mentioned in the flowchart it should be read “dispose as the local authority think fit”. In the case of a vehicle with no worth then this would suggest dispose means send to scrap. If the vehicle has worth then the word dispose suggests arrange for it to be sold.

Section.3(7) RDAA 1978 any vehicle removed by the council of a district... shall be delivered by them to the county council in accordance with such arrangements (including arrangement as to the sharing of any expenses incurred or sums received by the district council and the county council under this Act) as may be agreed between the district council and the county council, or, in default of agreement, as may be determined by arbitration.

Steps to be taken to find the owners of motor vehicles (Reg 12 The Removal and Disposal of Vehicles Regs 1986)

Unless the Authority has found a person who appears to them to be the owner of the vehicle and have sent a prescribed notice to him/her

1. Vehicle has GB registration mark
 - a. Ascertain the keeper of the vehicle from DVLA records and then:
 - b. Send notice to that person (see below for form of notice), and also
 - c. Give notice to Chief Police Officer & HPI Ltd and ask if they can make enquiries to find the owner of the vehicle
2. Vehicle does not carry a GB registration but carries a Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands or other country – refer to Reg 12.
3. Vehicle has no registration mark apply to Chief Police Officer giving specified information and enquiring if s/he has any information as to the owner of the vehicle.

Serving a notice on an owner requiring removal of vehicle

The notice shall be served by any of the following methods:

- a. by delivering it to the person who appears to be the owner;
- b. by leaving it at his usual or last known place of abode;
- c. by sending it in a prepaid registered letter, or by recorded delivery, addressed to his usual or last known place of abode;
- d. if the owner is a company, delivering it to the secretary or sending by prepaid registered letter or recorded delivery addressed to the secretary of the company.

The Notice must state:

- a. whether the vehicle has been removed from the place where it appeared to have been abandoned and if so to what place it has been removed
- b. stating if he is the owner of the vehicle the Authority require him to remove the vehicle from their custody on or before a specified date (this must be a date 7 days from the date the notice served on him – in practice it would always be best to give a couple of days extra
- c. stating that unless the vehicle is removed by him on or before that date the Authority intend to dispose of it.

A copy of the notice shall

Notification of disposal to relevant authorities

Vehicle has GB registered mark

- a. DVLA,
- b. Chief Police Officer of Durham Constabulary,
- c. HPI Limited, and

d. Anyone appearing to WVDC to be the owner before disposal

Recovery of expenses

The County Council is entitled to recover expenses for:

- a. removal of the vehicle; and
- b. storage of the vehicle; and
- c. disposal of the vehicle

The amounts are recoverable as a simple contract debt, so are recoverable through the County Court from the owner, person leaving vehicle in place from which it was removed or person convicted of offence of abandoning vehicle.

Prescribed Sums and Charges (The Removal, Storage and Disposal of Vehicles (Prescribed Sums and Charges etc.) Regulations 1989 as amended

Removal	£105
Storage	£12 for each period of 24 hours or part thereof
Disposal	£50

Summary of disposal procedure

The disposal procedure is the responsibility of Durham County Council as they are the Waste Disposal Authority. If in the officer's opinion, the vehicle is in such a condition that it ought to be destroyed then it will be destroyed as soon as this can be arranged. The council does NOT have to wait for the expiry of a licence.

If, in the officer's opinion the vehicle is NOT in such a condition that it ought to be destroyed:

- If there is neither a licence displayed nor a registration mark then the vehicle will be destroyed as soon as this can be arranged.
- If a licence is displayed then the council must take steps to identify the owner of the vehicle via DVLA records:
- If no owner can be identified then the vehicle will be destroyed as soon as this can be arranged.
- If the owner can be identified they will be served a notice requiring them to remove the vehicle within 7 days.
- If the vehicle is removed, steps will be taken to reclaim costs by issuing a fixed penalty notice.
- If the vehicle is not removed then the council can dispose of the vehicle, however they think fit including sale of the vehicle.
- The Council will inform the relevant authorities such as DVLA that the vehicle has been disposed.



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

18 JULY 2007

Report of the Director of Strategic Community **EVENTS 2007/8**

purpose of the report

To bring members up to date on the situation regarding events and to seek approval for the events calendar 2007/8

background

- 1 Members will be aware of the major events organised annually by the cultural services team in the Community Department. These major events are made up of the Fireworks & Bonfire Display, Weardale Triathlon, Proms in the Park, and Auckland Castle 10K Road Race. This year however a number of factors beyond our control have meant that we need to examine our organisation of these events closely.

the choices the council has to make

- 2 This report outlines the situation as it has been for a number of years with special events. The council in this report is faced with the choice of keeping the current provision of the Triathlon, 10k Road Race with limited resident and member involvement. Due to the new regulations if the events were sanctioned, the earliest these events could take place would be 2008/09. The second option would be for a more community focussed events programme which will include member involvement and also work to achieve the council's objectives and increased community involvement. The proposed programme increases the number of events we will attend, organise and participate significantly as you can read in the report.

weardale triathlon

- 3 This event takes place in June and this event can hold up to 120 competitors and therefore limited in expansion in terms of numbers. The event is very popular and has been running for over fifteen years; each year it is always fully subscribed. The event itself is made up of three parts, swim, cycle and run. The 750 metre swim takes place in Stanhope open Air Swimming Pool followed by the 20km cycle which takes competitors from Stanhope on the A689 to the market place in

Wolsingham and return to Stanhope Open Air Pool. The last part of the event is a 5km run which follows the minor road out towards Horsley Hall and return across the ford.

- 4 In terms of the profile of competitors in 2006, 9.6% were Wear Valley residents, 12% were residents of County Durham, and the rest of the field was made up of north east constituents. The annual post event customer satisfaction questionnaire shows that less than 1% stay overnight in the district.

what has changed?

- 5 This year sees the introduction of new guidelines from the Home Office with regard to organising safe events on the highway. These new guidelines have been adopted by the Wear Valley Safety Advisory Group. The Safety Advisory group exists to ensure that organisations (voluntary and public) have a one stop shop to assist them in organising safe events. The group is made up of Wear Valley District Council (T Carver & J Wynn), Durham County Council, Highways & Public transport, Durham Constabulary – Crook Police, B/A Police, Traffic Management, Fire Service. The adoption of this new advice has now altered the group's response to any events taking place on the highway. In particular all cycle events will only go ahead with a full road closure. This includes the Weardale Triathlon and would mean closing the A689 between Wolsingham and the junction with Stanhope Open Air Pool, Stanhope for approximately 3 hours – a full road closure. Although not financially prohibitive this would mean diversions as far away as Corbridge for some traffic and no exit route for the population between the road closures.
- 6 Consideration should also be given to the link between this event and the council's objectives against value for money. With only 9.6% of entrants Wear Valley residents it contributes to the council's aim of a healthy population in a very minor way and with a cost of £19.60 per participant officers believe that the cost far outweighs the benefit and the money could be utilised more effectively.

auckland castle 10K road race

- 7 This event has known regional and national status with the inclusion of international athletes for some years showing a field of approximately 650 runners at its peak. Due to the departure of a member of staff with contacts in the sporting world there have been a loss of invited athletes. In 2006 there was a reduced field of 368 runners, made up of 20% Wear Valley Residents and 29% Residents of County Durham, the rest been made up of regional and national entries. The organisation of the race has been done in conjunction with Crook & District Athletics Club and we have sought their views on possible changes to the event.

what has changed?

- 8 The responsibility for the event has recently changed which has led to this event not having a place in this year's race calendar. Analysis shows that cost per head of athletes participating in 2006 rose to £12.46. It is questionable that this is the best way to contribute towards the council's objectives and we believe this could be done in a more efficient and effective way. Our partners Crook & District Athletics Club have advised us that they believe a smaller 5k mass participation event would be more suited to this area and have invited us to work with them on a proposal for 2008. A smaller event would attract more participants and linked to some of our existing projects we would be in a better position to work towards the council's objectives.

fireworks and bonfire

- 9 Without a doubt this event is the showcase event for the council. It attracts approximately 5000 people who come to share the display and attractions. The team do not anticipate any major changes to this event.

proms in the park

- 10 The first Proms in the Park concert was held in the grounds of Auckland Castle in September 2004. This public evening concert coincides with Wear Valley District Council's civic function at Auckland Castle. The outdoor concert features the locally based Cobweb Orchestra and guest musicians. In 2005 Weardale based soprano soloist, Lesley Anne Dawes joined the Orchestra, and the concert sold out on the door. In 2006 the Cobweb Orchestra was joined by Durham Constabulary Choir and although ticket capacity had increased the event sold out in advance. The event has been featured in the ONE regional tourism magazine and its profile continues to grow. Wear Valley District Council has secured Grants for the Arts funding through the Arts Council of England to enable the nationally acclaimed soprano soloist, Catherine Bott (BBC Radio 2, Radio 3) to perform alongside the Cobweb Orchestra on Sunday 8 July 2007.
- 11 The authority will support a public concert by 11 piece Edinburgh based Orkestra Del Sol in the grounds of Auckland Castle as part of the Durham Brass Festival, on the evening of Friday 6 July 2007, ensuring greater value is obtained from the infrastructure prepared for the Proms.
- 12 In addition to performer fees, the technical and marquee hire costs of the Proms event are significant for a single performance. Expanding the event into a weekend festival in 2008/9, with opportunities to generate greater ticket and grant income will be considered.

proposal

- 13 The team responsible for organising and executing these events have met to look at alternative proposals for this year that can contribute to the council's objectives more effectively. Discussions were based around how we could assist our community in running celebratory events and link this to our ongoing programme. We have come up with the following calendar;

Proms in the Park – as detailed above this event will continue to grow and further reports will be presented as and when necessary.

Bonfire & Fireworks – there will be no changes to this event other than small organisational issues.

Junior Schools Cross Country – an annual participation event at Peases West Sports ground, with over 200 children running, links to the health agenda and CPAC work for pre and post activities to keep young people involved

Teddy Bears Picnic – annual event in the park at Auckland Castle with varied activities including face painting, bouncy castle, this event is well attended by communities from all over the district with approximately 200 parents and children involved.

Walking Festival – New Event - A programme of small walks between May and July culminating in a large walking event in and around Auckland Castle. The programme will include led walks, school participation walks and the annual ton up challenge event. Other projects in the department can contribute to this event, i.e. fixed facilities – using this as a challenge event for new gym users, cpac project – using this as a target to improve fitness levels.

Bishop Auckland St Mary's FC Football Tournament – a weekend festival at Bishop Auckland College with approximately 500 young people participating from the district and other areas, links to the CPAC programme and the work of the Sports Club Development Officer.

Wear Valley Cup – Crook Town FC – New event - a junior eleven-a-side tournament played at the Millfield ground, Crook, teams will be from the district, links to the CPAC programme and the work of the Sports Club Development Officer.

Crook Golf Festival – New Event - Crook Golf Club are hosting this event to further promote Golf to local communities and especially young people. One of the aims of the festival is to make the community aware that Golf is not an elite sport and that equipment can be loaned from the club and membership fees are low. The cpac project will be bringing young people to this event; this will develop an ongoing link between the club and the project.

Cricket Festival – the Wear Valley Cricket Development Group (WVDC are secretariat) support the organisation of the Kwik Cricket Festivals which take place in Willington, Crook, Bishop Auckland and Weardale. The local clubs host the festivals which are also part of the School Sport Co-ordinator programme. This helps build the school/club links and the development group play an important role in the identification of age groups, the CPAC programme use the festivals to refer their participants.

Willington Youth Football Tournament – New Event - a weekend event attracting youth teams from the across the district and the county, this

tournament will be organised with the CPAC programme, the club and the Sports Club Development Officer

Wolsingham Football Academy Tournament – a one day event attracting teams from the district targeting three age groups (U8, U12, U15), this tournament will be organised with the CPAC programme, the club and the Sports Club Development Officer

Woodhouse Close Carnival – a community based annual carnival, we will be providing a football tournament for the young people as part of the tournament, a development tool to attract new people to the CPAC programme

St Helens Carnival – a community based annual carnival, we will be providing a football tournament for the young people as part of the tournament, a development tool to attract new people to the CPAC programme

Henknowle Funday – a one day event where will be providing activities for the young people to take part in, a development tool to attract new people to the CPAC programme

Frosterley funday – a celebration event for the village aimed at fun activities for young people, a development tool to attract new people to the CPAC programme.

5K Race – 2008 – New Event - as mentioned earlier on the advice of the local athletics club we are planning to stage a 5K running event in 2008. The aim of developing this event will be to work with local communities and fixed facilities to produce more local runners by linking to our existing programmes and customers.

financial implications

- 14 This proposal would mean changing the allocated budget for this financial year to reflect the new programme. The table below shows the actual spend in the year 2006/07, this figure also has income from some events i.e. Triathlon, 10k Road Race. In the proposed budget for 2007/08 there will be no income from the new race calendar. Payroll budget 2006/2007 was used for the CPAC's time in support of the events programme. For 2007/2008 as the CPAC's have now been mainstreamed it is proposed to use this allocation to support the community events programme.

Special Events Budget breakdown		
	2006/2007 Actual	2007/2008 Revised
Payroll	10,016	0
Special Events - Teddy Bears Picnic, Contribution to Proms in The Park, Fireworks	21868	20000
Community Events Programme	0	9880
Sports Events - Triathlon, 10k Road Race	13088	0
Income	-6940	0
Net Charge	38,032	29880

legal implications

- 15 There are no legal implications

human resource implications

- 16 Whilst there will be an increased workload for officers in the Cultural Services section because of the addition of Community Events this will be managed within the current staffing levels.

it implications

- 17 There are no IT implications.

crime and disorder implications

18 There are no crime and disorder implications.

timescale

19 The new calendar would be effective this financial year.

conclusion

20 This report looks at providing a more community based approach to events realising that it is only through encouraging participation in these events that we can influence the council's objectives of Health and community cohesion.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 The proposed Special Events programme is accepted, and that officers are duly authorised to plan and deliver the programme for 2007/2008.
- 2 Officers work with Crook & District Athletics Club to stage a 5K event in 2008 and present a further report to committee if required.
- 3 The specials events budget be re-allocated to reflect the changed calendar.

Officer responsible for the report
Michael Laing
Strategic Director for the Community
Ext 281

Author of the report
Julie Wynn
Cultural Services Officer
Ext 349



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

18 JULY 2007

Report of the Director of Strategic Community
DRAFT PLAY STRATEGY FOR WEAR VALLEY

purpose of the report

To consider the draft Play Strategy for Wear Valley. A copy of the draft strategy is attached in Annex B.

background

- 1 Officers were authorised to produce a Play Strategy for the district at Community Services Committee on 25th January 2006. The Strategy would then be used as part of a submission to the Big Lottery Fund to access £200,000 of funding for Children's Play.
- 2 Big Lottery launched a £155 million Children's Play Initiative in March 2006. All Councils in England were allocated a nominal amount to which they could apply for based on numbers of children and young people within each local authority area and weighted by levels of poverty. Wear Valley is able to apply for up to £200,000 (the minimum allocation).
- 3 In order to apply for this fund Wear Valley District Council must be able to demonstrate through the production of a robust Play Strategy that it is working towards four identified outcomes to bring about real improvements to communities and to the lives of these most in need. The four outcomes are:
 - a. People having better chances in life
 - b. Stronger communities with more active citizens
 - c. Improved rural and urban environment
 - d. Healthier and more active communities
- 4 Officers within the Community Department have been leading on the production of the strategy and intend to submit an application on behalf of Wear Valley District Council and the newly formed Wear Valley Play Partnership.
- 5 The Strategy has been in development since May 2006 with the support of partners from:

- Auckland Youth and Community Centre
 - LSP Participation Worker for children and young people
 - Sure Start Wear Valley and Sure Start Wear Valley East
 - Woodhouse including St Helen's and Henknowle (WISH) – Play Development project
 - The Four Clocks Project
 - Wear Valley Disability Access Forum
 - Groundwork West Durham and Darlington
 - Durham County Council – Education in the Community
 - Crook Community Partnership.
- 6 The main outputs of the strategy are a substantial play audit of current provision of play services including play sites; wide consultation with Children and Young people; and the formation of 6 objectives and an action plan covering the next 5 years.
- 7 The main outcomes of the strategy include a commitment to developing high quality and sustainable play opportunities for Children and Young People. Identified within the action plan are two elements which will require funding via the application to Big Lottery. These being:
- Enhance provision for Children with disabilities at key locations
 - Building capacity for play development for children aged 5 to 13 within the district.

financial implications

- 8 A successful application to the Big Lottery Fund will release £200,000 for which it is anticipated a proportion will be utilised to improve fixed play facilities. Where the council has Section 106 money available within communities this can be used to enhance play sites to complement the improvements aimed at making play sites more inclusive. Further reports will be presented to committee in order to obtain authorisation to use Section 106 money where appropriate.

legal implications

- 9 There is no legal responsibility for a local authority to provide for children's play. However there is a general duty of care placed on the Council to ensure that the play areas it provides are safe and fit for purpose. The council needs to comply with guidelines issued by RoSPA and the Health & Safety Executive in relation to design, maintenance and inspection. Specifically under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974) to ensure the health and safety of users so far as reasonably practicable. Therefore provision and or enhancement of fixed play facilities will only proceed through proper planning, installation and availability of resources for on going maintenance

human resource implications

- 10 The development of the strategy and its action plan has been reliant on officer time has been built into current workloads. Involvement in the Play partnership will also need to be taken into account with individual work plans.

crime and disorder implications

- 11 The strategy recognises that antisocial behaviour such as vandalism, and bullying are barriers to children's play, the strategy aims to be inclusive and recognises that play itself is a quality diversionary activity that can help children and young people be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution.

equalities implications

- 12 Equalities issues are firmly identified and address within the strategy; its aim and its six objectives.

conclusion

- 13 Officers have been working in partnership with other agencies and the voluntary sector on the production of a play strategy for Wear Valley with the aim:

"Towards the development of high quality and sustainable play opportunities for all children and young people in Wear Valley".

- 14 This play strategy will be used as part of Wear Valley District Councils submission to Big Lottery to help achieve the actions identified.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 Committee approves the draft Play Strategy.

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Wear Valley Play Strategy

‘Towards the development of high quality and sustainable play opportunities for all children and young people in Wear Valley.’

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- What does this tell us about play in Wear Valley
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Executive Summary

Preparation of the first Wear Valley District Play Strategy has shown the importance of play to children and young people across Wear Valley District and demonstrated demand for enhanced provision.

'I enjoy what is available but would like to do more.'
15 year old, Woodhouse Close, Bishop Auckland

The development of Wear Valley District Play Partnership and this strategy will not meet this demand overnight, however they will increase the local delivery capacity and inform effective play development.

Consultation and dialogue with children and young people has identified the breadth of their play and leisure activity and their desire to identify local spaces in which they can play.

While the District supports a number of fixed play sites and hosts a number of play and leisure activities there are barriers which have limited opportunities for children and young people to play as they would wish.

This strategy seeks to develop high quality and sustainable play opportunities for children and young people in Wear Valley District. In order to do this it is necessary to identify objectives and to identify priorities which raise the profile of play, promote best practice and are informed by dialogue with local children and young people.

Enhanced fixed play site provision for children and young people with disabilities and the extension of best practice play development work to priority areas within the District have been identified as priority projects.

Maintenance of the Wear Valley District Play Partnership mechanism and engagement with Wear Valley District Local Strategic Partnership's Children and Young People's Planning Group, and then the emerging Local Children's Boards, will be vital in realising these objectives.

The strategy aims to continue cross working within the council ,in terms of contributing to other plans and strategies such as the Open Space Strategy and the Local Development Framework. Further it enhances partnership working with other agencies and stakeholders.

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council has been invited to apply for £200,000 of Big Lottery Planning for Play funding to implement a portfolio of play projects informed by a district specific play strategy. In order to apply for funding before the programme deadline, 10 September 2007, Wear Valley District Council is required to develop and endorse a Play Strategy.

While examples of best practice in play development exist within Wear Valley District, there is limited infrastructure to support the development of play. Wear Valley District Council manages and maintains a significant number of fixed play sites across Wear Valley. The authority currently employs no posts with exclusive responsibility for play development. A partnership approach was therefore deemed essential to inform development of an effective strategy. Wear Valley District Council supported the development of Wear Valley Play Partnership in 2006/7 which endorsed the following aim for this strategy –

‘Towards the development of high quality and sustainable play opportunities for all children and young people in Wear Valley.’

Wear Valley Play Partnership was in agreement from the outset, that ongoing engagement with children and young people should be a cornerstone of the strategy.

2.1 Purpose and scope

This strategy focuses on play provision for children and young people up to and including 18 years in Wear Valley District. It is recognised that an effective play strategy will practically impact on the lives of children and young people up to and including the age of 18, their older peers and their parents/carers.

This strategy will focus on developing play in Wear Valley District over six years from the development of Wear Valley District Play Partnership in 2006/7 to 2011/12.

Wear Valley Play Partnership recognises that any projects which receive Planning for Play funding from Big Lottery must be completed within three years of confirmation of said funding. The Play Partnership anticipates applying for funding by 10 September 2007 and a decision on funding is anticipated from Big Lottery in December 2007.

This strategy prioritises play opportunities which meet the ‘**3 frees**’ identified by Play England, i.e.–

- Are free to access
- Enable young people to come and go freely
- Enable young people to be free to safely do what they want while there

2.2 What is play?

While Wear Valley District Council manages a number of fixed play sites, the definition of play which informs this strategy is far broader than activity which children undertake solely within fixed play sites.

The Wear Valley District Play Partnership and Children and Young People’s Planning group endorsed the following definition of play for this strategy.

‘Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child Play can be fun or serious. Through play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter.’

From Best Play – what play provision should do for children
NPFA/PLAYLINK/Children’s Play Council (2001) .

2.3 The case for play

Wear Valley District Play Partnership recognises the value of play in it’s own right, as a pleasurable activity for children and young people not governed solely by hard outputs but also softer qualitative ones.

These softer outputs are crucial to improving the self esteem and aspirations of children and young people in Wear valley. Play is recognised as an essential component in the development of children and young people, contributing to many aspects of their lives, achievements, health, education, social interaction and enabling them to become positive members of their community. Play is an essential component of learning, a significant contributor to maintenance of both physical and mental health and of enormous social value in providing children and young people with the tools and skills to work together with peers and other members of communities whatever their age, gender or background. Some of this relates to team work but some skills are specifically aimed at improving self esteem and empowering young people to raise concerns and voice their individual opinions. This leads to a confident community that is able to develop solutions to problems in a pro-active and sustainable way.

Whilst expenditure on children’s play is seen as a discretionary activity for a Local Authority Wear Valley have recognised that support for play reduces the demand for more complex services such as child and adolescent mental health services. Whilst Wear Valley does not provide these complex services it has agreed to support play, for example by support to youth centres from it’s internal Youth Fund as a means of putting prevention services in place to reduce the risks to the children and young people of Wear Valley. However resources do not enable us to target all areas in Wear Valley currently and whilst we are addressing some of the need we need to remove barriers to play in the whole of Wear Valley.

While expenditure on children’s play may be seen as a discretionary activity for a Local Authority, the opportunity to allow children to play is set in law. Firstly the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) gives all children the right to ‘rest and leisure; to engage in age appropriate play and recreational activities’.

The Convention, particularly Article 31 states:

States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Articles 12, 13, 14 and 15 enshrine the rights of the child to freedom of expression and association and for opinions to be heeded.

2.4 What is a play strategy?

A play strategy sets out the long term aim and objectives of what an organisation or group of organisations want to achieve through play. It will be underpinned by strategic analysis of what provision there is available currently, what need there is, what are the gaps in provision both now and in the future. It should also look at what external forces will affect our ability to deliver and what can we do to overcome these and maximise our ability to deliver ie working in partnership, improved integration, pooling of resources or staff and working more effectively with children and young people, parents and carers.

It is important that the strategy is realistic and does not raise expectations but does nevertheless stretch organisations to deliver improvement in play. When the long term strategy has been developed it is important that all partners including statutory agencies, voluntary and community sectors, together with children and young people, parents and carers translate the strategy into a deliverable action plan. This action plan will identify key actions, partners and resources required to deliver the agreed improvements.

Additionally a play strategy provides a clear focus on the priorities and key actions for all partner organisations. It also highlights the importance of play and the benefits that can be forthcoming if play provision is improved together with the risks if it is not. It provides a focus for future resource management and enables play to be seen in the context of broader planning priorities within the Local Area Agreement and Children's Trust overarching strategic vision.

This play strategy seeks to develop high quality and sustainable play opportunities for all children and young people within Wear Valley District. The strategy is informed by an audit of existing provision and identifies key objectives within the District to support the development of play. The strategy also identifies resources, partners and key actions to progress these objectives.

2.5 Why have play strategies?

Wear Valley District Play Partnership is committed to enhancing good quality sustainable play provision which:

- Extends the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.
- Recognises the child's need to test boundaries and responds positively to that need.
- Manages the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm.
- Maximises the range of play opportunities.

- Fosters independence and self-esteem.
- Fosters children's respect for others and offers opportunities for social interaction.

Extract from Children's Play Policy Objectives of good play February 2004.

Developing a play strategy through Wear Valley District Play Partnership will help to identify key local issues and objectives for play, serve to raise the profile of play work, support and inform partnership working and improve delivery of quality provision.

2.6 Methodology – How the strategy has been developed

Organisations were invited to join the Wear Valley Play Partnership through Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership's Children and Young People's Planning Group. A broad range of organisations have engaged with Wear Valley Play Partnership and informed development of this strategy.

Organisations represented in the Wear Valley Play Partnership include–

- Durham County Council – Education in the Community
- Wear Valley District Council
- LSP Participation Worker for Children & Young People
- Sure Start Wear Valley and Sure Start Wear Valley East
- Groundwork West Durham
- Auckland Youth and Community Centre - situated on Woodhouse Close Estate, Bishop Auckland, providing a range of activities for all ages
- WISH – Woodhouse including St Helen's and Henknowle – play development project working with children 5 – 13 years
- The Four Clocks project (The Four Clocks Centre, in Newgate Street Bishop Auckland, is an integrated, serviced and centrally managed community resource centre for the people of the Bishop Auckland area)
- Wear Valley Disability Access Forum Ltd was formed in 1997 as a unique organisation dedicated to improving all aspects of access in Wear Valley.
- Crook Community Partnership -A group of local people and businesses working to improve the quality of life of the residents and town of Crook

Wear Valley District Play Partnership has been supported through Wear Valley District Council.

It should be noted that Wear Valley Play Partnership is not a formally constituted partnership. Wear Valley District Council will manage any Planning for Play funding allocated by Big Lottery to support projects informed by the Wear Valley Play Strategy.

The Play Partnership agreed a core aim for the strategy - *'Towards the development of high quality and sustainable play opportunities for all children and young people in Wear Valley.'*

The first priority of the Play Partnership was to undertake a play audit across Wear Valley District. The LSP Participation Worker for Children & Young People role undertook a central role in involving children and young people in dialogue to inform the play audit and ongoing strategy development. The audit followed the following steps –

Collating and reviewing examples of existing information play in Wear Valley District.

Circulating a questionnaire on play to children and young people across Wear Valley District and collating results

Identifying areas and groups where further dialogue/consultation was deemed necessary by Wear Valley District Play Partnership.

Generating further dialogue with children and young people identified -

- geographic areas (Coundon and Leeholme and St John's Chapel), where there had been limited response to the questionnaire
- specific age groups (children under 5)
- children and young people with disabilities.

Gathering information on fixed play sites managed by Wear Valley District Council, including disability access

Gathering information on range of play provision for children and young people currently available throughout district and ma

Following the audit the Play Partnership met to identify key objectives for the strategy and to develop an action plan.

Strategic Context

3.1 National context

The importance of play to children and young people has gained higher profile in recent years - see **Appendix 1**.

3.2 Regional context

This Play Strategy has been developed at a time of significant change in services for children and young people in County Durham, informed by the Every Child Matters agenda, and the development of Local Area Agreements.

The Local Area Agreement in County Durham aims to improve services for local people, to build on the significant achievements already made through partnership working and to ensure shared understanding around national priorities and shared clarity of thinking around local priorities.

Deprivation continues to be an issue which affects County Durham. The Index of Deprivation, published in 2004, shows that some 33.5% of County Durham's

residents live in areas that have been identified as possessing a measurable level of deprivation on this national scale.

The Index identifies the main problems in County Durham to be: employment deprivation; health deprivation; education and skills deprivation; and income deprivation. The high levels of deprivation are mainly concentrated in East Durham, North West Durham and around the Bishop Auckland/Crook & Willington area.

Measuring the seven constituent districts of County Durham on the same deprivation scale¹ as the County above, gives rise to the following rankings out of the 354 local authorities in England, where a rank of '1' indicates the existence of the highest level of multiple-deprivation.

Local Authority	Deprivation Ranking
Easington	7
Wear Valley	44
Sedgefield	55
Derwentside	67
Chester le Street	116
City of Durham	128
Teesdale	226

3.3 Local Context

Wear Valley District is based upon the valley of the river Wear and is a district of contrasts, with almost half of its 195 square miles falling within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is a mixture of both rural and urban, with the majority of the population living in the more urban eastern part of the district, which includes the market towns of Bishop Auckland and Crook.

Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership

Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) was set up in 2001 and brings together service providers and members of the local community to reduce inequalities and improve services. The LSP has thematic groups to ensure improved delivery takes place and these groups all include community members and key service providers. The thematic groups are:

- Business Forum
- Health
- Community Safety
- Lifelong Learning
- Housing
- Environment
- Children and Young People

Wear Valley District Council

Wear Valley District Council is one of the seven local councils that form the County of Durham. Wear Valley District Council is in the process of developing an Open Space strategy, which has not yet been finalised. While Wear Valley District maintains and manages fixed play sites across the District the authority does not manage any dedicated play posts.

The Vision for Wear Valley District Council is to become "the best District Council in England". The Council has agreed six corporate objectives. These objectives are designed to support the long-term vision developed by the Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership. They are:

Objective 1: THE COUNCIL WILL... use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole of Wear Valley District.

Objective 2: THE COUNCIL WILL... enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.

Objective 3: THE COUNCIL WILL... use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles.

Objective 4: THE COUNCIL WILL... design its services to increase community safety and crime prevention and work closely with key partners to improve crime reduction.

Objective 5: THE COUNCIL WILL... aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.

Objective 6: THE COUNCIL WILL...encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.

Whilst the council has no statutory duty to provide play areas, it is seen as a high priority for residents and is frequently requested by community groups.

There is however a general duty of care on the Council to ensure play areas it does provide are safe and fit for purpose. There are guidelines and codes of practice issued by both RoSPA and the Health & Safety Executive that should be adhered to in relation to inspection and maintenance and failure to do so will be used against the Council in the event of accidents.

There are a number of Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments that have a direct implication for the provision of Play Facilities. These Acts and Statutory Instruments are listed in **appendix 2**.

Play Audit – services available

4.1 Fixed play provision

Wear Valley District Council currently manages 26 fixed play areas across Wear Valley District **Map to go in appendices.**

The National Playing Fields Association provides guidance with regard to play areas in three categories. These are;

Lap – Local Areas for Play

These should be located within the development so that no home is located more than 100 metres by foot from the sites and located to enable supervision by surrounding dwellings.

LEAP – Local Equipped Areas for Play

These should be located within the development so that no home is located more than 400 metres by foot from the site located to enable supervision by surrounding dwellings or from well used pedestrian routes and designed and equipped to meet all current British Safety Standards and recommendations which apply to children's play areas.

NEAP - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play

These are mainly unsupervised sites servicing a substantial residential area, equipped mainly for older children but with opportunities for play for younger children. Such areas are required to be situated within or on the fringe of housing developments (off site), and ideally should be located so that no home is located more than 1000 metres by foot from the site and designed and equipped to meet all current British Safety Standards and recommendations which apply to children's play areas.

Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG 17)

PPG17 however encourages the development of local standards as the government believes that:

Open space standards are best set locally. National standards cannot cater for local circumstances, such as differing demographic profiles and the extent of existing built developments in the area. **(Para 6 PPG17 – 2002).**

Play sites have been entered on Wear Valley District Council's GIS system as part of the Play Audit. Wear Valley District Play Partnership hopes to make this information available to members of the public through Wear Valley District Council's web-site.

Wear Valley Disability Access Forum Ltd has undertaken a disability access audit of these fixed play sites. **See appendix 4**

A number of additional play sites are managed through other agencies within Wear Valley District, including parish councils, and community groups. It is intended that the play strategy will make use of the quality audits undertaken as part of the development of the Councils Open Space strategy, so that local standards can be developed in consultation with residents especially children and young people.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

The Local Development Framework will be a key mechanism to deliver these standards developed through the open space strategy using a variety of methods. The LDF core strategy will include policies which will prescribe types provision from new development; i.e. types of development, thresholds and alternative delivery mechanisms.

4.2 Other Play Provision

As part of the play audit Wear Valley District Play Partnership supported significant dialogue with children and young People, which generated a list of play and leisure opportunities available to children and young people across the District. **See appendix 5**

The LSP Participation Worker for Children and Young People asked children and young people and organisations, including schools and voluntary sector organisations, to identify out of school play opportunities. Children and young people listed several activities with fixed times and charges, however the Partnership is keen to monitor and review this audit on an ongoing basis, as it provides a better picture of locality play provision in the broadest sense.

While many of these opportunities, do not meet the 'three frees' criteria, they help to provide a broader picture of play and leisure provision within the District and to identify gaps in provision. Wear Valley District Play Partnership hopes to make this information available to members of the public through the 2D web-site

The WISH programme (Woodhouse including St Helen's and Henknowle) employs the only full time play development post within Wear Valley District. This post, is an example of best practice, and has undertaken considerable work to build play capacity amongst the voluntary sector and with partner agencies. The post is currently fixed term and works within specific wards determined by funding.

Dialogue and consultation with Children and Young People

5.1 Scope

Wear Valley District Play Partnership brought together and reviewed records of previous consultation on play undertaken by different agencies across Wear Valley District. The majority of this consultation was locality specific.

The Partnership felt it was important to undertake District wide consultation with children and young people, within available resources, focusing on–

- Where children and young people play most often
- Where children and young people would like to play most often
- Barriers to play
- Types of play
- Improvements to play provision

The Partnership then devised and circulated a questionnaire to gather the views of children and young people aged 16 and under across Wear Valley District. The LSP Participation Worker for Children and Young People in Wear Valley and 2D, played a key role in distributing the questionnaire to children and young people via schools and other networks, including face to face meetings to encourage completion.

Response levels were not even across all settlements. Wear Valley District Council collated results which were reviewed by Wear Valley District Play Partnership. The Partnership identified areas where further consultation through different mechanisms was necessary.

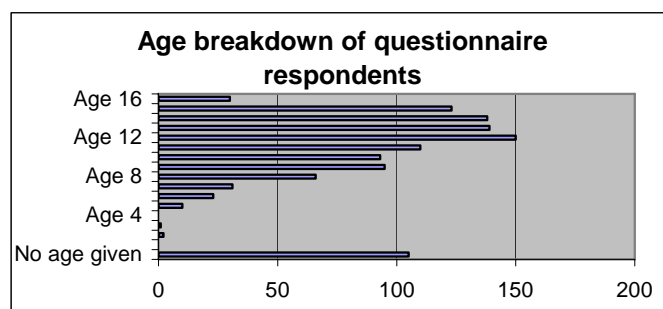
The Partnership utilised available resources, particularly the LSP Participation Worker for Children and Young People in Wear Valley, to progress face to face consultation with children and young people in target areas. This included consultation with children and young people and their parents/carers across Wear Valley District with disabilities, via the Evergreen School and Independence for Disability group **See appendix 6**

The Play Partnership invited representation from Sure Start Wear Valley and Sure Start Wear Valley East within the Play Partnership to ensure the views of children and young people under 5 were considered.

Investing In Children supported young people in consulting with children and young people in upper Weardale, via a special meeting co-ordinated at St John's Chapel.

Wear Valley District Play Partnership Questionnaire 2007

1,116 questionnaires were returned from settlements across Wear Valley District, representing a significant response rate. The population of Wear Valley District from the 2001 census was 61,342 (with 13,560 children and young people aged 0 to 17 year olds . (April 2001)



Where do children and young people play most often?		
Outdoors	714 respondents	64 %
Indoors	356 respondents	32 %
Both	19 respondents	2 %
No answer	27 respondents	2 %
Where children and young people would like to play most often?		
Outdoors	777 respondents	70 %
Indoors	282 respondents	25 %
Both	26 respondents	2 %
No answer	31 respondents	3 %

Respondents could mark more than one than more option in response to the questions below – percentage of total number of responses shown.

Where do you play outside most often?		
Street	634 respondents	44%
Green open space	222 respondents	16%
Fields/Woods	189 respondents	13%
Play parks	165 respondents	12%
Garden	156 respondents	11%
Rivers/Lakes/Ponds	50 respondents	4%
Where do you play indoors most often?		
Your home	748 respondents	57%
Friend's home	372 respondents	28%
Leisure centre	91 respondents	7%
After school club	78 respondents	6%
Village hall/community centre	33 respondents	2%

Reasons why people can't play where they want to play?		
Complaints from neighbours	311 respondents	22%
Play areas too far away	199 respondents	13%
Parents' fear of strangers	155 respondents	10%
Bullying	127 respondents	9%
No indoors clubs around	120 respondents	8%
Your fear of strangers	120 respondents	8%
Fear of traffic	95 respondents	6%
Transport	90 respondents	6%
Dirty play areas	87 respondents	6%
Cost	78 respondents	5%
Other*	57 respondents	4%
No adult supervision	38 respondents	3%

What activities do you like to do?		
Meet up and chat with friends	545 respondents	19%
Football	486 respondents	16%
Swimming	444 respondents	15%
Trampoline	340 respondents	11%
Bowling	269 respondents	9%
Arts and crafts	251 respondents	8%
Other *	241 respondents	8%
Dancing	229 respondents	8%
Horse riding	172 respondents	6%

- Police (12 respondents) and bad weather (10 respondents) were the most significant of these
- Basketball, rugby, cricket and gymnastics were the most common of these

How do you think play could be improved in your area?

666 people raised issues including –

- Improvements to leisure centres – reduction in cost
- New bowling alley/new cinema/ice rink/rock wall provision
- New 5 a side pitches/all weather and full size football pitches
- New tennis and basketball courts
- Construction and maintenance of cycle tracks
- Build/re-open play areas
- Keep parks clean and maintain equipment
- More youth clubs/general clubs
- More policing to stop bullying
- Less policing/more freedom
- CCTV cameras and adult supervision
- Improved transport – reduction in cost
- Reduction in bullying

- Improved lighting

Who do you think could help with play provision?

- **Councils** improve public facilities (sports facilities/youth centres etc), maintain and improve equipment in parks/leisure centres
- **Youth workers** assist in organising more trips, in making youth clubs more accessible, combating bullying
- **Schools** organise more trips, take pupils to local parks and make their facilities more accessible outside of school hours.
- **Parents** comments included taking people out more.
- **Police** – views differed from the positive role of police in tackling bullying to the negative role of preventing young people having fun.

Other comments

Positive comments included people who enjoyed local facilities while wanting more. Negative concerns included number of stray dogs, bullying, vandalism/bad language, dog mess etc.

Findings

The majority of children and young people consulted played outdoors most frequently. The majority of children and young people also confirmed that they would like to play outdoors most often. The street, green spaces and gardens were more common locations for outdoor play than dedicated play sites, although consultation identified the need for children and young people to identify and have access to public spaces in which they could play freely.

Complaints from neighbours/disapproving adults was identified by children and young people as their most significant barrier to playing as they wish. Children and young people are aware that they are often perceived as a 'nuisance' or 'threat' when their intention is to socialise, chat with friends and play with no intention to offend.

Play areas being 'too far away' was the second biggest barrier to play recorded in the questionnaire.

Another significant barrier to play for children and young people is parents/carers fear of 'stranger danger' and concern for the well being and safety of children and young people. A significant proportion of children and young people also declared their own fear of bullying as a major barrier to free play. Children and young people are keen to identify areas for play which they feel comfortable in utilising with their peers.

Children and young people identified the price of some leisure opportunities as a barrier to their participation. Limited public transport to sites where children and young people feel happy to play, whether fixed play sites or open spaces, inhibits play opportunities which would otherwise meet the '3 frees test.'. Public transport issues are of particular significance in the more rural areas of the District.

These points affirm the need for children and young people and their parents/carers to feel confident in identifying public spaces in which they can freely play with minimal risk.

Children and young people were keen to identify areas where they can play safely with their peers, without fear of bullying or intimidation. Ensuring open spaces are available and fixed play provision designed to cater for the requirements of different age groups of children and young people is a significant challenge.

Children and young people felt that the parents/carers, local authorities, schools, youth clubs and youth services had a role to play in developing their play opportunities.

Analysis

6.1 What does this tell us about play in Wear Valley

The play audit and consultation and dialogue with children and young people demonstrate demand for increased play provision.

The District maintains a reasonable level of fixed play provision and has undertaken a disability access audit of sites. While physical access to fixed play sites has improved dialogue with children and young people with disabilities within Wear Valley District identified demand for more equipment on which to play within Wear Valley's fixed play sites.

Dialogue with children and young people with disabilities and their parents/carers identified key play sites where they felt they felt the introduction of such equipment should be prioritised.

The play audit and consultation/dialogue with children and young people has demonstrated that there are gaps in available play provision and leisure opportunities for children and young people, particularly regarding supervised and indoor play activities. Children aged 5 to 13 are targeted less frequently out of school hours than other age groups.

Analysis of the play audit and consultation/dialogue has shown that children and young people in this age range, and their parents/carers, value measured adult supervision. 'Fear of bullying' and 'competing with older children' were commonly voiced by children as barriers to play within the questionnaire. An adult presence can help to –

- Encourage dialogue and creative play
- Create a space where children and young people feel safe to determine their own play.

Wear Valley District Play Partnership identified limited play development capacity as a current weakness in provision, affecting children and young people and the development of the broader play sector.

Objectives for Wear Valley Play Strategy

The following objectives for the Wear Valley District Play Strategy were agreed by Wear Valley District Play Partnership.

- a) To work in partnership with parents/carers, children and young people and other agencies to enable all children and young people to have access to good quality varied play opportunities and services, both indoors and outdoors.
- b) Develop and promote high standards for children and young people's play within Wear Valley and to ensure that services provided have long-term viability and sustainability.
- c) Promote inclusive accessible play opportunities for all children and young people, whatever their age ability and circumstances.
- d) To support the development of appropriately risk managed play opportunities, environments and services that are stimulating and challenging, build confidence, contribute to a healthy lifestyle and are appropriate for children and young people's ages and stages of development.
- e) To ensure children, young people and adults are involved in reviewing and responding to their development of play provision.
- f) Build upon good practice within the district, retain and expand capacity and advocacy for children's play, according to need.

7 Action Plan

This action plan will focus on developing play in Wear Valley District over six years from the development of Wear Valley District Play Partnership in 2006/7 to 2011/12.

Wear Valley Play Partnership recognises that any projects which receive Planning for Play funding from Big Lottery must be completed within three years of confirmation of said funding.

The Play Partnership anticipates applying for funding by 10 September 2007 and a decision on funding is anticipated from Big Lottery in December 2007. It is anticipated that Big Lottery Planning for Play funding, if confirmed, will be allocated to objectives c and f.

- a) To work in partnership with parents/carers, children and young people and other agencies to enable all children and young people to have access to good quality varied play opportunities and services, both indoors and outdoors.

Wear Valley District Council will continue to support the operation of Wear Valley District Play Partnership. Significant progress has already been made by establishing the Partnership, holding regular meetings, undertaking the play audit and developing the Play Strategy. The Partnership relies on effective mechanisms for dialogue and consultation with children and young people to work effectively. Ensuring the Partnership retains capacity to enable effective dialogue and consultation is essential.

- b) Develop and promote high standards for children and young people's play within Wear Valley and to ensure that services provided have long-term viability and sustainability.

Wear Valley District Play Partnership has developed the Wear Valley Play Strategy and will report on progress against the action plan to the Local Strategic Partnership's Children and Young People's Planning Group, and to the Local Children's Board thereafter. This mechanism should support advocacy and awareness of good play provision within the District.

- c) Promote inclusive accessible play opportunities for all children and young people, whatever their age ability and circumstances.

The Wear Valley District Play Partnership aims to provide accessible, high quality, sustainable play opportunities for all children and young people within Wear Valley District. Consultation and dialogue undertaken to inform this strategy has identified demand amongst children and young people with disabilities and their parents/carers for enhanced play equipment provision within priority sites.

Wear Valley District Play Partnership is keen to introduce a higher level of fixed play equipment accessible to children and young people with disabilities within priority sites utilising Planning for Play funding. Ongoing dialogue with children and young people with disabilities and their parents/carers will inform the development of sites and the selection of equipment.

Wear Valley District Play Partnership will continue to engage in dialogue with relevant agencies and will apply for Planning for Play funding to support this initiative from Big Lottery in September 2007.

Subject to the success of the Wear Valley District Council application, on behalf of the Play Partnership, it is anticipated five priority play sites will be equipped with equipment by June 2010.

- d) To support the development of appropriately risk managed play opportunities, environments and services that are stimulating and challenging, build confidence, contribute to a healthy lifestyle and are appropriate for children and young people's ages and stages of development.

Wear Valley District Council will continue to undertake support an effective inspection programme of fixed play provision within Wear Valley District. Wear Valley District Play Partnership will support advocacy around stimulating and challenging play opportunities, environments and services within appropriate arenas.

- e) To ensure children, young people and adults are involved in reviewing and planning the development of play provision.

Wear Valley District Play Partnership regards children and young people within Wear Valley District as the experts in their own play provision and will utilise appropriate mechanisms to ensure dialogue with them is effective and of mutual benefit. Wear Valley District Play Partnership will support direct dialogue and consultation and will also work with appropriate mechanisms, e.g. Investing In Children, to ensure progress against the action plan.

- f) Build upon good practice within the district, retain and expand capacity and advocacy for children's play, according to need.

The Play Partnership has supported an audit and dialogue/consultation with children and young people to identify existing provision within Wear Valley District and examples of best practice. Our findings identified a shortage of supervised play provision for children aged 5 – 13 years out of school hours and limited play development infrastructure.

The Play Partnership recognised the efficacy of the Play Development Worker model which has been employed by WISH and is keen to extend this provision to new areas within available resources. The Play Partnership has progressed dialogue with children and young people in Coundon and Leeholme, which allied to reports around anti social behaviour, have prioritised this area for play development work.

Wear Valley District Play Partnership will continue to engage in dialogue with relevant agencies (Community Partnership, primary schools, Children's Centre, Groundwork, Community Physical Activity Co-ordinators etc) and will apply for Planning for Play funding to support a play development initiative in this area from Big Lottery in September 2007.

Subject to the success of the Wear Valley District Council application, on behalf of the Play Partnership, it is anticipated enhanced play provision will begin in 2008/9.

Wear Valley District Play Partnership recognises that delivery of improved play provision is a key outcome for children and young people within these localities but also aims to utilise effective delivery in Coundon and Leeholme to promote awareness of best play practice District wide.

8 Monitoring and Review

The Wear Valley Play Partnership will be responsible for overseeing implementation of this Play Strategy and for securing the ongoing participation of children and young people, parents and carers within the District in this process.

The Wear Valley Play Partnership will continue to report to the Children and Young People's Planning Group and the Local Children's Board, once established. Wear Valley District Council will service the Wear Valley Play Partnership and provide budget management/undertake monitoring of any play portfolio projects which receive Big Lottery funding.

Play is a tool that builds self esteem and raises aspirations. In Wear Valley a number of children and young people are from families where deprivation has led to unemployment and low self esteem. If we are to enable children and young people to maximise their life chances we need to break this cycle of deprivation. Good play enables young people to take calculated risk, test boundaries and exercise choice and control in a safe environment. The benefits of good play provision are set out in the Children's Play objectives of the Children's Play Council Policy Objectives developed in February 2004.

We have worked with children and young people to develop this strategy to begin the process of fostering independence and self esteem. As the strategy is implemented we will continue to work with them to ensure that both strategy and delivery enshrine these principles in the activities we undertake.

Action Plan

OBJECTIVE A			
To work in partnership with parents/carers, children and young people and other agencies to enable all children and young people to have access to good quality varied play opportunities and services, both indoors and outdoors.			
Action	Milestones	Dates & responsibility	Outcomes
Develop and maintain Wear Valley Play Partnership	Play Partnership meetings held	November 2006, Wear Valley District Council	Support play development in Wear Valley District and report to LSP
Undertake play audit	Audit completed	June 2007, Wear Valley District Play Partnership	District wide information on play opportunities made available.
Maintain and update play audit and link to 2D website	Update of play audit completed	March 2009	Accurate Information on opportunities maintained
Produce Play Strategy	Draft play strategy taken to LSP and endorsed by Wear Valley District Council	July 2007 Wear Valley District Council	Local strategy with objectives informed by play audit supported by Wear Valley District Play Partnership and local authority, with clear objectives to support play in District
Co-opt expertise onto Play Partnership	Dialogue with Wear Valley Disability Access Forum	February 2007 Wear Valley Play Partnership	Inform play partnership and play Strategy
Develop links with Children's Centre Parent Forums	Dialogue with Children's Centre Parent Forums	March 2008 Wear Valley Play Partnership	Informs development of play portfolio
Develop links with Extended Services Co-ordinator, and EMTAS	Dialogue with Extended Services and EMTAS	March 2008 Wear Valley Play Partnership	Information sharing on accessible play opportunities

OBJECTIVE B			
Develop and promote high standards for children and young people's play within Wear Valley and to ensure that services provided have long-term viability and sustainability.			
Action	Milestones	Dates & responsibility	Outcomes
Play Partnership reports to CYPPG and soon to be Local Children's Board	Wear Valley District Play Strategy on LSP'S Children and Young People's Planning Group agenda	LSP CYPPG, November 2007 ongoing	Advocacy for play strategy, update on actions.
CYPPG involved in Play Strategy Development	Play strategy endorsed by CYPPG and WVDC	JULY 2007	Informed development of strategy
Play Strategy endorsed by Wear Valley District Council	Play Strategy approved by council	July 07 TBC	Endorsement of Strategy

OBJECTIVE C			
Promote inclusive accessible play opportunities for all children and young people, whatever their age ability and circumstances.			
Action	Milestones	Dates & responsibility	Outcomes
Consult with stakeholders, e.g. Evergreen School, Independence for Disability re fixed play provision improvement	Report to Play Partnership produced informed by dialogue with agencies	June 2007, Wear Valley District Play Partnership	Dialogue with children and young people with disabilities informs Play Strategy objectives
Ensure 5 key sites across District have upgraded accessible equipment	Seek funding through Planning for Play application to Big Lottery, and if confirmed progress.	September 07 – March 2010	Enhanced provision for children and young people with disabilities at key fixed play sites.

OBJECTIVE D			
To support the development of appropriately risk managed play opportunities, environments and services that are stimulating and challenging, build confidence, contribute to a healthy lifestyle and are appropriate for children and young people's ages and stages of development.			
Action	Milestones	Dates & responsibility	Outcomes
Undertake Annual ROSPA inspections of fixed play provision	Inspections undertaken	Ongoing, WVDC	Encourage safe play
Maintain fixed play provision inspection regime	Fixed play sites inspected	Ongoing, WVDC	Encourage safe play
Play Strategy links to LAA priorities	Links included in Play Strategy	July 07, WVDC	Play Strategy informed by local priorities for children and young people
OBJECTIVE E			
To ensure children, young people and adults are involved in reviewing and planning the development of play provision.			
Action	Milestones	Dates & responsibility	Outcomes
Play Partnership informed by Every Child Matters in County Durham Participation Strategy	Dialogue and consultation with children and young people informs play audit	July 07, Wear Valley District Play Partnership	Play Strategy objectives and actions informed by children and young people
Play Partnership works with Children's Participation Worker posts	Children's Participation Worker represented on Play Partnership	November 06 ongoing, Wear Valley District Play Partnership	Dialogue and consultation with young people supported through Strategy development and implementation of action plan
Work with Investing In Children	Investing in Children involved in play audit	May 07, Wear Valley District Play Partnership	Dialogue and consultation with young people supported through Strategy development

OBJECTIVE F			
Build upon good practice within the district, retain and expand capacity and advocacy for children's play, according to need.			
Action	Milestones	Dates & responsibility	Outcomes
Identify good practice within district through play audit	Play audit completed	June 07, Wear Valley District Play Partnership	Improved awareness of best practice within District
Apply existing best practice models to priority areas identified through play audit	Identify priority areas through play audit. Seek funding to improve play provision in priority areas through Planning for Play application to Big Lottery. Support improved delivery. Report on progress to CYPPG	September 07 – March 2011, WVDC	Improved awareness of best practice within District. Improved provision of positive play opportunities for children and young people.

Appendix 1

The National Context

C. 1. The Childcare Act (2006)

Under this Act, Local Authorities will be required to deliver a number of actions, the most relevant to Play being to:

- Recognise that the integration of education and care into high quality early years provision will have statutory force. Play will have a significant role to play in this new responsibility.
- Ensure that all children up to age five get a better start, in particular by closing the gap between those at risk of the poorest outcomes and the rest, through helping them to access integrated childhood and family support services
- Ensure that sufficient local childcare (including play) is provided to meet the needs of working mothers and fathers, or those that want to return to work, with particular regard to low income families and those with a disabled child – with parents given advice and help with accessing childcare
- Ensure that all parents are able to access the full range of information which they may require for children up to the age of 20 – with parents' views contributing to the planning of early childhood and play services in their area
- Ensure that, for all children from birth to the end of reception year, all registered settings deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. There will be a framework of requirements to ensure all young children have access to an integrated learning and care experience, which highlights the importance of learning through Play. This will have the same legal force as the National Curriculum in schools.
- Recognise that, for out of school provision, settings will be judged against new Ofsted Childcare Register (OCR) standards ensuring safety and suitability; for the first time offering parents consistent mechanisms for choosing safe, reliable and good quality childcare for children up to age 15 (16 if disabled). This will impact on the qualifications of the staff

C 2. The Children Act 2004

The Act covers the universal services which every child accesses, such as education, and more targeted or specialist services for those with additional or special needs. Local authorities are required, under Section 17 of the Act, to produce a single strategic Children and Young People's Plan for all services affecting children and young people, including play and leisure. The plan should set out a vision for children and young people and detail the priorities and actions for delivering it. The local authority must consult widely and include children, young people and their parents or carers, the voluntary and community sector, as well as the key partners within the children's trust.

C 3. Every Child Matters: Change for Children Programme

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is the Government's overarching approach to the wellbeing of children and young people. It is founded on five key outcomes: being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and achieving economic well-being. Along with culture and sport, play organisations have a central role in helping to deliver these five outcomes. It is this agenda that brings key Government departments together, Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), Department of Health (DOH), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

C 4. Children's Trusts

Children's trusts are the partnership arrangements which bring together, under Section 10 of the Children Act (the duty to cooperate) all services for children and young people. Government expects all areas to have a children's trust by 2008. By working with the children's trust, the Director of Children's Services and the council Lead Member for Children's Services, the play sector can encourage local authorities to recognise the benefits that good play opportunities can offer. The children's trust (or other partnership arrangements eg Children and Young People Strategic Partnership), will serve as the main vehicle of delivery for the Children and Young People (CYP) block of the Local Area Agreement (LAA). LAAs deliver national outcomes in a way that reflects local priorities – giving local authorities and their partners the freedom and flexibilities to find local solutions to local problems.

C 5. Sure Start Children's Centres

Children's Centres provide good quality flexibly-tailored early years services. These include integrated early education and childcare (including opportunities for learning through play) and a diverse range of health and family support and health services for children up to five years old and their families. They also offer parenting education, outreach services to parents, childminder networks and links with Job Centre Plus.

These Centres (there will be 2,500 by 2008, and 3,500 – one for every community – by 2010) are being developed from Sure Start Local Programmes, Neighbourhood Nurseries, Early Excellence Centres, Maintained Nursery Schools, health centres and family centres and will make considerable use of local private and voluntary sector providers to help offer services. They act as a service centre at the heart of their communities, including and providing links to other facilities or sources of help and support such as holiday schemes, out-of-school clubs, extended schools and toy libraries.

Play activities in Children's Centres have a vital role in contributing to the range of early learning and development opportunities on offer for young children, and progression opportunities as they get older.

C.6. Play within Children's Learning and Development

Play underpins all learning and development for young children. It is a key way young children learn that is both enjoyable and challenging. Encouraging learning through play enriches children's early years and gives them a good start to life. Play is a safe and pleasurable way of finding out about the world they have been born into, and where new people, places and experiences are an almost daily occurrence. You can't get play 'wrong' and so children will try things they might normally feel anxious about by developing at their own pace and in their own time. Play is the natural route for children to enhance their physical and cognitive ability as well as providing opportunities for their social and emotional development. From an early age, play is important to a child's development and learning. It isn't just physical. It can involve cognitive, imaginative, creative, emotional and social aspects. It is the main way most children express their impulse to explore, experiment and understand.

C 7. The Early Years Foundation Stage.

The philosophy underpinning the Birth to Three Matters and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage is that learning should be carefully planned, with an emphasis on activities that are fun, relevant and motivating for each child. Practitioners therefore support children's learning through planned play and extending and developing children's spontaneous play. The Government plans to create a single quality framework to support children's learning

and development from birth to five. Early years settings will be required to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage from September 2008. The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework aims to raise quality in the early years by removing the existing artificial distinction between care and education in the early years, to reflect better the way young children learn and develop. The single, coherent document will recognise the importance of play in young children's learning and development. It will require practitioners to use observational assessment and knowledge of child development to plan systematically for individual children's progression at a pace that is right for them.

C 8. Extended Schools.

Extended schools provide access to extended services including a wide range of fun and developmental activities which could easily include play. Individual local authorities will be working with schools and other partners in Primary Care Trusts, Strategic Health Authorities and the private and voluntary sectors. They will plan and lead change and help schools make links with their children's trusts and, through consultation with the community, develop easy access to extended services. It will be for schools, parents, local authorities, other children's services and the voluntary and private sectors to work together to shape the provision in individual schools.

C 9. Building Schools for the Future

Although this programme is focused on school premises, children will benefit from having more and better access to good quality play provision during the school day (and with the advent of extended schools, beyond the school day). Over the three years 2005-08, more than £6.6 billion has so far been committed to the Building Schools for the Future programme. This has the aim of rebuilding or renewing every secondary school in England over the next 15 years. The Government has just finished consulting on how to improve primary schools. The target here is to rebuild or refurbish at least half the primary schools and primary-age special schools over a 15 year period. Additional funding for this programme will be available from 2008-09. Primary schools are being encouraged to develop zoned playgrounds to encourage more creative play and more choice for children.

C 10. Youth Matters

The Green Paper Youth Matters was published in July 2005, and a Next Steps document was published in March 2006. Recognising the need to ensure that young people have "things to do and places to go" Youth Matters proposed new national standards for positive activities for young people as well as new legislation to clarify local authorities' duty to secure young people's access to positive activities. Local authorities will be expected to integrate their planning for positive activities with the local Children and Young People's planning process, and to work with key partners, including district councils and voluntary and community sector organisations to implement this.

The national standards are as follows:

- Access to two hours per week of sporting activity
- Access to two hours per week of other constructive activities in clubs, youth groups or classes
- Opportunities to contribute to their communities through volunteering
- A wide range of other recreational, cultural, sporting and enriching experiences
- A range of safe and enjoyable places in which to spend time.

Sometimes described as an Every Child Matters for teenagers, Youth Matters is intended to address the needs of older children. The importance of providing positive activities for young people is reinforced by the Government's Respect Action Plan published in January 2006.

Statutory guidance is currently being developed to set out what is expected of local authorities and will confirm the importance of recreational activities and facilities under the duty.

C 11. BIG Lottery Fund.

In March 2006 BIG announced their three year strategic Play Programme. All second tier authorities were allocated funding for “free play” subject to their applications clearly showing there was a Play Partnership and Play Strategy in place, and that the proposed projects were inclusive, free and accessible.

In addition, there is an Innovation Programme available for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to apply for. Ideally the proposals should be endorsed by the Local Authority and should appear in the strategy, in promoting coherence and continuity of provision. It is recommended that a Playwork Education and Training or workforce development strand should be included in the local Play Strategy, to ensure there is the capacity and quality of staff to deliver the new enhanced or extended services.

C 12. Green and Open Spaces:

Parks and greenspace are an essential part of the urban heritage and a strong element in the architectural and aesthetic form. They play an important role in education, and provide a role for community cultural, recreational and leisure needs. Provision of parks and open spaces helps to reduce the inequalities, poor health and social exclusion in deprived areas. Parks and greenspaces play an important role in helping to conserve natural systems including water, carbon and other natural elements and support ecosystems.

C 13. SkillsActive

SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning. Within SkillsActive sits the Playwork Unit which is responsible for:

- Improving children’s lives by setting standards of excellence in education, training and qualifications, and developing opportunities for playworkers to access education, training and qualifications
- Raising the level of understanding about the importance of children’s play
- Improving access to good quality play provision throughout England.

SkillsActive plays a vital role and has recently published its five year UK strategy ‘Quality Training, Quality Play 2006-11’ which aims to support and develop education, training and qualifications for playworkers across the workforce. The Trafford strategy will complement the structure and format in the context of Trafford and the East region.

The National Occupational Standards (NOS) will support the development and recognition of a qualification framework from entry to postgraduate level, which will encourage career progression and transitions.

The Sector Skills Agreement will also provide a conduit for raising awareness with employers and users alike, and will forge closer links with other allied professions across the children’s workforce.

C 14. Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC)

The CWDC was established in April 2005 and is a member of the federated Sector Skills Council for Social Care, Children and Young People (Skills for Care and Development SSC). CWDC aims to build the very best workforce for children, young people and families. It supports the whole workforce to put the child, young person and family at the heart of service design and delivery.

Training, development, qualifications and leadership and management will be key to supporting successful change in the delivery of services for children and young people. The Government has established CWDC and the Children’s Workforce Network (SkillsActive is a member) to lead on workforce change and support the change at local level. The Children’s Workforce Strategy and the 10 Year Childcare Strategy set a demanding agenda for CWDC. In turn each Local Authority is required to produce a Children’s Workforce Development Plan, and the intention is that Trafford will include the Playwork Education and Training strategy as a strand of that.

C 15 Joint Area Reviews.

A Joint Area Review (JAR) is an assessment of services for children and young people, led by Ofsted working with nine other inspectorates and commissions. These are: the Adult Learning Inspectorate, the Audit Commission, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI, the Healthcare Commission, HMI Constabulary, HMI Probation, HMI Prisons, HMI Court Administration and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

JARs will be conducted in all 150 single-tier and county council areas over the next three years, at the same time as each council's corporate assessment. These reviews evaluate the degree to which local services are improving the lives of children and young people and how well they are working together to achieve this.

JARs look at all education and social services for children and young people that are directly managed or commissioned by the council, as well as health and youth justice services provided by partner agencies such as primary care trusts, child and adolescent mental health services, local safeguarding children boards and the police.

One of the five achievement themes in a council's corporate assessment reports on the contribution of the council to the quality of outcomes for children and young people. The content for this part of the assessment is provided by the JAR. In addition, the JAR may provide evidence that can be reported within other themes in the corporate assessment.

16 Annual Performance Assessment

A Local Authority 'Annual Performance Assessment' makes judgements about:

- The council's children's services and the specific contributions they make to improving outcomes for children and young people
- The council's capacity to further improve these services

Each council is required to have a single children and young people's plan or equivalent in place, and within this the specific focus on the council's own services is necessary in order to contribute a grade for the children and young people's block of the comprehensive performance assessment (CPA).

Under the outcome 'Enjoying and achieving', the following judgements relate to the area covered by the Play Strategy:

Key Judgements	Examples of Evidence
3.1 Parents and carers receive support in helping their children to enjoy and achieve	Targeted support and guidance is provided to parents and carers, in line with their expressed wishes, in helping children and young people to enjoy play, achieve educationally and make a productive and enjoyable use of leisure time

<p>3.6 All children and young people can access a range of recreational activities, including play and voluntary learning provision</p>	<p>There are safe and accessible places where children and young people can play and socialise</p> <p>A range of affordable, accessible, challenging and rewarding recreational and voluntary learning opportunities is provided</p> <p>Action is taken to ensure that the cost or availability of transport are not undue barriers to participation in recreational and voluntary learning activities</p> <p>Recreational and voluntary learning opportunities reflect the needs and interests of individuals as well as groups</p> <p>Recreational voluntary learning opportunities reflect the needs of socially excluded groups, and they are given particular encouragement to take them up</p>
<p>3.7 Children and young people who are looked after are helped to enjoy and achieve</p>	<p>Looked after children are encouraged and given practical support in participating in a range of cultural and leisure activities, and in developing their individual interests</p>
<p>3.8 Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to achieve and enjoy</p>	<p>Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported in participating in a range of appropriate cultural and leisure activities</p>

C.17 Other Government Policy Documents

The following policy documents are also relevant to the area of play provision:

‘Strong and prosperous communities - The Local Government White Paper’ – DCLG (2006)

‘Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity’ – ODPM 5 yr Plan (2005)

‘Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development’ - ODPM (2005)

‘Living Places: Caring for Quality’ – ODPM (2004)

‘Sustainable Communities: Building for The Future’ ODPM (2003)

‘Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener’ – ODPM (2002)

Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation ODPM (2002)

‘Green Spaces, Better Places’ – The Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Task Force (2002)

‘Our Towns and Cities: The Future’ - Urban White Paper, DETR (2000)

Delivering an urban renaissance

'By Design, Urban design in the planning system – towards better practice' – DETR/CABE (2000)

'Towards an Urban Renaissance' – Urban Task Force (1999)

Appendix 2

Play legislation

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)

Under Sections 3 and 4 of this Act a clear responsibility is placed on the Council to ensure the health and safety of users so far as is reasonably practicable. The Health and Safety Executive has recently been in communication with the Council with respect to play provision and has indicated that it is keen to see a systematic approach to health and safety with play facilities, and supports the adoption of relevant standards and guidance. By adopting management systems for the proper planning, installation, and maintenance of play facilities the Council will be doing all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of users.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

This Act requires a risk assessment of facilities be undertaken, a safety policy for meeting the risks developed, and appropriate training undertaken by those responsible. The Council will commission on an annual basis an independent inspection of its play facilities from a recognised industry expert, which will include both equipment specific risk assessments, and area specific assessments where these have changed since the last assessment. The results of such independent inspections will be used to formulate annual action plans to address any risks identified in an appropriately prioritised way. The Council shall also retain appropriately trained staff for managing and interpreting such requirements. Furthermore, any new equipment installed will be assessed for risk at the design and specification stage, and then again immediately following installation as part of the Post Installation Safety Inspection.

Occupiers' Liability Act (1957, Revised 1984)

As provider and manager of play facilities the Council has a duty to ensure that users are reasonably safe when using the area. The 1984 Act also places a duty to ensure the safety of trespassers where an injury could be foreseeable.

The Council will ensure compliance with this act through the careful siting, design and layout of its facilities recognising that the process of play is an absorbing one, and that the safety of children requires special attention as to what injury may be reasonably foreseen. The Council will furthermore ensure, by inserting relevant clauses into tender and contract documents, the safety of users during construction, installation or removal activities, and maintenance operations in or around the facilities.

Consumer Protection Act (1987)

This Act places a responsibility on manufacturers and suppliers for injuries resulting from defective products. The Council will ensure this duty is fully met, primarily by only accepting goods which have been inspected as safe, then by retention sums within contracts, and finally through the insurance section.

Unfair Contract Terms Act (1977)

This Act relates to the significance of notices, and limits the extent to which civil liability can be avoided. The Council will ensure that all notices erected as part of play facilities do not fall foul of this Act, and will furthermore ensure that all notices are designed to be easily understood by children by the use of illustrative symbols wherever possible.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1995) (RIDDOR)

Under these regulations the Council is obliged to report certain types of accidents to the Health and Safety Executive. The Council considers any such accident extremely seriously and will work with the Health and Safety Executive whenever necessary to fully investigate the causes of any accident and make appropriate changes to the equipment, site, or management practices where necessary. In addition to this legal requirement the Council will maintain accurate records of all accidents, incidents or complaints reported on any site

and item of equipment in order that such information may be built into the risk assessment process and appropriate action taken.

Environmental Protection Act (1990)

This Act places a duty on the Council for the control and removal of litter, including dog fouling within certain time scales. The Council, through the maintenance programme for each area, will ensure the requirements of this act are exceeded, that bins are provided and emptied regularly, and that any reported incidents involving litter accumulations over and above the specified visits will be actioned as soon as possible to maintain a clean and safe environment.

Common Law

Common Law is based on decisions made by judges sitting in various courts, and impacts on play facilities during any claims alleging negligence. Whilst not having the same importance as Statute Law, the decisions made with respect to Common Law can set certain precedents, and result in unnecessary expense for the Council should such judgements be ruled against the Council.

Experience suggests that the key areas of interest in determining negligence relate to compliance with standards, surfacing, inspection, maintenance, training and supervision. The recent Woolf Reforms also mean that such claims now have much stricter time limits for responding to claims.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child

The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20th of November 1989. The Convention recognised that children are individuals with the right to develop physically, mentally and socially to their fullest potential, and to express opinions freely. In December 1991 the UK Government ratified the Articles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, which have a strong and direct relevance to the importance

Appendix 3

Fixed play provision – map plus list of sites maintained by WVDC Map to be finalised

Appendix 4

Wear Valley Disability Access Ltd audit of fixed play sites to be finalised

Appendix 5

Wear Valley District Play Partnership Play Audit 2007 to be finalised

Appendix 6

Report on consultation/dialogue with Evergreen School and Independence for Disabilities to be finalised.



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

18 JULY 2007

Report of the Director of Strategic Community
DEFRA - WASTE STRATEGY FOR ENGLAND 2007

purpose of the report

To advise Committee of the "Waste Strategy for England" issued by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

background

- 1 In late May 2007 Defra published its "Waste Strategy for England." This showed the progress made since the publication of the previous strategy in 2000, highlighted the areas to improve, and seeks to encourage local authorities, consumers and retailers to play their part.

key objectives

- 2 The strategy sets out a number of key objectives.
 - To decouple waste growth from economic growth and put more emphasis on waste prevention and re-use;
 - To meet and exceed the Landfill Directive diversion targets for biodegradable municipal waste in 2010, 2013 and 2020;
 - Increase diversion from landfill of non-municipal waste and secure better integration of treatment for municipal and non-municipal waste;
 - Secure the investment in infrastructure needed to divert waste from landfill and for the management of hazardous waste; and
 - Get the most environmental benefit from that investment, through increased recycling of resources and recovery of energy from residual waste using a mix of technologies.

key proposals

- 3 Key proposals are around:
 - Incentives to reduce, re-use and recycle waste
 - Reduce waste and divert from landfill by regulatory reform
 - Targeting action on materials and products by identifying key waste materials such as paper, green waste and plastics, and developing targets for producers and supporting new technologies to reduce waste production and increase recycling.

what the strategy means for the Council

- 4 Much of the Strategy deals with waste disposal, and as such, is aimed at disposal authorities such as Durham County Council. However waste collection, as a District function, is also addressed.
- 5 The Strategy encourages local authorities to work with their communities to provide convenient collection and recycling services for their residents, and local businesses; and makes proposals to develop incentives and tools to do so.
- 6 Consultation is underway on removing the ban on financial incentives for households which reduce or recycle their waste. It would then be for individual local authorities to decide whether or not they wished to introduce a scheme for their area. It is estimated that schemes could lead to reductions in the amount of non-recycled waste of between 13 and 39 per cent.
- 7 WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Plan) will provide advice and information services on different collection systems and their impacts, helping get the most environmental value from recycled materials in a cost-effective way. This includes evaluation of separate food waste collection through their support for a number of further trials. The Council are already working with WRAP on the introduction of a twin bin scheme.
- 8 Legislation is going through Parliament which will enable local authorities (following consultation with local residents) to set up Joint Waste Authorities and work together more easily to improve local waste services.
- 9 Current individual authority recycling targets will be replaced. There are proposals for a new indicator emphasising waste prevention as well as recycling, setting a minimum recycling service level across the country and giving incentives for joint working.
- 10 In the longer term, an indicator measuring the climate change impact of a local authority's waste management operations is to be developed.
- 11 As part of their local leadership, local authorities are asked to help their local businesses reduce and recycle their waste. The Government will support this through funding for pilot initiatives by local authorities and preparation of guidance and dissemination of good practice.

other elements of the strategy

- 12 The Strategy also aims to develop plans for development in the infrastructure to allow for greater segregation and sorting of waste closer to its household sources. It seeks to ensure that Regional Spatial Strategies and local development plans conform to national guidance when waste infrastructure projects are being considered, and supports this with the introduction of the Waste Infrastructure Delivery Programme (WIDP) to ensure timely and cost-effective delivery.
- 13 Local and regional governance is addressed as the Government sets out to strengthen the ability of local authorities in two-tier areas to work together, and to encourage partnership working between Councils. (This would be advantageous to District Councils in the county as their longer term planning

is presently hampered by the absence of a countywide strategy on waste management.) This will be strengthened by new powers in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill, presently at second reading stage in the House of Lords; using Local Area Agreements; and the new local government performance framework.

culture change

- 14 The Strategy recognises that the way in which waste is created and managed needs to undergo fundamental change, and will extend awareness campaigns; use “zero waste places” initiatives to encourage innovation and excellent practice; provide more recycling bins in public places; and promote waste reduction and recycling in schools.

delivery

- 15 The Government will establish a Defra-led “Waste Strategy Board”, responsible for delivering the Strategy and developing new policy actions in the future. This in turn will lead to a “Waste Stakeholder Group” and a high-level implementation plan including key actions, timeframes, and monitoring and review mechanisms.

financial implications

- 16 Financial implications arising from the Strategy cannot be evaluated at this stage.

human resource implications

- 17 There are no immediate human resource implications.

legal implications

- 18 Legal implications will be evaluated and reported upon when the impact of the Strategy on the Council is apparent.

outcomes for customers and the environment

- 19 Defra estimates that the combined impact of the Strategy will be to save 9.3 million tonnes more of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2020.
- 20 Customers could benefit from improved waste management, more efficient practices, financial incentives from non-recyclable waste reduction schemes where introduced, less waste going to landfill, and improved environmental impacts.

RECOMMENDED

1. That Committee notes the Strategy and authorises Officers to consider implications in planning and delivering services.

Officer responsible for the report
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Strategic Director for the Community
Ext 281

Author of the report
Alan Northcote
AD Neighbourhood Management
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COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

18 JULY 2007

Report of the Director of Strategic Community

USE OF RESOURCES – PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE

purpose of the report

To inform Members of the financial performance of partnerships of the Community Department.

background

- 1 Within the Use of Resources assessment, Key Line of Enquiry No. 2.2.12 requires that “the financial performance of partnerships is regularly reviewed, linked to outputs, and the results shared with partners and acted upon”.
- 2 Annex C to this report outlines the financial performance of the partnerships within the Strategic Community Department as required by the Key Line of Enquiry. The actions will be shared with partners.
- 3 The councils partnerships database has been reviewed in line with the Audit Commission’s feedback and takes into account the new departmental structure. The Partnership database now details some 6 partnerships for the Community Department.

proposal

- 4 That the contents of this report and partnership review Annex B are noted

financial implications

- 5 Financial implications are detailed within the partnership review.

legal implications

- 6 Any legal implications are detailed within the partnership review.

human resource implications

- 7 The requirement to review the financial performance of its partnership annually will place further burdens on the Authority in relation to officer time.

IT implications

- 8 There are no IT implications.

crime and disorder implications

9 Any crime and disorder implications are detailed within the partnership review.

timescale

10 There is a requirement to update this report on an annual basis and present to Community Services Committee.

conclusion

11 The Annex shows that progress is being made across the partnerships within the department. However these need to be kept under continuous review to ensure that delivery of its aims and objectives are achieved.

RECOMMENDED

1 That Committee endorse the report

Officer responsible for the report
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Author of the report
Andrew Frankcom
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PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

PARTNERSHIP NAME:

Dale & Valley Homes

INPUTS	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	ACTION POINTS	COMMENTS
<p>Monthly ALMO Liaison meetings require attendance of ALMO Liaison Officer and Chief Executive.</p> <p>Service Level Agreements with key support services require regular interaction with Heads of Service in IT, HR, Finance and Legal services.</p> <p>ALMO Liaison Officer meets with D&VH Director of Resources to review Delivery Plan and inspection updates.</p>	<p>D&VH achieved 2 stars at full Best Value inspection in January 2007. Gained access to an additional £27M in additional monies to be invested in Council homes to achieve the Decent Homes Standard.</p> <p>Full Business Plan developed and Delivery Plan being reviewed in light of inspection findings.</p>	<p>Improvements to quality of life of tenants of the Council, improving health.</p> <p>Visible improvements to the environment has improved perceptions of neighbourhoods, encouraging increases in population and uptake of Council homes.</p>	<p>Delivery Plan in need of review to reflect organisational change and enable more effective performance management.</p> <p>ALMO Liaison function to reflect these changes.</p> <p>Service Level Agreements to be kept under review.</p>	<p>D&VH are now proceeding to make changes to the organisation to enable the achievement of 3 stars.</p>

PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

PARTNERSHIP NAME:

County Durham Waste Partnership

To Co-ordinate Waste Delivery and Update Stakeholders

INPUTS	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	ACTION POINTS	COMMENTS
Bi-monthly meeting Head of Service Contracts x 4 hours/meeting	Co-ordinated approach to the delivery of waste collection, disposal management and recycling.	Enable the authority to plan and provide efficient Waste Management Strategy in accordance with county-wide approach.	Continued participation in partnership.	Failure to attend, may result in detrimental service provision and lead to significant financial consequences.

PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

PARTNERSHIP NAME:

Sport Action Zone Partnership

INPUTS	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	ACTION POINTS	COMMENTS
<p>Officer time from the Sport Action Zone Manager. This partnership meets approximately four times per year and is serviced by the SAZ Manager who spends approximately two working days per month servicing the business of the partnership.</p>	<p>Six-monthly reports to Sport England and a business plan are the annual commitments. The development of the work through the SAZ has been focused through the Needs Assessment Action Plan (NAAP) and more recently through the SAZ Forward Plan for 2005-08.</p>	<p>Increase in people taking part in physical activity and related reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.</p>	<p>The forward plan has enabled Wear Valley to gain funding up to 2008. Four out of Seven CPAC posts have now been mainstreamed.</p> <p>The revenue funding through Sport England is seen as the final stage of external funding and sustainability of a number of these programmes needs to be achieved through mainstreaming. Therefore long term strategy needs to be around delivery of a number of these programmes through core funding.</p>	<p>Whilst funding is available until 2008 if the Council cannot afford to sustain this programme in the long term, it will have an effect upon physical activity levels of young people and adults through the CPAC programme and through Walking the Way to Health programmes, reduction in support to sports clubs and the sporting volunteer network.</p>

PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

PARTNERSHIP NAME:

Wellness on Wheels (WOW) Partnership

To oversee the management of the Wellness on Wheels Project in providing opportunities for people to undertake physical activity who have been excluded by means of geography or social deprivation factors.

INPUTS	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	ACTION POINTS	COMMENTS
<p>A number of staff attend the WOW Partnership Board meeting and the WOW Management Board meeting. Whilst it is difficult to divorce the inputs of the project itself against the partnership, the partnership work is likely to require approximately 12 days per year by staff.</p>	<p>Outputs are in line with key performance indicators required from our funders, e.g. Sport England on the take up of physical activity from a range of target groups.</p> <p>The outputs also contribute to Wear Valley District Council Corporate Objectives regarding health.</p>	<p>Increased opportunities for people in Wear Valley to participated in and be signposted on to other projects and mainstream physical activities.</p> <p>Central to the Legacy project is the work within communities at ground level. This has resulted in successfully targeting 'hard to reach' groups by removing barriers to physical activity i.e. transport and cost.</p>	<p>Exit strategy already includes the additional WOW Legacy Project.</p> <p>Five community based fitness suites are now in operation. Two more will be launched within the next three months.</p>	<p>There is a risk when the project comes to an end that funding will not be available to continue with the Wellness on Wheels main project. The partnership is currently investigating ways of continuing the important elements of delivery.</p> <p>There is further risk in terms of the community fitness suites, that lack of capacity within the legacy sites could be threatened. To reduce this risk officers will keep close contact with these community groups to ensure that they are still on track.</p> <p>In an effort to negate these risks, we would hope that these community-based venues will also provide the opportunity for other health and fitness projects within Wear Valley District Council to deliver programmes into the heart of communities.</p>

PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

PARTNERSHIP NAME:

Durham Sport

The co-ordination of sports development activities across County Durham

INPUTS	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	ACTION POINTS	COMMENTS
<p>Officer time to attend the four Durham Sport quarterly meetings (Steering Group). Up to 8 sports development officer meetings, up to 6 sub-group meetings – approximately 9 working days per annum. Annual contribution of £4,000 (paid by each of the seven Durham local authorities to contribute to the running of Durham Sport).</p>	<p>Development of coach education. Development of sports club development framework.</p> <p>Distribution of some Sport England funding streams.</p> <p>Provides Community Sports Network links. Development of a Safeguarding Children Policy.</p> <p>Development of Volunteers and Volunteering in Sport.</p>	<p>Helps the improvement of the sporting infrastructure of Wear Valley. In doing so this contributes to the health and crime agendas, specifically helps us improve our coach standards and club networks as exit routes from the CPAC programmes.</p>	<p>This network is ongoing, and is performance managed through Sport England. Durham Sport is working for the 'Towards An Excellent Service' model (TAES).</p>	<p>Risk of low value for money. This requires ongoing review of the partnership by officers of Wear Valley.</p>

PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

PARTNERSHIP NAME:

Wear and Tees Community Safety Partnership

To reduce crime, the fear of crime and substance misuse

INPUTS	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	ACTION POINTS	COMMENTS
<p>Officer time to attend the bi-monthly partnership meetings and the task group meetings.</p> <p>There are 6 task groups in total and 5 meet quarterly and one meets fortnightly. Production of reports and actions outside of the meeting</p>	<p>Priorities and actions determined</p> <p>Performance monitoring undertaken</p> <p>Funding regimes targeted effectively</p>	<p>Reduces crime and substance misuse and increases public reassurance</p>	<p>The partnership has a three year strategy and crime reduction targets. These are monitored monthly.</p> <p>The partnership makes decisions on the use of the Building Safer Communities Fund and the ASB Fund, which is part of the SSCF.</p>	<p>The partnership has recently restructured to have the wider partnership and an executive group.</p> <p>The majority of the members of the latter have a statutory duty under Section 17 to reduce crime and disorder.</p> <p>There is a lot of change to be introduced because of the Reform of the Crime and Disorder Act.</p>

