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Iain Phillips      Chief Executive

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23rd March 2007

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Special Meeting of the **REGENERATION COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2007** at **2:00 p.m.**

### AGENDA

	Page No.
1. Apologies for Absence.	
2. To consider the Local Development Framework; Annual Monitoring Report (2005 – 2006).	1 - 11
3. To consider the Local Development Framework: joint Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies development plan documents.	12 - 84
4. To consider the draft Regeneration Department Service Plan 2007/08.	85
5. To consider an update on the Wear Valley Economic Strategy.	87 - 88

Yours faithfully

**Chief Executive**

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

\*ex-officio, non-voting capacity.

Chair : Councillor Townsend

Deputy Chair : Councillor Mowbray

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

## SPECIAL REGENERATION COMMITTEE

2 APRIL 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

### **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK; ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT (2005-2006)**

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

1. To present for main finding of the Annual Monitoring Report prepared for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 in respect to the performance of current Local Plan policies and development plan preparation.
2. To advise Members of key issues identified through monitoring activity and where applicable present proposals to address these issues.

#### **background**

3. Members will recall that the Council's first Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), as required by The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), was produced for the 2004/2005 monitoring period and submitted to GONE in accordance with the statutory requirements in December 2005. The aim of the first AMR was to establish a monitoring framework which would form the basis of subsequent AMRs. Given the fact that monitoring activity prior to that time had been very limited the first AMR it did not contain much statistical data or analysis.
4. Over the past year the Forward Planning team have worked towards preparing the second such AMR. As a result the monitoring activity which has taken place over this period represents a significant improvement in terms of the scope to that which was feasible in respect to the period relating to the first AMR.
5. Mechanisms have been developed to monitor the performance of all site specific Local Plan policies and effectiveness of Local Plan policies at appeal to inform the content of this second AMR. Furthermore mechanisms have also been established to collate data in relation to 71 of 103 monitoring indicators which form part of the framework. This includes 15 of the 18 mandatory indicators set by central government. Measures are currently being put in place to enable the monitoring of the remainder of these in subsequent AMRs. In addition this second AMR includes a review of preparation of the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) against the key milestones set out in the adopted project plan, the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

## **policy context**

6. The 2004 planning reform has placed a statutory duty on all Local Planning Authorities to monitor the performance of existing and future development plan policies and production of Local Development Framework documents, the findings of which are to be contained in an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). This relates to the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March each year and be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government by the end of the preceding December. The findings of such monitoring activity will inform the Council of;
  - Whether it is adhering to the adopted project plan as set out in the Local Development Scheme and when contingencies need to be put in place to remedy any potential deviation.
  - The potential content of future planning policies
  - The effectiveness of adopted planning policies
  - The need for review of forthcoming policy documents which will form part of the emerging Local Development Framework.

## **analysis**

7. The AMR (2005/06) is tabled. The key findings of this AMR are briefly summarised below.
8. With regard to progress made in the preparation of the Local Development Framework whilst to date all targets have been met in relation to the production of the Statement of Community Involvement, the targets relating to the 4 proposed Development Plan Documents have not been met.
9. A housing trajectory has been produced to show past and estimated future performance in delivery in relation to the provisional strategic housing target set out in the Submission draft RSS. As members are aware the draft RSS allocates 2800 new dwellings to the District for the period 2004-21. As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 the trajectory confirmed a surplus of 316 units with planning consent above this district housing target.
10. The Local Plan allocated 88.6 ha of new employment land. The uptake of this has been disappointing as only 5ha has been developed, none of which has occurred this AMR period. The Council has recently commissioned an Employment Land Review which will confirm the appropriateness of all remaining employment allocations which in turn will inform the preparation of the LDF land use allocations.
11. The implemented Environmental Protection and Enhancement policies have been effective. Over the Local Plan period a total of 125.2ha of land has been the subject of environmental improvement and reclamation.
12. The performance of Local Plan policies in relation to appeals considered within this monitoring period has been good; 70% of all appeal decisions made did not undermine the applicable Local Plan policies.

13. In respect to these key findings the AMR has raised two particular key issues which the Council needs to address as a matter of expedience. These are summarised below for Members' consideration.

#### **review of adopted local development scheme**

14. Given the slippage in the LDF work programme which has been incurred it is necessary for the Council to amend the adopted project plan, the Local Development Scheme. This was reported to Regeneration Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

#### **alignment of local decision making with national and emerging regional planning policies**

15. Since the adoption of the Wear Valley District Local Plan in 1997 there have been significant changes in circumstances in relation to development plan production, national and regional planning policy, the emphasis placed upon monitoring development plan performance and the actual house building activity which has occurred more recently within the District.
16. Of significance is the fact that the AMR has identified that the sum of net units which have been completed since the start of the RSS period in 2004: units under construction; units subject to an unimplemented planning permission; and those applications which the Council has been minded to approve subject to the signing of a legal agreement as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 equated to 3111 net additional dwellings. This exceeds the target set out in the draft RSS for the period 2004 to 2021 by 316 units.
17. The percentage of dwellings completed on previously developed brownfield sites and the density at which they have been built has historically been below the central government targets though recently this has begun to improve.
18. In light of these findings, discussions have taken place with the NEA. Their view is that whilst the current potential net addition exceeds the district's RSS allocation they do not consider that this would provide sufficient justification on its own to justify refusing a planning application providing these meet the sequential test set out in RSS Policy 3. Conversely they would be concerned if the Council was to grant consent for unsustainable developments in the context of the current high housing land supply. Because of this there is a need to alter how the Council assesses future housing proposals in the interim whilst the Local Development Framework emerges.

#### **proposals to address emerging issues**

##### **management of district housing land supply**

19. Up until December 2006 national planning policy for new housing was set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 'Housing' (2000). Amongst other things this document placed great emphasis upon prioritising the use of previously developed (brownfield) sites for delivering new housing development. It also advocated a 'Plan Monitor Manage' approach to housing land supply. This requires robust monitoring of housing land supply and management of further

releases where applicable. The current Local Plan policies predated this document.

20. In December 2006 a new Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS 3) was published. This policy document continues to prioritise delivery of new housing on brownfield sites. Whilst unlike PPG 3 this new PPS does not set out a specific set of sequential criteria for considering the acceptability of sites, both it and PPS 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' still require that priority is afforded to the development of previously developed sites within locations which are well related to community facilities, employment and public transport. It also places a greater emphasis upon the need to plan to meet local housing need and managing the process to ensure that a 5 year housing land supply is available in accordance with the net additional dwelling target afforded by the relevant RSS. The Council is currently able to demonstrate a housing land supply which exceeds this.
21. The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East (RSS) policies reflect this national policy direction. Government Office NE is currently considering the findings of EIP with the view of producing a final RSS over the next few months. Of significance is the fact that the panel report advocates a lesser housing target for Wear Valley than the submission draft document. This would serve to exacerbate the AMR findings with respect to housing land supply.
22. Amongst other things the draft RSS sets out a housing policy framework which the Council must have regard to when making development control decisions. Given that the RSS has reached the latter stages of the production process weight should now be given to its strategy direction as a material planning consideration in the decision making process. The key policy considerations which form this proposal are outlined below in respect to the manner in which the Council should consider the acceptability of the location of new housing development.
  - 1) RSS Policy 3 - The Sequential Approach to Development
23. This policy sets out a sequential approach to prioritise and therefore guide the location of new development, including housing to the 'urban areas' of the region. This approach accords with PPS 3. The policy does not distinguish between the scale of development to which this policy should be applied. For the purposes of interpretation from a Wear Valley perspective 'urban areas' are:-

**Main towns:**

Bishop Auckland, West Auckland and St Helens Auckland (Bishop Auckland sub area)

Crook/Willington (Crook sub area)

**Towns identified for regeneration:**

Tow Law (Weardale sub area)

Coundon (Bishop Auckland sub area)

**Rural Service Centres:**

Stanhope (Weardale sub area)

**Other settlements with significant levels of brownfield land;**  
Wolsingham (Weardale sub area).

NB – the number of settlements may increase when a review of brownfield opportunities is carried out to inform a Brownfield Strategy for the district. PPS 3 contains a revised definition of “brownfield” sites. This is contained in Annex 1 of this report.

2) RSS Policy 5 – Locational Strategy

24. This policy reiterates the priority which should be afforded to the development in the ‘core areas’ of the conurbations and from a Wear Valley perspective ‘main towns’, ‘regeneration areas’ and ‘Rural Service Centres’ as redefined above.

**proposal to align local decision making with RSS policies on housing proposals**

25. In September 2005 Members endorsed a more rigorous application of the ‘sequential search’ when considering greenfield housing proposals, regardless of their scale. This arose as a consequence of being in receipt of conflicting Planning Inspectors’ appeal decisions. At that time given the diversity and geography of the district it was considered appropriate to limit this search to the sub area within which the proposal was based, namely Crook, Bishop Auckland and Weardale. This approach was endorsed by GONE. However now this approach does not strictly accord with RSS Policies 3 and 5. In light of NEA recent advise the Council needs to ensure that it is effectively implementing policies 3 and 5.
26. The successful application of RSS policies 3 and 5 at a local level within Wear Valley in the future will require a settlement hierarchy approach to be implemented, which prioritises development in and around the urban areas (defined as Bishop Auckland, St Helens Auckland, West Auckland, Coundon, Tow Law, Crook/Willington, Wolsingham and Stanhope) with sites in the remaining settlements in the District being given little priority.
27. In view of the above there is a need to align local decision making with the emerging RSS. However, given the geography and characteristics of the District it is considered that the sub area approach already implemented should be continued. In view of the above it is considered that RSS Policy 3 translates at the local level into the following way.
28. Locations for all new future housing proposals within a given sub area should be selected in the following priority order regardless of site size in comparison to the proposal:-
1. Brownfield sites within the limits to development of ‘urban areas’ of the sub area.
  2. Greenfield sites within the limits to development of ‘urban areas’ of the sub area.
  3. Brownfield sites adjoining the limits to development of ‘urban areas’ of the sub area.

4. Greenfield sites adjoining the limits to development of 'urban areas' of the sub area.

The development of any sites, beyond those specified above should only be accepted where no such sites are available in the relevant sub area, regardless of scale.

29. This sequential approach should be used when considering new planning proposals and renewals of previous planning consents which are about to or have expired.

### **considerations**

30. There are no financial, health and safety, IT, value for money or crime and disorder implications in respect to this matter.
31. There is a statutory duty by virtue of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to monitor performance in relation to the preparation of the Local Development Framework and effectiveness of adopted planning policies.
32. The effective and comprehensive monitoring activity which is demanded by central government needs to be continuous and joined up with other such activity within the Council. This activity is mandatory. Being a new requirement it has human resource implications. Monitoring activity carried out so far has resulted in links being established with relevant sections within the Council where relevant data is available. There is therefore awareness that such data will be requested annually to inform the AMR. Data sources are clearly listed within the AMR.
33. From an equality and diversity perspective each AMR must be made available on the Council's website indefinitely. They are also available in a range of languages and formats to address this issue.

### **risk assessment**

34. The Council's Local Development Scheme includes a risk assessment in relation to slippage in preparation of the emerging Local Development Framework. Forthcoming AMR's must be used as a mechanism to highlight and address any such occurrence.

### **consultations**

35. The Government good practice guide suggests that it would be prudent to undertake limited consultation with key Stakeholders on the content of AMRs prior to publication. It is the intended to undertake this in subsequent years. As the new Local Development Framework policy documents evolve the current monitoring framework will need to be modified to ensure that the performance of new policies can be monitored effectively. The development of such indicators will be subject to third party engagement as an integral part of new policy development.



## **timescale**

36. Development Plan monitoring must be a continuous process with the publication and submission of an AMR to the relevant Secretary of State by 31<sup>st</sup> December each year.

## **monitoring**

37. The input of monitoring data into the relevant electronic systems will be monitored on a monthly basis in terms of quality, accuracy and quantity.

## **conclusion**

38. The effective and comprehensive monitoring activity which is demanded by central government needs to be continuous and joined up with other such activity within the Council. This activity is a mandatory requirement of central government which will ensure that the Council's planning policies are effective and up to date in future years. The process will also assist in the identification of any gaps in policy or deviation from the adopted plan making programme.
39. As the new Local Development Framework policy documents evolve the current monitoring framework will need to be modified to ensure that the performance of new policies can be monitored effectively.
40. The results of housing monitoring have reinforced the need for the Council to align local decision making with new national and emerging regional planning policies.

- RECOMMENDED**                      1            That Members approve the revised sequential approach contained within the report resulting from the findings of the AMR (2005/06).

## **background information**

Local Development Framework Monitoring : A Good Practice Guide (ODPM)  
AMR2005/06; PPS12 Local Development Framework; PPS3 Housing; Submission  
Draft RSS

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**Officer responsible for the report**

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Ext 264

**Author of the report**

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## SPECIAL REGENERATION COMMITTEE

2 APRIL 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

### **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: JOINT SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SCOPING REPORT FOR CORE STRATEGY AND GENERIC DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS**

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

1. To seek Members approval of the joint Sustainability Appraisal Framework Scoping Report which relates to Local Development Framework (LDF) documents currently under preparation for public consultation.

#### **background**

2. As members are aware the preparation of the new District plan is underway and that it is a statutory requirement of all Councils to perform a Sustainability Appraisal of all LDF documents throughout their preparation.
3. Sustainability Appraisal is a method to identify the potential positive and negative consequences that draft planning policies (and resulting development) will have on the environment, society and the economy of the District. The results of Sustainability Appraisal will also suggest to the Council how the draft planning policies should be changed so that any negative impacts are avoided or reduced and positive effects are maximised. It is an important means by which the Council can ensure that the LDF will facilitate sustainable development in the future. The first stage in this process is to prepare a SA Scoping Report. This is presented at Annex 2.
4. Any LDF document produced (e.g. Core Strategy or DC Policies will need to be accompanied by a SA Report which will be evaluated both alternative and preferred policy options. This will be the subject of extensive public consultation and to scrutiny by an independent Planning Inspector. Therefore it is important to note that the Council will need to demonstrate that the preparation of the new planning policies, including the Sustainability Appraisal process have been carried out correctly and the results taken on board.
5. The Sustainability Appraisal process is summarised in Figure 4 at para. 1.20 of the attached Scoping Report. The appraisal process comprises of five distinct stages, each of which is made up of a series of separate tasks. The first stage in the Sustainability Appraisal process is to prepare a Scoping Report for each policy document under preparation. Given that the Council is preparing its first two policy documents simultaneously (Core Strategy and Generic DC Policies) it is feasible to produce one Scoping Report that covers both documents.

## **policy context**

6. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires the preparation of all Local Development Framework policy documents to be informed by Sustainability Appraisal, which incorporates the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. PPS 12 'Local Development Frameworks' illustrates how the Sustainability Appraisal process should run alongside and inform the preparation of the Local Development Framework. Specific guidance is also contained in a government publication 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents'. The resulting Scoping Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of these documents.

## **outputs of the sustainability appraisal scoping report**

7. In summary the main purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report is to;
  - Identify other strategies, plans and policies that are appropriate and provide the context to the new planning policy documents and the Sustainability Appraisal process,
  - Identify and prioritise the main sustainability objectives that will be used to appraise planning policy options for the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies documents, i.e. develop a Sustainability Appraisal Framework.
  - Apply the resulting Sustainability Appraisal Framework to the draft objectives of the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies documents.
8. The key outputs are summarised in the proceeding sections of this report.

## **summary of key outputs of the sustainability appraisal scoping report**

- **Identification of relevant strategies, plans and policies that provide the context to the Sustainability Appraisal and new planning policy documents.**
9. The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal reviewed and identified the key objectives contained within a range of other strategies, plans and policies that are applicable to the preparation of new planning documents e.g. National planning policy and the Community Strategy. These are set out in Chapter 2 of the Scoping Report. The new planning policy documents that form part of the new District plan and the Sustainability Appraisal must contribute to the achievement of these key objectives. Examples of these key objectives include; reducing the District's contribution to Climate Change, protecting wildlife, supporting rural communities, providing homes for all residents, strengthening the role of the Market Towns and developing the local economy.

- **Identification and prioritisation of the main sustainability issues facing the District.**
10. The completion of the next stage of the Sustainability Appraisal required the collection of up to date credible, statistical information relating to a wide range of economic, social and environmental matters. This is contained in Chapter 3 of the Scoping Report. This information has been used to identify key district sustainability issues to inform the Scoping Report. This baseline was the subject to members and stakeholders workshop in July 2006. This task has also informed the development of the draft of the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies documents which have also been the subject of discussion at the workshops held in October 2006. Examples of the key sustainability issues include; local economic decline in traditional rural industries (e.g. agriculture, quarrying), a dependence on a limited range of industrial activities, high levels of economic, social deprivation and unemployment.
- **Development of a Sustainability Appraisal Framework to be used to appraise planning policy options for the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies documents.**
11. The draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework is presented in Table 12 at para. 4.15 of Chapter 4 of the joint Scoping Report. It is a tool to check the compatibility of the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan Document objectives and policies against the principles of Sustainable Development. The draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework was informed by the outputs of two workshops and satisfies the key messages from the context review (Chapter 2) and the key sustainability issues (Chapter 3).
12. The suggested Sustainability Objectives that form the actual draft appraisal framework have been tested for compatibility against one another. This identified potential conflicts that will need to be managed during the Sustainability Appraisal process; for example it must be noted that increasing economic activity will increase emissions of gases that are causing climate change. The draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework also includes a list of Sustainability Indicators that will be used to monitor the effectiveness of new policies in the longer term.
- **Application of the resulting Sustainability Appraisal Framework to the draft objectives of the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies documents.**
13. The draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework has been applied to the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies draft objectives that were identified through the LDF workshop. This has been useful to undertake to test at an early stage where the draft objectives are either compatible or incompatible with the principles of Sustainable Development. The process therefore identified which of the draft objectives should be changed to ensure they are more sustainable. This is described in detail in Chapters 5 and 6 of the Scoping Report.

14. The results demonstrate the effectiveness of carrying out such appraisal of the emerging development plan. They will be used to inform the content of the forthcoming Issues and Alternative Options Reports for each of the two policy documents under preparation and ensure that the most appropriate sustainable plan objectives are developed for public consultation.

#### **next steps**

15. It is proposed to invite comments on this Scoping Report and amend if necessary.
16. Once finalized the Sustainability Appraisal Framework will be used to assess the issues and alternative options relating to the two emerging LDF policy documents. This will inform the selection of the preferred options.
17. The preferred options selected together with the relevant supporting Sustainability Appraisal Reports in turn will be the subjects of further public consultation.

#### **considerations**

18. Other than the cost of consultation, which has already been budgeted for, there are no financial implications in relation to this Scoping Report. The Council has a statutory duty to consult on this document and carry out the appraisal process when preparing its development plan. There are no health and safety, IT, crime and disorder or additional human resource implications relating to this part of the process.

#### **equality and diversity**

19. The draft Scoping Report and supporting Technical Appendices will be made available in the appropriate formats in order to ensure that all third parties have the ability to access it. There will be a non-technical summary of the Scoping Report and formal consultation response form. These documents will be made available on the Council's website, in public buildings throughout the district and hard copies will be made available upon request.

#### **consultations**

20. The Draft Scoping Report once endorsed by Members will be subject to a 5-week statutory consultation period. The minimum requirement placed upon the Council is to consult with Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage. However it is considered appropriate to give other third parties who will be able to engage in the production of the LDF documents to also be involved at this stage in order to ensure that a robust framework is set for subsequent policy option appraisal.

#### **conclusion**

21. Sustainability Appraisal is an integral and fundamental part of the plan making process. At this early stage in the process the application of the draft appraisal framework to draft plan objectives has demonstrated the value that undergoing such a process can add.

- RECOMMENDED**
- 1 That Members approve the Scoping Report for public consultation.
  - 2 That Members endorse the use of the results of compatibility testing to inform the revision of the draft Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies objectives for the purposes of preparing the respective Issues and Options reports.

**background information**

PPS 12 'Local Development Frameworks'  
Wear Valley District Community Plan

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<b>Officer responsible for the report</b>	<b>Author of the report</b>
Robert Hope Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration Ext 264	Carole Dillon Principal Forward Planning Officer Ext 538

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**SPECIAL REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**2 APRIL 2007**

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration  
**DRAFT REGENERATION DEPARTMENT SERVICE PLAN 2007-2008**

**purpose of the report**

1. To present to Members for endorsement the draft Environment and Regeneration Service Plan for 2007/08 (Annex 3).

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That members endorse the Environment and Regeneration Service Plan and receive further reports on implementation through the year.

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**Officer responsible for the report**

Robert Hope  
Strategic Director for Environment and  
Regeneration  
Ext 264

**Author of the report**

Robert Hope

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## SPECIAL REGENERATION COMMITTEE

2 APRIL 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

### **WEAR VALLEY ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

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

1. To provide members with an update of the Wear Valley Economic Strategy and seek agreement to the proposed consultation with key stakeholders.

#### **background**

2. Members will recall that it was agreed that a comprehensive long-term vision for the District should be prepared together with a development strategy and investment programme to realise the vision. The study was designed as a two stage process with Stage I providing a baseline assessment of the district with proposed future scenarios and Stage II preparing the vision and an overall strategy and investment programme.
3. DTZ Pidea was appointed to undertake Stage I. However whilst the baseline assessment was thorough their proposed future scenarios were thought to be not sufficiently aspirational or challenging, it also underplayed the significance of Eastgate and the potential to develop the roles of Bishop Auckland, Crook and Stanhope.
4. Shared Intelligence (SI) was appointed to undertake Phase II. They have been involved in other relevant work in Wear Valley and the region including the successful LEGI bid, One NorthEast Development Plan and the Durham Vision for Durham County Council. They have also been involved with the development of the Tees Valley City Region Development Plan, which is very pertinent to economic future study.
5. The development of the vision and draft strategy has involved a wide consultation with a number of meetings being held with the Forum for Business and other stakeholders. A briefing was held with the Regeneration and Policy and Strategic Development Committee on 2 March 2007.
6. A copy of the strategy is attached (Annex 4).



### **policy context**

7. The Action Plan accompanying the strategy identifies how the proposed activities fit with existing regional and sub regional strategies.

### **financial implications**

8. None directly although the Economic Strategy will provide a framework through which activity will be identified and appropriate sources of funding sought.

### **legal implications and human resource implications**

9. None.

### **consultations**

10. We have consulted widely in the development of the Vision for Wear Valley and the Economic Strategy. It is proposed that the final version of the report will be formally circulated to key stakeholders to seek support such as One NorthEast, Durham County Council, Learning and Skills Council, Forum for Business, Business Link, and Government Office North East.

### **conclusion**

11. The Wear Valley Vision and Economic Strategy provides a challenging but achievable framework for future economic development in Wear Valley and enables us to align our actions with both regional and sub regional strategies. The process to date has attempted to ensure the widest consultation during development of the vision for Wear Valley and the formulation of the strategy.

### **RECOMMENDED**

1. The committee note the report and agree to the consultation with key stakeholders.
2. A report on the outcome of the consultation will be made to the committee at a future date.

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**Officer responsible for the report**

Robert Hope  
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**Author of the report**

Principal Economic Development Officer  
John Parnell  
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## Annex B: Definitions

### **Affordable housing**

#### **Affordable housing is:**

‘Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
- Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.’

#### **Social rented housing is:**

‘Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. The proposals set out in the Three Year Review of Rent Restructuring (July 2004) were implemented as policy in April 2006. It may also include rented housing owned or managed by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Housing Corporation as a condition of grant.’

#### **Intermediate affordable housing is:**

‘Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents, and which meet the criteria set out above. These can include shared equity products (eg HomeBuy), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.’

These definitions replace guidance given in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3)* and *DETR Circular 6/98 Planning and Affordable Housing*.

The definition does not exclude homes provided by private sector bodies or provided without grant funding. Where such homes meet the definition above, they may be considered, for planning purposes, as affordable housing. Whereas, those homes that do not meet the definition, for example, ‘low cost market’ housing, may not be considered, for planning purposes, as affordable housing.

There is further guidance on eligibility for affordable housing, recycling of subsidy, specific features of social rented and intermediate affordable housing and the application of the affordable housing definition, in particular with regard to the extent to which non-grant funded and private sector low cost housing products meet the definition in the Affordable Housing Policy Statement.

The terms ‘affordability’ and ‘affordable housing’ have different meanings. ‘Affordability’ is a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households. ‘Affordable housing’ refers to particular products outside the main housing market.

### **Previously-developed land (often referred to as brownfield land)**

‘Previously-developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.’

The definition includes defence buildings, but excludes:

- Land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings.
- Land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures.
- Land in built-up areas such as parks, recreation grounds and allotments, which, although it may feature paths, pavilions and other buildings, has not been previously developed.
- Land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time (to the extent that it can reasonably be considered as part of the natural surroundings).

There is no presumption that land that is previously-developed is necessarily suitable for housing development nor that the whole of the curtilage should be developed.

### **Market housing**

Private housing for rent or for sale, where the price is set in the open market.

### **Net dwelling density**

Net dwelling density is calculated by including only those site areas which will be developed for housing and directly associated uses, including access roads within the site, private garden space, car parking areas, incidental open space and landscaping and children’s play areas, where these are provided.

### **Housing demand**

The quantity of housing that households are willing and able to buy or rent.

**Housing need**

The quantity of housing required for households who are unable to access suitable housing without financial assistance.

**Key worker**

The Government's definition of key workers includes those groups eligible for the Housing Corporation funded Key Worker Living programme and others employed within the public sector (ie outside of this programme) identified by the Regional Housing Board for assistance.

**Housing market areas**

Geographical areas defined by household demand and preferences for housing. They reflect the key functional linkages between places where people live and work. See the *Identifying Sub-Regional Housing Market Areas Advice Note* for further details.

**Design code**

A design code is a set of illustrated design rules and requirements which instruct and may advise on the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code are detailed and precise, and build upon a design vision such as a masterplan or other design framework for a site or area.

## PREFACE

### Local Development Framework and the Sustainability Appraisal Process

The aim of Sustainability Appraisal is to integrate Sustainable Development into the plan making process. The Council are in the early stages of preparing a new development plan for the District, the Local Development Framework, which will set out new planning policies and proposals. This new development plan will progressively supersede the existing Wear Valley District Local Plan. The Wear Valley District Local Development Framework will differ from the current Local Plan in that it will comprise several individual but related documents as set out in the Local Development Scheme<sup>1</sup> as opposed to being one comprehensive plan. These documents will be produced in phases. The first Local Development Framework documents to be produced and subject to Sustainability Appraisal, are the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies documents. This document is the combined Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal (and Strategic Environmental Assessment) of the first two Local Development Framework policy documents.

The Local Development Framework will contribute towards achieving Sustainable Development by integrating social, environmental and economic considerations and the issues facing the District into planning policy documents. To achieve this, a Sustainability Appraisal will be undertaken on all the Local Development Framework policy documents throughout their various production stages. This will determine and enhance their contribution to the Sustainable Development of the District.

The Sustainability Appraisal process will highlight the potential environmental, economic or social effects that a particular course of action could pose. It will also suggest appropriate mitigation measures to reduce any negative impacts. The Sustainability Appraisal must conform with Section 39 (2) of *The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)* and the European Directive on "*The Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations (2004)*".

The Core Strategy document will set out the overall spatial vision and Strategic Objectives to which all Local Development Framework policies will need to accord. It will contain a strategy that sets out in broad terms the scale and location of new development in Wear Valley for the period up to 2021.

The Generic Development Control Policies document will contain a limited suite of none site-specific policies based upon generic themes. They will be used to determine the acceptability of all future planning applications and proposals. The implementation of these policies will be a means of meeting the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> The Wear Valley District Local Development Scheme can be viewed at [www.wearvalley.gov.uk](http://www.wearvalley.gov.uk)

The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process requires the development of a draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework. This Scoping Report presents a draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework for your consideration.

The objectives of this Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report are to;

- Identify links to relevant policies, plans and programmes and indicate their implications for the Local Development Framework and sustainability processes,
- Establish an evidenced and verified sustainability baseline data for the District,
- Identify the key sustainability issues within the District,
- Present a draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework that will be used to appraise forthcoming planning policy options,
- Appraise the draft objectives of the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies documents,
- Facilitate continuous and meaningful engagement with statutory agencies, other stakeholders and our community on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal process.

The Wear Valley District Statement of Community Involvement<sup>2</sup> sets out how the Council will engage with our community and stakeholders in the preparation of all Local Development Framework and Sustainability Appraisal documents. The value of your input in the document production process is acknowledged. The resulting draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework forms an important component of the production of the Local Development Framework. To ensure the development of a robust Sustainability Appraisal Framework the Council have broadened engagement opportunities for this document beyond the minimum statutory requirements. At the end of each chapter there are a series of specific consultation questions that we would particularly value comments on. Please consider replying to these consultation questions on the consultation response form.

**The presence of the Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) require that the Local Development Framework Core Strategy also undergoes an Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. The purpose of an Appropriate Assessment is to assess the impacts of a Local Development Framework document against the conservation objectives of a European Site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site. This assessment is a separate but related area of work to Sustainability Appraisal and therefore does not form part of this Scoping Report.**

***The Appendices that support this Scoping Report are contained in a separate Technical Appendices Document.***

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<sup>2</sup> The Wear Valley District Statement of Community Involvement can be viewed at [www.wearvalley.gov.uk](http://www.wearvalley.gov.uk)

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## Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive Checklist

The SEA Directive has specific requirements that must be covered. The following table confirms where these requirements are addressed in this Scoping Report.

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Where covered in Report</b>
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	<b>Chapter 2</b> <b>Appendix 1</b>
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme	<b>Chapter 3</b> <b>Appendix 3</b>
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	<i>Will be covered in the full Sustainability Appraisal Report</i>
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive	<b>Chapter 3</b> <b>Appendix 3</b>
e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation	<b>Chapter 2 and 4</b> <b>Appendix 1</b>
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors	<i>Will be covered in the full Sustainability Appraisal Report</i>
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme	<i>Will be covered in the full Sustainability Appraisal Report</i>
<b>Consultation</b> Authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report	<i>Purpose of this Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report</i>

# 1 Introduction

## Sustainable Development Explained

- 1.1 Sustainable Development became an international priority as a result of the 1992 United Nations conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. As a result, Sustainable Development was defined as,

*“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”<sup>3</sup>*

- 1.2 This definition of Sustainable Development states that development in the present should not compromise the quality of life of existing and future generations. This protection of future generations should be achieved by ensuring that global society’s needs are satisfied by development that respects the environment.
- 1.3 **Figure 1** illustrates the concept of Sustainable Development. This shows that while our economy functions to meet the needs of society, both the society and the economy are dependent on, and are nested within the wider environment. In reality, the natural environment is the foundation for all of our social, cultural and economic ways of life.

**Figure 1. Concept of Sustainable Development**



- 1.4 A simple summary of Sustainable Development is<sup>4</sup>,
- Finding integrated solutions to environmental, social and economic needs,
  - Making sure that quality of life improvements reach everyone, especially those most in need,

<sup>3</sup> From “Our Common Future (The Brundtland Report), Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

<sup>4</sup> From WWF Mainstreaming Sustainability WWF-UK, 2002

- Human society lives within the carrying capacity of the natural environment,
  - Using resources more efficiently and de-couple economic growth from environmental damage,
  - Recognising that local decisions and actions can have global impacts,
  - Accepting that global issues are a local concern and affect us all.
- 1.5 In essence, the challenge of Sustainable Development is to resolve the tension between providing a good quality of life for everyone, both now and in the future, whilst maintaining the life-support capacity of the Earth.

### **“Securing the Future” The Government’s Sustainable Development Strategy**

- 1.6 In 2005, the Government published a revised Sustainable Development strategy “Securing the Future”<sup>5</sup>. The strategy provided five guiding principles as the basis for all Sustainable Development activity in the UK.
- **Living within environmental limits.** Respecting the limits of the planet’s environment, resources and biodiversity. To improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations,
  - **Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society.** Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion and creating equal opportunities for all.
  - **Achieving a sustainable economy.** Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy that provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays principle) and efficient resource use is incentivised.
  - **Promoting good governance.** Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society and engaging people’s creativity, energy and diversity.
  - **Using sound science responsibly.** Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty (the precautionary principle) as well as public attitudes and values.

### **The Role of the Planning System**

- 1.7 The planning system is one of the most important processes by which Sustainable Development can be achieved. The British planning

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<sup>5</sup> The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy “Securing the Future”, ODPM, 2005

system was reformed through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Act makes Sustainable Development central to the reformed planning system. The Act also requires all local planning authorities to prepare, maintain and regularly review a new style development plan called the Local Development Framework. The Act also requires that a Sustainability Appraisal be undertaken on the Local Development Framework; the purpose being to promote Sustainable Development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of the Local Development Framework. The Sustainability Appraisal Process is explained in greater detail later in this document.

### **The Wear Valley District Local Development Framework**

- 1.8 The new-style development plan will comprise a number of separate Development Plan Documents that will be produced incrementally. These documents will provide the new planning framework for the District and will progressively replace the existing Wear Valley District Local Plan.
- 1.9 The current Local Plan policies are “saved” under transitional arrangements until at least September 2007 while the new policy framework is being developed.
- 1.10 Wear Valley District Council is in the early stages of preparing it’s Local Development Framework. The Council’s priorities with respect to Development Plan Document production over the next three years are set out in the Local Development Scheme<sup>6</sup>. **Figure 2** provides a basic illustration of the documents included within the Local Development Scheme.

#### **Figure 2. Wear Valley District Council Local Development Framework**

- 1.11 The first two policy documents to be prepared are;

##### **a) Core Strategy Development Plan Document**

This will cover the period up to 2021 and includes a;

- District Profile,
- Vision for the District,
- Strategic objectives of the plan that all Development Plan Documents must seek to deliver,

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<sup>6</sup> The Wear Valley District Local Development scheme can be viewed at [www.wearvalley.gov.uk](http://www.wearvalley.gov.uk)

- A locational strategy that sets out the broad distribution and scale of new development,
- Strategic non-site specific policies.

**b) Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan document**

This will contain a limited suite of non site-specific policies, based upon generic themes, which are applicable to all new development. These generic themes include highway safety, design and residential amenity.

- 1.12 There are four stages to producing every Development Plan Document, **Figure 3**. Each stage identified will be informed by the different stages of the Sustainability Appraisal process.

**Figure 3. Stages in producing each Development Plan Document**

**Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Explained**

- 1.13 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 it is mandatory for all Local Development Framework policy documents to undergo a Sustainability Appraisal and a Strategic Environmental Assessment. These are briefly discussed below;

- **Sustainability Appraisal**

Sustainability Appraisal is a “tool” that is used to consider the potential effects of any proposed plan, policy or programme and their alternatives, on the social, environmental, and economic characteristics of an area. By considering the environmental, social and economic issues at the strategic decision making level, Sustainability Appraisal can help ensure that the plan, policy or programme contributes towards achieving Sustainable Development.

- **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)<sup>7</sup> requirement is translated into British law by the Act.

1.14 The SEA Directive main objective is;

*“...to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.” (2001/42/EC)*

1.15 The Government has indicated that it is possible to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Sustainability Appraisal through a single process<sup>8</sup>. Wear Valley District Council has decided to follow this guidance, and will undertake a single process that meets the requirements of both the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal processes. For the sake of brevity within this report the combined Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment process will be referred to as Sustainability Appraisal.

1.16 The most recent<sup>8</sup> guidance states that the Sustainability Appraisal process should;

- Take a long-term view of how the area covered by the plan is expected to develop, taking account the social, environmental and economic effects of the proposed plan,
- Provide a mechanism for ensuring that sustainability objectives are translated into sustainable planning policies,
- Reflect global, national, regional and local concerns,
- Provide an audit trail of how the plan has been revised to take into account the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal,
- Form an integral part of all stages of plan preparation, and
- Incorporate the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

1.17 The Sustainability Appraisal process is a means to appraise Local Development Framework potential policy options against locally developed sustainability objectives. The results of this appraisal will inform the preparation of each stage in the production of a Local Development Framework policy document. In the early stages of preparing the Local Development Framework documents (**Figure 3**) the Sustainability Appraisal will guide the policy approach or direction;

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<sup>7</sup> European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”

<sup>8</sup> Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, ODPM, 2004

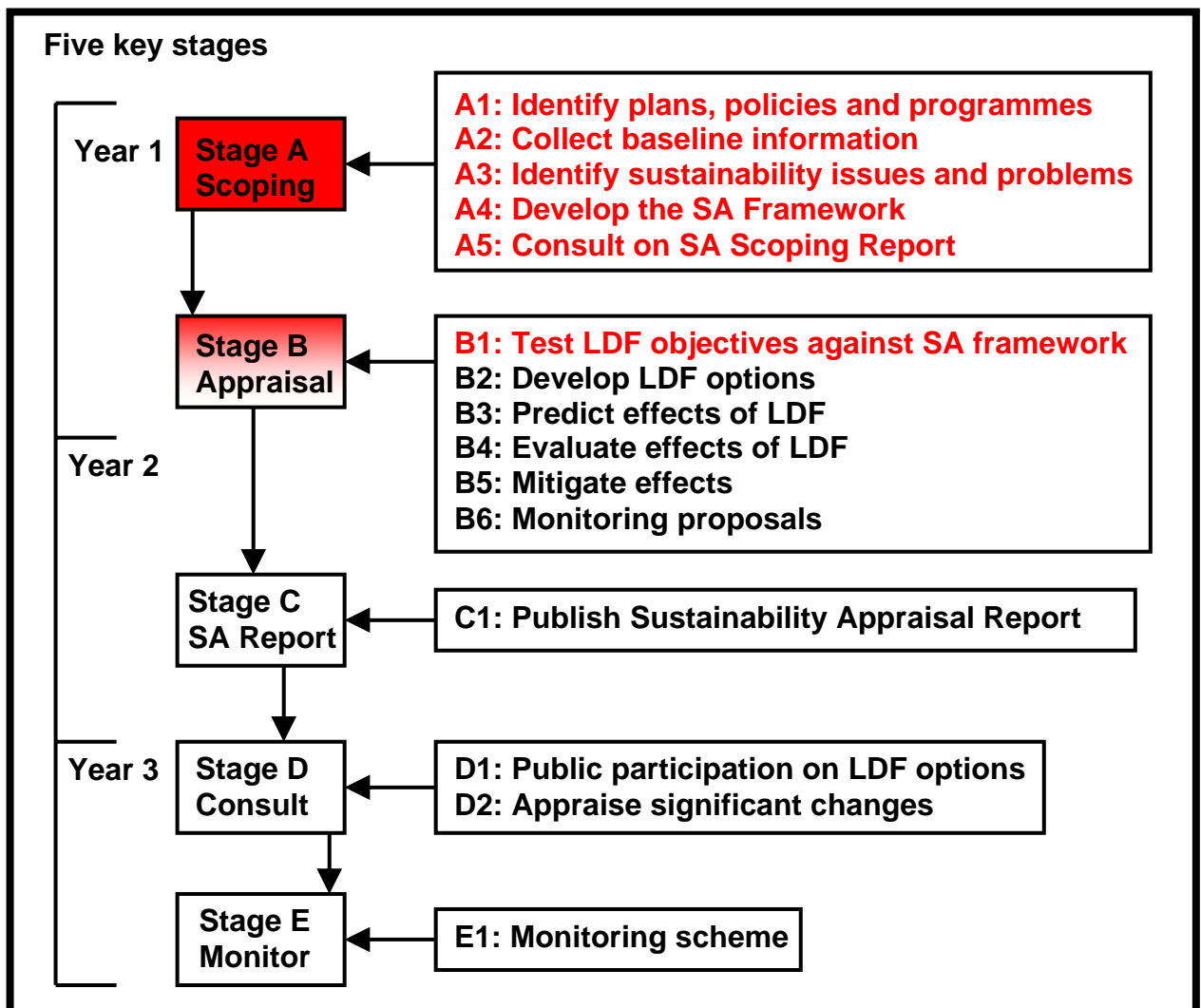
in the later stages it will inform the need to alter the policy or the need to propose mitigation measures to ensure that the aims of Sustainable Development are met.

- 1.18 It is important to note that the effect, content and results that the Sustainability Appraisal has had on its relevant Local Development Framework document may be challenged through a Public Examination process.

### The Sustainability Appraisal Process

- 1.19 **Figure 4** outlines the Sustainability Appraisal process as detailed in the Government guidance. This report relates to Sustainability Appraisal Scoping (Stage A) and Task B1 of Stage B.
- 1.20 Stage A (the Scoping stage) has five separate tasks, A1-A5. These are described in detail in **Chapters 2, 3 and 4**. Task B1 is described in **Chapters 5 and 6**.

**Figure 4. The Sustainability Appraisal Process**





- 1.21 The next stages of the Sustainability Appraisal process (Stages B and C) and comments received through this consultation process will be presented in two separate Sustainability Appraisal Reports, one for each of the Local Development Framework policy documents being prepared at present. These are due for publication in 2007.

## 2 Overview of Task A1: Context Review

### Background

2.1 **Task A1** of Stage A of the Sustainability Appraisal process establishes and defines the context in which the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and the Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents and the Sustainability Appraisal are being prepared. Relevant plans, policies and programmes have been identified and reviewed to highlight their influences on the content and scope of the Local Development Framework and the Sustainability Appraisal.

2.2 A context review is a requirement of the SEA Directive and should include;

*“an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes”, (Annex 1a).*

2.3 Many plans, policies and programmes also contain environmental and sustainability objectives. The SEA Directive also requires the context review to include;

*“the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme”, (Annex 1e).*

2.4 In addition, the Government Sustainability Appraisal guidance states that *“the [context] review should consider guidance at the international, European Union (EU) or national level on Sustainable Development as well as other policy documents such as Planning Statements. Note should be made of any targets or specific requirements included within them and what they relate to.”*

### Methodology

2.5 The following steps were carried out in order to complete **Task A1**;

- Identification of relevant plans, policies and programmes.
- Review of relevant plans, policies and programmes.

2.6 Details of each of these are outlined below.

## Identification of Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes

2.7 In order to conduct the context review relevant plans, policies and programmes were identified. Those identified are listed in **Table 1**.

**Table 1. Scope of Context Review**

<b>International</b>	<b>Year</b>
World Summit on Sustainable Development	2002
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	1992
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity	1992
<b>European Community</b>	<b>Year</b>
EU Council Directive 01/42/EC "SEA Directive"	2001
EU Council Directive 92/42/EC "Habitats Directive"	1992
EU Council Directive 79/49/EC "Birds Directive"	1997
EU Council Directive 00/60/EC "Water Framework Directive"	2000
<b>National</b>	<b>Year</b>
Sustainable Development Strategy "Securing the Future"	2005
Urban White Paper "Our Towns and Cities: The Future"	2000
Rural White Paper "Our Countryside: The Future"	2000
Working with the grain of nature: Biodiversity strategy for England	2002
The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: Working together for clean air.	2000
The Future of Transport: a network for 2030.	2004
Energy White Paper "Our energy future, creating a low carbon economy"	2003
Safer Places: The planning system and crime prevention	2004
English Indices of Deprivation	2004
National Service Framework for Older People	2001
PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development	2005
PPS 3: Housing	2006
PPG 4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms	1992
PPS 6: Planning for Town Centres	1996
PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas	2004
PPG 8: Telecommunications	2001
PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation	2005
PPS 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management	2005
PPS 11: Regional Spatial Strategies	2005
PPS 12: Local Development Frameworks	2004
PPG 13: Transport	1994
PPG 14: Development on Unstable Land	1990
PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment	1994
PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning	1999
PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation	1991
PPS 22: Renewable Energy	2004
PPS 23: Planning and Pollution Control	2004
PPG 24: Planning and Noise	1994
PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk	2005
<b>Regional</b>	<b>Year</b>
Sustainable Communities in the North East, Building for the Future	2003
The Integrated Regional Framework for the North East	2004
Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East	2005
Regional Planning Guidance for the North East	2002
Leading the Way Regional Economic Strategy Draft	2006
<b>County</b>	<b>Year</b>
Durham County Council Local Transport Plan 2	2005
County Durham Cultural Strategy	2002
County Durham Landscape Strategy	2004

County Durham Biodiversity Action Plan	1999
County Durham Waste Local Plan	2005
Single Education Plan "Partners in Learning"	2004
County Durham Tourism Strategy	2005
County Durham Minerals Local Plan	2000
County Durham Children and Young People's Plan	2006
Durham County Council Employment Sites and Premises Study	2005
<b>Local</b>	<b>Year</b>
Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership Community Plan	2005
Wear Valley District Council Housing Strategy	2006
Wear Valley Vision 21: Action for Sustainability in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	2001
Wear Valley District Council Community Safety Strategy	2005
Wear Valley District Council Urban Capacity Study	2004
Wear Valley District Council Plan 2005-2008	2005
Wear Valley District Council Retail Study	2004
Wear Valley District Council Draft Tourism Strategy	2003
Wear Valley District Council 2020 Vision	2005
An Integrated Rural Development Plan for Weardale: Renewing Weardale	2003
Durham Dales Primary Care Trust: Our Strategy for Health 2004-2007	2004
The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan	2005
Wear Valley District Council & Teesdale District Council Homelessness Strategy	2003
Bishop Auckland Town Centre Master Plan	1999
Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy	2003
Wear Valley District Council Structure Plan	1997

### **Review of Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes.**

- 2.8 Each of the plans, policies and programmes identified above were subsequently reviewed to identify the key objectives and implications for the Local Development Framework and Sustainability Appraisal. It should be noted that the list is not exhaustive as it will be subject to change as new plans, policies and programmes are continually produced. In response to this, the list will be updated and reviewed in the later stages of the Sustainability Appraisal process. **Appendix 1** contains a review of each of the relevant plans, policies and programmes.

### **Outcomes: Key Messages from the Context Review**

- 2.9 The context review has identified the following key messages that should be taken into account when developing the Local Development Framework and the Sustainability Appraisal.
- Deliver sustainable development by changing consumption and production patterns, conserving natural resources, tackling climate change and creating sustainable communities,
  - Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity at all levels including priority habitats and species (e.g. Biodiversity Action Plan, Special Areas of Conservation/Special Protection Areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and urban green space),

- Protect and improve the quality of Wear Valley's land, air and water (e.g. reduce pollution),
- Reduce Wear Valley's contribution to global Climate Change by reducing energy use, increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy generation,
- Adapt to, and reduce the impacts of Climate Change (e.g. flood risk),
- Reduce the amount of waste produced and increase the amount of waste reused, recycled and recovered,
- Reduce the use of finite natural resources by the efficient and sustainable use of land and resources (e.g. development on brownfield land, promote environmentally sustainable design),
- Protect the historic environment including listed buildings, settlements, and archaeological and cultural heritage,
- Protect landscape character from inappropriate development (e.g. North Pennines Area of Outstanding Beauty),
- Reduce health inequalities and promote healthy communities,
- Improve educational achievement, skill levels and opportunities for lifelong learning,
- Deliver the Regional Spatial Strategy target in relation to the provision of new housing within the district and meet identified needs across a range of housing types and tenures (e.g. affordable housing and decent homes standard),
- Create safer, secure and more socially inclusive communities,
- Enhance and support community involvement at all levels and for all ages in Wear Valley (e.g. Parish Councils, Local Strategic Partnership),
- Promote economic inclusion by focussing regeneration in areas of need, to ensure all residents can contribute and benefit from economic growth,
- Rejuvenate Market Towns, local economies and plan for the growth and development of existing town centres and shopping areas,
- Support equality and social inclusion by improving accessibility to good quality essential services and facilities (e.g. health services, recreational facilities),

- Support rural communities and the services they depend on to enhance their local sustainability (e.g. vital village services),
- Reduce the need to travel by motor vehicle. Locate new development close to existing services. Improve accessibility to employment, leisure facilities and essential services by sustainable transport choices (e.g. walking and cycling),
- Ensure that Local Development Framework policies are produced with early and meaningful community and stakeholder involvement.

### 3 Overview of Task A2: Baseline Information and Task A3: Sustainability Issues

#### Background

3.1 The collection of baseline information is a key part of Sustainability Appraisal. The aim of **Task A2** is to describe the current state of the District of Wear Valley. This requires the collection of information on a wide range of economic, social and environmental subjects. The baseline information is a means to identify key sustainability issues, **Task A3**. The identification of sustainability issues (including environmental problems as required by the SEA Directive) provides an opportunity to pin point the key issues for the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Development Plan Documents and to develop sustainable plan objectives and options.

3.2 The SEA Directive requires the baseline information (**Task A2**) to include;

*“the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected”, (Annex 1b).*

3.3 The SEA Directive also requires the identification of sustainability issues (**Task A3**) to include;

*“any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC [the “Birds Directive”] and 92/43/EEC [the “Habitats Directive”]*

3.4 Sustainability Appraisal requires that **Task A2** and **Task A3** are broadened to include social and economic aspects. These, together with the environmental aspects required by the SEA Directive should ensure the main aspects of sustainability are covered.

#### Methodology & Outcomes

3.5 The following steps have been carried out in order to complete **Task A2** and **Task A3**;

- Collation of baseline data,
- Identification of sustainability issues facing the District,
- Determining the sustainability of the District,
- Verifying baseline data, issues and objectives,
- Prioritisation of sustainability issues facing the District.

- 3.6 An overview of each of these steps and the outcomes are detailed below.

### **Collation of Baseline Data**

- 3.7 To ensure that the Sustainability Appraisal process is robust it is necessary to ensure that it is founded on detailed and accurate baseline data relating to the District. To achieve this it was necessary from the outset to establish an appropriate framework to focus the collation and management of such information. The resulting framework is based upon the Audit Commission's Quality of Life themes<sup>9</sup>.
- 3.8 The Audit Commission produced the Quality of Life themes in response to the Local Government Act (2000). This Act empowered local authorities to promote the social, economic and environmental well being of their area, and a new duty to work with partners to prepare a Community Strategy. The quality of life themes cover a range of social, economic and environmental aspects and are complimentary to the aims and objectives of Sustainability Appraisal. They cover the following themes;
- **Leisure (and Culture)**
  - **Community Cohesion and Involvement**
  - **Homes**
  - **Education and Life-long Learning**
  - **People and Place**
  - **Health and Social well-being**
  - **Community Safety**
  - **Transport and Access**
  - **Economic well-being**
  - **Environment**
- 3.9 A detailed description of the baseline information collated so far and the sustainability issues identified from this data are contained in **Appendix 3**.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk/>



## Identification of Sustainability Issues Facing the District

- 3.10 Many sustainability issues in the District had previously been identified through the Wear Valley Community Strategy<sup>10</sup>. The context review, baseline information, the performance of the sustainability indicators and Sustainability Appraisal workshops were used to update, broaden and extend the sustainability issues identified in the Community Strategy. This approach has enabled the early integration of the Community Strategy into the Sustainability Appraisal and the emerging Local Development Framework. The resulting sustainability issues are contained within **Appendix 3**.
- 3.11 It is important to note that the current baseline information may not highlight all of the sustainability issues in the District. As new baseline information is continuously produced and changed it is inevitable that some information will become out of date. Later stages of the Sustainability Appraisal process and the forthcoming review of the Wear Valley Community Strategy will review the baseline. This will ensure that the sustainability issues are kept up to date.

## Verification of Baseline Data, Sustainability Issues and Draft Sustainability Objectives

- 3.12 In July 2006, two Sustainability Appraisal workshops were held to inform the baseline and identify the key sustainability issues. Elected Members and key Council officers attended the first workshop and external stakeholders attended the second workshop. The workshop delegates are listed in **Appendix 2**.
- 3.13 The main objectives of the workshops were;
- To inform the delegates about Sustainability Appraisal and the Local Development Framework;
  - To allow delegates to discuss, amend and verify the baseline, sustainability indicators and sustainability issues; and
  - To begin the development of locally relevant sustainability objectives to guide the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (**Chapter 4**),
- 3.14 Delegates were provided with baseline information and draft sustainability issues identified from the baseline data. Delegates were asked to verify the baseline and to discuss and agree the sustainability issues. This process has been invaluable in that it has informed the baseline, sustainability issues and sustainability objectives that are contained in this report.

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<sup>10</sup> Wear Valley Community Strategy, Local Strategic Partnership 2005

### **Determining the Sustainability of the District**

- 3.15 It has been necessary to identify Sustainability Indicators as part of carrying out **Task A3**. The role of Sustainability Indicators are to indicate and enable the monitoring of the overall performance of the sustainability of the entire District. Their use is essential in the identification of the current and future sustainability issues in the District.
- 3.16 **To ensure compliance with the Government guidance all future references to indicators in this report will now be called Sustainability Indicators.**
- 3.17 Therefore, Sustainability Indicators selected need to be appropriate to a wide range of sustainability criteria that cover key social, economic and environmental aspects. There are a large range of potential indicators that could assist in this process. However, the Sustainability Indicators must be appropriate to the scale of the Sustainability Appraisal *i.e.* relevant at the District level.
- 3.18 The Sustainability Indicators that are contained within **Appendix 3** of this report are derived from the Audit Commission's Quality of Life Indicators, Wear Valley District Council Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI), the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and other indicators relevant to a specific sustainability issue *e.g.* ecological footprint.
- 3.19 The Sustainability Indicators identified through carrying out this part of the process were used as a means to compare the District's sustainability performance against other geographical areas *e.g.* national, regional and county level. In order to gauge the sustainability of the District through these indicators it was necessary to collect sufficient data to answer the following questions;
- How good or bad is the current situation? Do trends show that it is getting worse or improving?
  - How far is the current situation from sustainability thresholds or targets?

### **Prioritisation of Sustainability Issues facing the District**

- 3.20 It is important to note that the Local Development Framework is only one of a number of mechanisms that can contribute towards addressing the main sustainability issues of the District.

3.21 The SEA Directive requires the identification of;

*“the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without the implementation of the plan or programme”, (Annex 1a).*

3.22 This requires a prediction of how the environment will change overtime and what will happen without the Local Development Framework being in place to address the environmental sustainability issues in the District. To accord with the aims of Sustainable Development the prediction has been widened to include social and economic sustainability issues and are summarised in **Table 2**.

**Table 2. Summary of likely implications of not implementing the Local Development Framework**

No.	Sustainability Issue	Likely implications of absence of the Development Framework.	
<b>Theme 1: Leisure</b>			
S1	Good access to sports facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poor quality formal leisure provision</li> <li>▪ Inadequate succession planning for leisure facilities</li> <li>▪ Constrained participation rates</li> <li>▪ Poor open space consideration and difficulties in resisting pressure for development on existing open space</li> </ul>	
S2	Leisure centres nearing end of their working life		
S3	Unknown status and quality of open spaces		
S4	Good informal leisure opportunities from rural setting		
<b>Theme 2: Community Cohesion and Involvement</b>			
S5	Average election turnout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduced potential to identify community needs</li> <li>▪ Reduced potential to identify the distribution, quality and appropriateness of community facilities</li> <li>▪ Reduced levels of social capital</li> </ul>	
S6	Good geographical coverage of Parish Councils		
S7	Very low levels of racial incidents		
S8	Strong levels of community cohesion and involvement.		
S9	Many active and working community groups/network supported by LSP		
S10	Established mechanism for public engagement in the planning process		
S11	High out of hours school usage		
S12	Meet needs for community facilities and access		
<b>Theme 3: Homes</b>			
S13	High proportion of Local Authority housing stock failing to meet decent homes standard		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Negative impact upon residential amenity, health &amp; social wellbeing</li> <li>▪ Inability to meet housing need without new housing land allocations leading to population migration</li> <li>▪ Exacerbation of affordability issues without affordable housing policies</li> <li>▪ Lack of certainty for housing developers</li> <li>▪ Increased number of “windfall” permissions</li> <li>▪ Reduced use of previously developed land</li> <li>▪ Inability to satisfy regional housing allocation</li> <li>▪ Inability to plan and control the regeneration of low demand areas</li> </ul>
S14	Increasing trend in house building		
S15	Increasing housing yield		
S16	Low second home ownership		
S17	Sufficient Previously Developed Land available to meet further housing requirements		
S18	Rising house prices		
S19	No affordable housing completions		
S20	Low levels of new housing built on previously developed land		
S21	Decreasing household size		
S22	Number of permitted new build homes		
S23	Existing housing supply higher than Regional Spatial Strategy allocation		
S24	Increasing trend in hidden homelessness		
S25	High housing vacancy rate		
S26	Increasing house price to income ratio		
S27	Meet housing need		
S28	Meet affordable housing need		
S29	Low housing demand areas		

<b>Theme 4: Education and Lifelong Learning</b>		
S30	Poor access to schools and adult education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No land allocations for new or extensions to existing educational establishments</li> <li>▪ Exacerbation of accessibility problems</li> <li>▪ Negative impact upon attractiveness of District to existing business and potential investor</li> <li>▪ Negative impact upon social wellbeing of residents</li> <li>▪ Negative impact upon ability of residents to contribute to economic growth</li> <li>▪ Current deprivation levels exacerbated</li> <li>▪ Cycle of deprivation reinforced</li> <li>▪ Reinforced local skill shortages impacting upon attractiveness of District for investment</li> </ul>
S31	Local skills shortages	
S32	Poor educational achievement in schools	
S33	Possible problems with long-term viability of schools	
S34	Low qualification levels	
S35	Poor adult literacy skills	
S36	Poor adult numeracy skills	
S37	High levels of intergenerational worklessness	
S38	Good involvement of schools with community	
<b>Theme 5: People and Place</b>		
S39	Population increasing but with geographical variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inability to plan for the needs of a changing population e.g. elderly and health care, young people, immigration</li> <li>▪ Exacerbating current fall in birth rate and decline in population</li> <li>▪ Change in household composition and thus ability of housing stock to meet current and future housing need</li> </ul>
S40	Declining population	
S41	More females than males	
S42	Ageing population	
S43	Unclear population predictions	
S44	Low ethnicity	
S45.	Net inward migration	
S46	Young people leaving	
S47	Increasing number of households	
S49	Falling birth rate	
S50	Male life expectancy increasing	
S51	Female life expectancy decreasing	
<b>Theme 6: Health and Social Well being</b>		
S52	High teenage pregnancy rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No new land designations for leisure and recreation</li> <li>▪ No provision of new recreation routes</li> <li>▪ Reduced accessibility to community facilities and services</li> <li>▪ Increased and unmet demand for access to new and existing health services</li> </ul>
S53	Low infant mortality rate	
S54	High levels of early deaths from circulatory disease	
S55	High levels of early deaths from cancer	
S56	High proportion of obese adults	
S57	High incidence of lifestyle related illness	
S58	High and increasing road accident rate	
S59	High levels of long-term illness	
S60	High levels of deaths due to smoking	
S61	High levels of incapacity	
S62	Geographical variations in life expectancy	

<b>Theme 7: Community Safety</b>		
<b>S63</b>	<b>Crime increasing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of “Secured by Design” principles unlikely to be met</li> <li>▪ Unmet need for further and improved leisure provision for young people</li> <li>▪ Inability to plan for flood defences</li> <li>▪ Inappropriate development in areas of flood risk</li> </ul>
<b>S64</b>	<b>High fear of crime</b>	
<b>S65</b>	<b>Geographical variations in crime, (low in Weardale but high in town centres and deprived wards)</b>	
<b>S66</b>	<b>Severe flood risk</b>	
<b>Theme 8: Transport and Access</b>		
<b>S67</b>	<b>Extensive Public Rights of Way Network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unmet needs of elderly e.g. health care facilities and access to services</li> <li>▪ Situation likely to worsen with increased traffic flows from higher car ownership</li> <li>▪ No control on the location of new development that reduces the need to travel</li> <li>▪ No contribution to sustainable modes of transport e.g. cycling paths</li> <li>▪ Limited control on the quality and protection of the PROW network</li> <li>▪ Reduced opportunity to maximise exiting sustainable transport infrastructure e.g. rail links</li> <li>▪ Reduced ability to support needs of new and existing community based transport schemes</li> </ul>
<b>S68</b>	<b>Address access needs of an ageing population</b>	
<b>S69</b>	<b>Need for greater integration of transport services</b>	
<b>S70</b>	<b>Inter and intra accessibility difficulties</b>	
<b>S71</b>	<b>Support and develop existing community based sustainable transport initiatives</b>	
<b>S72</b>	<b>Available rail potential</b>	
<b>S73</b>	<b>Meet access needs for those without a car</b>	
<b>S74</b>	<b>Long travel to work distances</b>	
<b>Theme 9: Economic Well being</b>		
<b>S75</b>	<b>Declining traditional rural industry e.g. agriculture, quarrying.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No new employment land allocations will exacerbate all existing economic problems</li> <li>▪ Inadequate planning for economic development will adversely impact the growth of the Districts economy</li> <li>▪ Reduced ability to focus economic development in areas of need e.g. rural diversification, former coal-field area</li> <li>▪ Failing to provide for the needs of additional businesses (e.g. expansion) will increase the risk of high unemployment if dominant employers leave the area</li> <li>▪ Insufficient provision of local employment will increase need to travel outside of the District</li> <li>▪ Limited economic opportunities will decrease the diversity of skills in the community</li> <li>▪ Reduced ability to attract prestige and high tech business uses</li> <li>▪ Low economic growth will exacerbate economic deprivation and unemployment</li> <li>▪ Unmet needs of growing economic sectors (e.g. tourism, new business start ups)</li> <li>▪ Reduced local employment opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>S76</b>	<b>Large dependence on Education/Health/Public, Manufacturing and Distribution/Retail</b>	
<b>S77</b>	<b>Shift from traditional industries but slow growth in replacement sectors</b>	
<b>S78</b>	<b>Negative business image</b>	
<b>S79</b>	<b>Mismatch in supply and demand of existing business property e.g. legacy buildings</b>	
<b>S80</b>	<b>Limited high quality business units</b>	
<b>S81</b>	<b>Low wages (weekly)</b>	
<b>S82</b>	<b>Increasing wage inequality</b>	
<b>S83</b>	<b>High proportion of physically constrained employment land</b>	
<b>S84</b>	<b>Good levels of self employment</b>	
<b>S85</b>	<b>High retail leakage</b>	
<b>S86</b>	<b>Inflexible land allocations</b>	
<b>S87</b>	<b>Limited job opportunities</b>	
<b>S88</b>	<b>Geographical variation in employment rate</b>	
<b>S89</b>	<b>Areas of high employment deprivation</b>	
<b>S90</b>	<b>Declining employment base</b>	
<b>S91</b>	<b>Tourism growth</b>	
<b>S92</b>	<b>Increasing economically active population</b>	
<b>S93</b>	<b>High levels of business start ups</b>	
<b>S94</b>	<b>High levels of JSA claimants</b>	
<b>S95</b>	<b>High multiple deprivation</b>	

Theme 10: Environment		
S96	High landscape value under threat from development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key habitats and species could be lost/damaged without adequate protection from LDF</li> <li>▪ Further habitat loss and fragmentation</li> <li>▪ Inability to provide environmental enhancement opportunities</li> <li>▪ Decline in overall biodiversity from inadequate protection without LDF policies</li> <li>▪ Reduced protection of open space, landscape character and tranquillity</li> <li>▪ Reduced opportunity to promote waste and water minimisation and sustainable resource use in new developments</li> <li>▪ Increased potential for environmental pollution from inappropriate development</li> <li>▪ Reduced ability to encourage/support renewable energy generation and energy efficiency measures in new development</li> <li>▪ Inability to plan/locate renewable energy schemes</li> <li>▪ Inadequate provision of waste management facilities</li> <li>▪ Inability to reduce/remediate land contamination</li> <li>▪ Increasing unsustainable ecological footprint</li> <li>▪ Decline in local environmental quality</li> <li>▪ Increased potential for damage to built heritage</li> <li>▪ Reduced ability to designate new and protect existing conservation areas from inappropriate development</li> </ul>
S97	High biodiversity value but many designated habitats in poor condition	
S98	High biodiversity value but many LBAP habitats in poor condition	
S99	Protected species in poor condition	
S100	Reduction in landfill capacity	
S101	Decreasing domestic waste	
S102	Low levels of reuse, recovery and recycling of waste	
S103	High CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	
S104	High energy use	
S105	Very limited renewable energy generation	
S106	Excellent river water quality	
S107	Average levels of domestic water use	
S108	Average levels of water supply leakage	
S109	Good local air quality	
S110	Large areas of contaminated land	
S111	Good local environmental quality-	
S112	Unsustainable ecological footprint	
S113	High number of listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments	
S114	Listed buildings at risk	
S115	Sites of archaeological interest	
S116	Scheduled Ancient Monuments at risk	
S117	High proportion of conservation areas relative to number of settlements	

### Prioritisation of Sustainability Issues facing the District

3.23 A level of priority has been assigned to each sustainability issue that the Local Development Framework should seek to address. The level of priority for action is related to maximising the improvement in the overall sustainability of the District. It should be noted that all of the sustainability issues should be addressed by the Local Development Framework but that some issues will contribute more than others to improving local sustainability.

3.24 The rankings we have applied are as follows;

#### **Priority Action** (red)

These issues must be addressed by the Local Development Framework. Addressing these issues will provide a significant and cumulative improvement in local sustainability. These issues are either significantly below target or are of high importance for Sustainable Development.

**Consider Action** (yellow)

These issues may be on target, show an improving trend or are in a favourable situation. These issues will require action although they may be addressed indirectly by tackling the issues for priority action.

**No Action Needed** (green)

These issues are performing favourably with regard to targets and trends. Although they should still be considered by the Local Development Framework to ensure performance is maintained.

**Uncertain or Unclassifiable** (grey)

These issues require the collection of supporting baseline information. Some of these issues are outside the control of the Local Development Framework e.g. number of permitted new homes.

**Table 3. Priority Sustainability Issues**

No.	Priority Action
S13	High proportion of Local Authority housing stock failing to meet decent homes standard
S14	Increasing trend in house building
S16	Increasing second home ownership
S18	Rising house prices
S19	No affordable housing completions
S20	Low levels of new housing built on previously developed land
S23	Existing housing supply higher than Regional Spatial Strategy allocation
S24	Increasing trend in hidden homelessness
S25	High housing vacancy rate
S26	Increasing house price to income ratio
S28	Meet affordable housing need
S30	Poor access to schools and adult education
S32	Poor educational achievement in schools
S34	Low qualification levels
S35	Poor adult literacy skills
S36	Poor adult numeracy skills
S37	High levels of intergenerational worklessness
S40	Declining population
S43	Unclear population predictions
S46	Young people leaving
S48	Strong travelling / gypsy communities
S49	Falling birth rate
S51	Female life expectancy decreasing
S52	High teenage pregnancy rate
S54	High levels of early deaths from circulatory disease
S55	High levels of early deaths from cancer
S56	High proportion of obese adults
S57	High incidence of lifestyle related illness
S62	Geographical variations in life expectancy
S63	Crime increasing
S64	High fear of crime
S65	Geographical variations in crime, (low in Weardale, high in town centres/deprived wards)
S68	Address access needs of an ageing population
S75	Declining traditional rural industry e.g. agriculture, quarrying.
S76	Large dependence on Education/Health/Public, Manufacturing and Distribution/Retail
S77	Shift from traditional industries but slow growth in replacement sectors
S81	Low wages (weekly)
S82	Increasing wage inequality



<b>S85</b>	<b>High retail leakage</b>
<b>S87</b>	<b>Limited job opportunities</b>
<b>S88</b>	<b>Geographical variation in employment rate</b>
<b>S89</b>	<b>Areas of high employment deprivation</b>
<b>S94</b>	<b>High levels of JSA claimants</b>
<b>S95</b>	<b>High multiple deprivation</b>
<b>S97</b>	<b>High biodiversity value but many designated habitats in poor condition</b>
<b>S98</b>	<b>High biodiversity value but many LBAP habitats in poor condition</b>
<b>S99</b>	<b>Protected species in poor condition</b>
<b>S103</b>	<b>High CO<sub>2</sub> emissions</b>
<b>S104</b>	<b>High energy use</b>
<b>S105</b>	<b>Very limited renewable energy generation</b>
<b>S110</b>	<b>Large areas of contaminated land</b>
<b>S112</b>	<b>Unsustainable ecological footprint</b>

**Table 4. Consider Action Sustainability Issues**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Consider Action</b>
<b>S2</b>	<b>Leisure centres nearing end of their working life</b>
<b>S7</b>	<b>Very low levels of racial incidents</b>
<b>S8</b>	<b>Strong levels of community cohesion and involvement.</b>
<b>S9</b>	<b>Many active and working community groups/network supported by the LSP</b>
<b>S12</b>	<b>Meet needs for community facilities and access</b>
<b>S21</b>	<b>Decreasing household size</b>
<b>S27</b>	<b>Meet housing need</b>
<b>S29</b>	<b>Low housing demand areas</b>
<b>S31</b>	<b>Local skills shortages</b>
<b>S33</b>	<b>Possible problems with long-term viability of schools</b>
<b>S42</b>	<b>Ageing population</b>
<b>S45</b>	<b>Net inward migration</b>
<b>S47</b>	<b>Increasing number of households</b>
<b>S58</b>	<b>High and increasing road accident rate</b>
<b>S59</b>	<b>High levels of long-term illness</b>
<b>S60</b>	<b>High levels of deaths due to smoking</b>
<b>S61</b>	<b>High levels of incapacity</b>
<b>S66</b>	<b>Severe flood risk</b>
<b>S69</b>	<b>Need for greater integration of transport services</b>
<b>S70</b>	<b>Inter and intra accessibility difficulties</b>
<b>S71</b>	<b>Support and develop existing community based sustainable transport initiatives</b>
<b>S72</b>	<b>Available rail potential</b>
<b>S73</b>	<b>Meet access needs for those without a car</b>
<b>S74</b>	<b>Long travel to work distances</b>
<b>S78</b>	<b>Negative business image</b>
<b>S79</b>	<b>Mismatch in supply and demand of existing business property e.g. legacy buildings</b>
<b>S80</b>	<b>Limited high quality business units</b>
<b>S83</b>	<b>High proportion of physically constrained employment land</b>
<b>S86</b>	<b>Inflexible land allocations</b>
<b>S90</b>	<b>Declining employment base</b>
<b>S92</b>	<b>Increasing economically active population</b>
<b>S96</b>	<b>High landscape value under threat from development</b>
<b>S101</b>	<b>Increasing domestic waste</b>
<b>S102</b>	<b>Low levels of reuse, recovery and recycling of waste</b>
<b>S107</b>	<b>Average levels of domestic water use</b>
<b>S108</b>	<b>Average levels of water supply leakage</b>
<b>S114</b>	<b>Listed buildings at risk</b>
<b>S116</b>	<b>Scheduled Ancient Monuments at risk</b>

**Table 5. No Action Sustainability Issues**

<b>No.</b>	<b>No Action</b>
<b>S1</b>	<b>Good access to sports facilities</b>
<b>S4</b>	<b>Good informal leisure opportunities from rural setting</b>
<b>S5</b>	<b>Average election turnout</b>
<b>S6</b>	<b>Good geographical coverage of Parish Councils</b>
<b>S15</b>	<b>Increasing housing yield</b>
<b>S38</b>	<b>Good involvement of schools with community</b>
<b>S44</b>	<b>Low ethnicity</b>
<b>S50</b>	<b>Male life expectancy increasing</b>
<b>S53</b>	<b>Low infant mortality rate</b>
<b>S67</b>	<b>Extensive Public Rights of Way Network</b>
<b>S84</b>	<b>Good levels of self employment</b>
<b>S91</b>	<b>Tourism growth</b>
<b>S93</b>	<b>High levels of business start ups</b>
<b>S106</b>	<b>Excellent river water quality</b>
<b>S109</b>	<b>Good local air quality</b>
<b>S111</b>	<b>Good local environmental quality</b>

**Table 6. Unclassifiable Sustainability Issues**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Unclassifiable</b>
<b>S3</b>	<b>Unknown status and quality of open spaces</b>
<b>S10</b>	<b>Established mechanism for public engagement in the planning process</b>
<b>S11</b>	<b>High out of hours school usage</b>
<b>S17</b>	<b>Sufficient Previously Developed Land available to meet further housing requirements</b>
<b>S22</b>	<b>Number of permitted new build homes</b>
<b>S41</b>	<b>More females than males</b>
<b>S100</b>	<b>Reduction in landfill capacity</b>
<b>S113</b>	<b>High number of listed buildings and SAMs</b>
<b>S115</b>	<b>Sites of archaeological interest</b>
<b>S117</b>	<b>High proportion of conservation areas relative to number of settlements</b>

## **4 Task A4: Developing the Draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

### **Background**

- 4.1 The implementation of **Task A4** relates to the development of the draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework and is central to the Sustainability Appraisal process. The resulting Sustainability Appraisal Framework is used to check the compatibility of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan Document objectives and policies against Sustainable Development principles. This is documented in **Chapter 5** of this report. Essentially the Sustainability Appraisal Framework provides a way in which the sustainability effects of the Local Development Framework can be described, analysed and compared.
- 4.2 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework has two components;
- 1) Sustainability Objectives - these cover the context review, the sustainability issues and the Sustainability Appraisal guidance and Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requirements.
  - 2) Local Development Framework Sustainability Indicators - are used to monitor progress of the Local Development Framework in achieving the sustainability objectives.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework will change to incorporate appropriate feedback from consultees in respect to this Scoping Report.

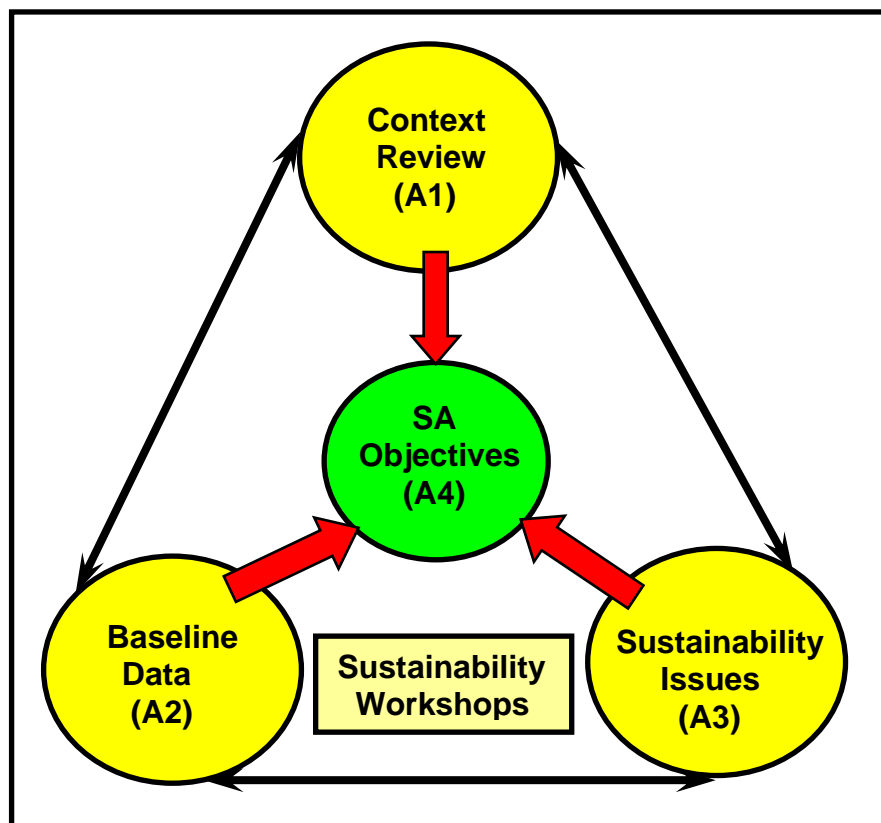
### **Methodology**

- 4.4 The following steps were carried out in order to complete **Task A4**;
- Development of Sustainability Objectives for the Sustainability Appraisal Framework,
  - Ensuring integration of SEA and Sustainability Objectives,
  - Development of Local Development Framework Sustainability Indicators,
  - Compatibility testing of the draft Sustainability Objectives.
- 4.5 Each step and outcome is detailed below.

## Development of the Sustainability Objectives for the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

- 4.6 **Figure 5** shows the process undertaken in the development of the sustainability objectives. The link to the earlier Stage A Tasks A1-A3 and the Sustainability workshops are shown.

**Figure 5. Sustainability Objectives Process**



- 4.7 The sustainability workshops positively contributed towards the development of the sustainability objectives. The Sustainability Appraisal Officers of Wear Valley District Council have subsequently been refined the workshop sustainability objectives to ensure they;
- comply with the Sustainability Appraisal guidance and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive,
  - include the key messages from the context review (**Chapter 2**),
  - satisfy the sustainability issues (**Chapter 3**) identified from the baseline, the sustainability indicators, the Sustainability Appraisal workshops and the Community Strategy.
- 4.8 An audit trail documenting the refinement of the draft sustainability objectives is given in **Appendix 4**.

4.9 The resulting draft Sustainability Objectives are as follows;

**Table 7. Draft Sustainability Objectives**

<b>Sustainability Objective</b>	
1.	<b>Protect and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity</b>
2.	<b>To reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life for all residents</b>
3.	<b>Improve educational achievement and access to qualifications and life long learning skills for all residents</b>
4.	<b>Ensure everyone has access to good quality sustainable affordable homes that meet their needs</b>
5.	<b>Improve community safety to reduce crime and the fear of crime</b>
6.	<b>Support and enhance community activity and increase public involvement in all decision making</b>
7.	<b>Protect and improve the quality of land, air and water</b>
8.	<b>Reduce the District's contribution to global Climate Change and ensure we are prepared for associated impacts</b>
9.	<b>Provide high and sustainable levels of employment and improve access for all to employment opportunities</b>
10.	<b>Promote and enhance a sustainable dynamic and diverse economy</b>
11.	<b>Promote sustainable waste management practices to reduce waste and waste disposal and promote reuse, recycling and recovery</b>
12.	<b>Ensure the sustainable and efficient use of energy and natural resources</b>
13.	<b>Ensure access for all to essential facilities, services and leisure opportunities</b>
14.	<b>Protect and enhance our significant built cultural and historic heritage</b>
15.	<b>Protect and enhance the high quality of Wear Valley's townscapes, settlements and rural landscapes</b>
16.	<b>Reduce the need to travel by motor vehicle and encourage the use of integrated and sustainable forms of transport</b>
17.	<b>Ensure sustainable and balanced population growth</b>

**Ensuring integration of SEA and Sustainability Objectives.**

4.10 In accordance with current government guidance the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and the Sustainability Appraisal have been combined into one appraisal process. **Table 8** shows how the various objectives related to the SEA Directive have been integrated into the Sustainability Appraisal objectives. It indicates how the sustainability objectives contribute in an integrated way to the achievement of the social, environmental and economic aspects of

sustainability *i.e.* the sustainability objective may be cross-cutting in nature.

**Table 8. Integrating SEA Objectives with Sustainability Appraisal Objectives**

<b>Sustainability Appraisal Objective</b>		<b>Soc</b>	<b>Env</b>	<b>Econ</b>
1.	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity	✓	✓	
2.	To reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life for all residents.	✓		✓
3.	Improve educational achievement and access to qualifications and life long learning skills for all residents	✓		✓
4.	Ensure everyone has access to good quality sustainable affordable homes that meet their needs	✓		✓
5.	Improve community safety and reduce crime and the fear of crime	✓		
6.	Support and enhance community activity and increase public involvement in all decision making	✓		
7.	Protect and improve the quality of land, air and water.	✓	✓	
8.	Reduce the District's contribution to global Climate Change and ensure we are prepared for associated impacts	✓	✓	✓
9.	Provide high and sustainable levels of employment and improve access for all to employment opportunities	✓		✓
10.	Promote and enhance a sustainable dynamic and diverse economy	✓		✓
11.	Promote sustainable waste management practices to reduce waste and waste disposal and promote reuse, recycling and recovery.		✓	✓
12.	Ensure the sustainable and efficient use of energy and natural resources		✓	✓
13.	Ensure access for all to essential facilities, services and leisure opportunities	✓		✓
14.	Protect and enhance our significant built cultural and historic heritage.	✓		✓
15.	Protect and enhance the high quality of Wear Valley's townscapes, settlements and rural landscapes.	✓	✓	✓
16.	Reduce the need to travel by motor vehicle and encourage the use of integrated and sustainable forms of transport	✓	✓	
17.	Ensure sustainable and balanced population growth	✓		✓

- 4.11 **Table 9** indicates how the issues that must be addressed in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (*Directive Annex 1f*) have been satisfied by the sustainability objectives.

**Table 9. Relationship of Sustainability Appraisal objectives to Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive**

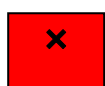
<b>SEA Directive Issue</b>	<b>Sustainability Appraisal Objective</b>
Biodiversity	1
Population	3, 4, 5, 6, 17
Human Health	2
Fauna	1
Flora	1
Soil	7
Water	7
Air	7
Climatic Factors	8
Material Assets	9, 10, 11, 12, 13
Cultural Heritage	14
Landscape	15

### **Compatibility Testing the Sustainability Objectives**

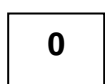
- 4.12 The final component of **Task A4** requires that the draft sustainability objectives are appraised or tested for potential compatibility against one another. This is detailed in **Table 10**. It must be recognized that a basic test of this nature inevitably involves assumptions being made.
- 4.13 Four categories have been used to assess the compatibility of the sustainability objectives against one another;



**Compatible objectives.** These sustainability objectives will not have any negative impacts on one another. They should, if implemented correctly, compliment and/or enhance each of the sustainability objectives.



**Incompatible objectives.** These sustainability objectives will have negative impacts on one another. If the objective is pursued then appropriate mitigation measures will be required to reduce the negative impact.



**Neutral objectives.** These sustainability objectives do not directly have an effect on one another.



**Variable objectives.** It is possible that these sustainability objectives may have either a positive effect or a negative impact on one another. The potential for effect or impact depends on how the particular objective is implemented.



**Table 10. Compatibility Testing the Sustainability Objectives**

Sustainability Objective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity																	
2. To reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life for all residents	✓																
3. Improve educational achievement and access to qualifications and life long learning skills for all residents	✓	✓															
4. Ensure everyone has access to good quality sustainable affordable homes that meet their needs	✗	✓	0														
5. Improve community safety and reduce crime and the fear of crime	0	✓	0	✓													
6. Support and enhance community activity and increase public involvement in all decision making	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓												
7. Protect and improve the quality of land, air and water	✓	✓	✓	✗	0	✓											
8. Reduce the District's contribution to global Climate Change and ensure we are prepared for associated impacts	✓	✓	✓	✗	0	0	✓										
9. Provide high and sustainable levels of employment and improve access for all to employment opportunities	✗	✓	✓	✓	0	0	✗	✗									
10. Promote and enhance a sustainable dynamic and diverse economy	✗	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓								
11. Promote sustainable waste management practices to reduce waste and waste disposal and promote reuse, recycling and recovery	✓	✓/✗	✓	✗	0	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗							
12. Ensure the sustainable and efficient use of energy and natural resources	✓	✓/✗	✓	✗	0	0	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓						
13. Ensure access for all to essential facilities, services and leisure opportunities	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗					
14. Protect and enhance our significant built cultural and historic heritage	0	✓	✓	✓/✗	0	0	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	0	✓/✗	✓/✗				
15. Protect and enhance the high quality of Wear Valley's townscapes, settlements and rural landscapes	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	0	0	✓	✓	0	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓			
16. Reduce the need to travel by motor vehicle and encourage the use of integrated and sustainable transport	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	0	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓/✗		
17. Ensure sustainable and balanced population growth	✗	✓	✓	✓	0	0	✗	✗	0	✓	✗	✗	✓	0	0	✓/✗	
<b>Sustainability Objective</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>

**KEY**

**Compatible**

**Incompatible**

**0 Neutral**

**✓/✗ Variable**

4.14 The majority of the sustainability objectives are either compatible or have a neutral impact on one another. However, some sustainability objectives have returned a variable outcome. However, the compatibility test has also identified the following potential conflicts arising from incompatible objectives detailed in **Table 11**.

**Table 11. Potential Conflicts between Sustainability Objectives**

Sustainability Objective	Conflicting Objective	Summary of Conflict
4 (homes)	1 (biodiversity) 7 (air/land/water quality) 8 (climate change) 11 (waste) 12 (resource use)	Provision of housing will increase demand for building materials (resources) and energy. Consequently emissions of gases causing climate change will increase. Emissions of pollutants to air and water will increase (e.g. urban run-off). Provision of housing land could reduce biodiversity (e.g. habitat loss, fragmentation)

<b>Sustainability Objective</b>	<b>Conflicting Objective</b>	<b>Summary of Conflict</b>
9 (employment) 10 (economic growth)	1 (biodiversity) 7 (air/land/water quality) 8 (climate change) 11 (waste) 12 (resource use)	Increased economic activity will increase the use of energy and resources and the amount of waste for disposal. Increased energy use associated with economic activity will increase emissions of gases causing climate change. Increased need for resources and energy may cause loss of biodiversity. Provision of new employment land could damage habitats. Emissions to the environment and potential for pollution will increase (e.g. air, water and land)
13 (access)	1 (biodiversity) 7 (air/land/water quality) 8 (climate change) 11 (waste) 12 (resource use)	Provision of access to and providing new facilities will increase demand for building materials (resources) and energy. Emissions of gases causing climate change will increase. Provision of land for new facilities and access infrastructure could damage habitats. Emissions to air and water may increase from travel resulting from improving access
16 (transport)	1 (biodiversity)	Although the need to travel will be reduced, negative impacts on biodiversity will remain. These could include habitat fragmentation from transport infrastructure and disturbance/death from motor vehicles
17 (population)	1 (biodiversity) 7 (air/land/water quality) 8 (climate change) 11 (waste) 12 (resource use)	Population growth will increase the consumption of natural resources, energy. Consequently emissions to air/water and land will increase e.g. waste disposal. Increasing energy use will contribute to climate change. Direct loss of biodiversity may occur by providing for needs of an increasing population but also indirect impacts that occur from associated increasing resource use

## Draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework

- 4.15 The draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework is shown in **Table 12**. The Sustainability Appraisal Framework contains the sustainability objectives and a number of Local Development Framework sustainability indicators. The Local Development Framework sustainability indicators provide a means to monitor the contribution that the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies plans make towards achieving the sustainability objectives.

**Table 12. Draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

<b>Sustainability Objective</b>	<b>Local Development Framework Sustainability Indicator</b>
<b>1. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity</b>	<i>Area (ha) of approved and completed development subject to an ecological survey and/or EIA, that required mitigation measures to be implemented, as a proportion of all development that required an ecological survey and/or EIA</i>
	<i>Designated sites and/or priority species protected from inappropriate development by a planning refusal, a) number of sites, b) area protected, c) number of priority species.</i>
	<i>Approved and completed development that will enhance biodiversity, a) number of species, b) site area (ha)</i>
	<i>Approved and completed development that will affect geo-diversity a) area, b) number of sites</i>
	<i>Number of approved and completed development that provide opportunities to understand biodiversity and geo-diversity</i>

<b>Sustainability Objective</b>	<b>Local Development Framework Sustainability Indicator</b>
<b>2. To reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life for all residents</b>	<i>Developer contribution to the provision of new or maintenance of existing open space/play area/allotment a) total amount agreed by S106 (£), b) total amount received (£), c) total amount invested (£)</i>
	<i>Number and proportion of completed new dwellings within 30mins public transport travel from a GP/dentist/sports facility</i>
	<i>Number of proposed and completed health related developments by type and location on a) allocated sites and b) non-allocated sites</i>
<b>3. Improve educational achievement and access to qualifications and life long learning skills for all residents</b>	<i>Number of proposed and completed education related developments by type and location on a) allocated sites and b) non-allocated sites</i>
<b>4. Ensure everyone has access to good quality sustainable affordable homes that meet their needs</b>	<i>Affordable homes proposed, completed and refused by a) tenure, b) number, c) type/size and d) location</i>
	<i>All housing completions compared to identified housing need by a) number, b) type/size and c) location (inc sub-area)</i>
	<i>Number of proposed, completed and refused dwellings to BREEAM or ECOHOMES standard</i>
	<i>Number of proposed, completed and refused dwellings that incorporate at least one form of renewable energy</i>
	<i>Number of voids compared to previous years and regional average</i>
	<i>Number of dwellings demolished due to being a) void and b) unfit</i>
<b>5. Improve community safety to reduce crime and the fear of crime</b>	<i>Approved and completed developments meeting "Secured by Design" principles by;</i> a) <i>Type of developments</i> b) <i>Number of schemes</i> c) <i>Area (ha) of development</i> d) <i>Number of schemes amended to incorporate</i> e) <i>Number of schemes refused or outstanding</i>
<b>6. Support and enhance community activity and increase public involvement in all decision making</b>	<i>LDF/SA consultation events;</i> a) <i>Number of events</i> b) <i>Number of people attending events</i> c) <i>Number of electronic responses</i> d) <i>Number of web page hits</i> e) <i>Types of groups engaged</i>

<b>Sustainability Objective</b>	<b>Local Development Framework Sustainability Indicator</b>
<b>7. Protect and improve the quality of land, air and water</b>	<i>Developments incorporating pollution control measures by;</i> a) <i>Number of applications</i> b) <i>Number of applications amended to incorporate pollution control measures</i> c) <i>Type and size (ha) of proposed, refused and completed development</i>
	<i>Developer contribution (S106) for environmental improvement by;</i> a) <i>Sum (£) secured by agreement</i> b) <i>Sum (£) paid to Council</i> c) <i>Sum (£) invested by Council</i> d) <i>Resulting site area (ha) of proposed and completed</i>
	<i>Contaminated land;</i> a) <i>Number and area (ha) of "sites of concern"</i> b) <i>Number and area (ha) of sites known to be contaminated</i> c) <i>Area of land (ha) and number of sites subject to planning approval and completed development that required remediation</i>
<b>8. Reduce the District's contribution to global Climate Change and ensure we are prepared for associated impacts</b>	<i>Number of approved and completed new dwellings within 30 minutes public transport time of key community facilities</i>
	<i>Number of approved and completed new development to BREEAM or other appropriate energy efficiency standard</i>
	<i>Number and capacity (MW) of approved and completed development installed with renewable energy</i>
	<i>Number, capacity (MW) and type of approved and completed renewable energy schemes</i>
	<i>Number of planning applications requiring mitigation measures identified through a Flood Risk Assessment</i>
	<i>Number of approved and completed planning applications as a percentage of all applications granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flood risk or the Water Framework Directive</i>
	<i>Number and area (ha) of approved and completed development as a percentage of all applications determined that provide biodiversity adaptation measures</i>
	<i>Number and area (ha) of development refused on sustainability/location grounds</i>

<b>Sustainability Objective</b>	<b>Local Development Framework Sustainability Indicator</b>
<b>9. Provide high and sustainable levels of employment and improve access for all to employment opportunities</b>	<i>Number and type of employment resulting from completed development</i>
	<i>Amount of floorspace (ha) developed by employment type in a) employment allocations and b) regeneration areas</i>
	<i>Number of new VAT registrations/de-registrations</i>
	<i>Number of approved and completed live work units</i>
<b>10. Promote and enhance a sustainable dynamic and diverse economy</b>	<i>Area (ha) of employment and housing land lost to other uses by type of use</i>
	<i>Area (ha) of employment land safeguarded from other none allocated uses</i>
	<i>Area (ha) of approved and completed new land brought forward for employment development by type of use and geographical location</i>
	<i>Number and type of approved and completed rural diversification schemes</i>
	<i>Number of new employment created by rural diversification schemes</i>
<b>11. Promote sustainable waste management practices to reduce waste and waste disposal and promote reuse, recycling and recovery</b>	<i>Number of approved and completed development incorporating recycling facilities</i>
	<i>Number of completed developments that used re-used, reclaimed or recycled construction materials</i>
<b>12. Ensure the sustainable and efficient use of energy and natural resources</b>	<i>Percentage of approved and completed development by type on Previously Developed Land (PDL) as a percentage of all development</i>
	<i>Percentage of Grade 1-3 agricultural land lost to approved and completed development</i>
	<i>Number of approved, amended and completed development incorporating water conservation and pollution control measures</i>

<b>Sustainability Objective</b>	<b>Local Development Framework Sustainability Indicator</b>
<b>13. Ensure access for all to essential facilities, services and leisure opportunities</b>	<i>Percentage of approved and completed new housing development located within 30 minutes public transport of services and facilities (by type) as a percentage of all approved and completed development</i>
	<i>Percentage of approved and completed new housing development within 400m of a public transport node as a percentage of all approved and completed development</i>
	<i>Number of development refused due to Disability and Discrimination Act non-compliance</i>
	<i>Number of applications amended due to Disability and Discrimination Act non-compliance as a percentage of all applications</i>
<b>14. Protect and enhance our significant built cultural and historic heritage</b>	<i>Number of applications refused on grounds of being inappropriate to the setting/character of a listed building as a percentage of all listed building related applications</i>
	<i>Number of applications refused on grounds of being detrimental to the character of a Conservation Area as percentage of all applications in a Conservation Area</i>
	<i>Number of applications refused on grounds of having an adverse impact upon a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) as percentage of all applications affecting a SAM</i>
	<i>Number of Conservation Area enhancement schemes delivered that were identified in the Local Development Framework</i>
	<i>Number of environmental improvement schemes delivered that were identified in the Local Development Framework</i>
<b>15. Protect and enhance the high quality of Wear Valley's townscapes, settlements and rural landscapes</b>	<i>Number of planning refusals on grounds of adverse impact upon landscape as a percentage of all applications</i>
	<i>Number and type of planning approvals and completions relating to development beyond settlement boundaries as a percentage of all approvals and completions</i>

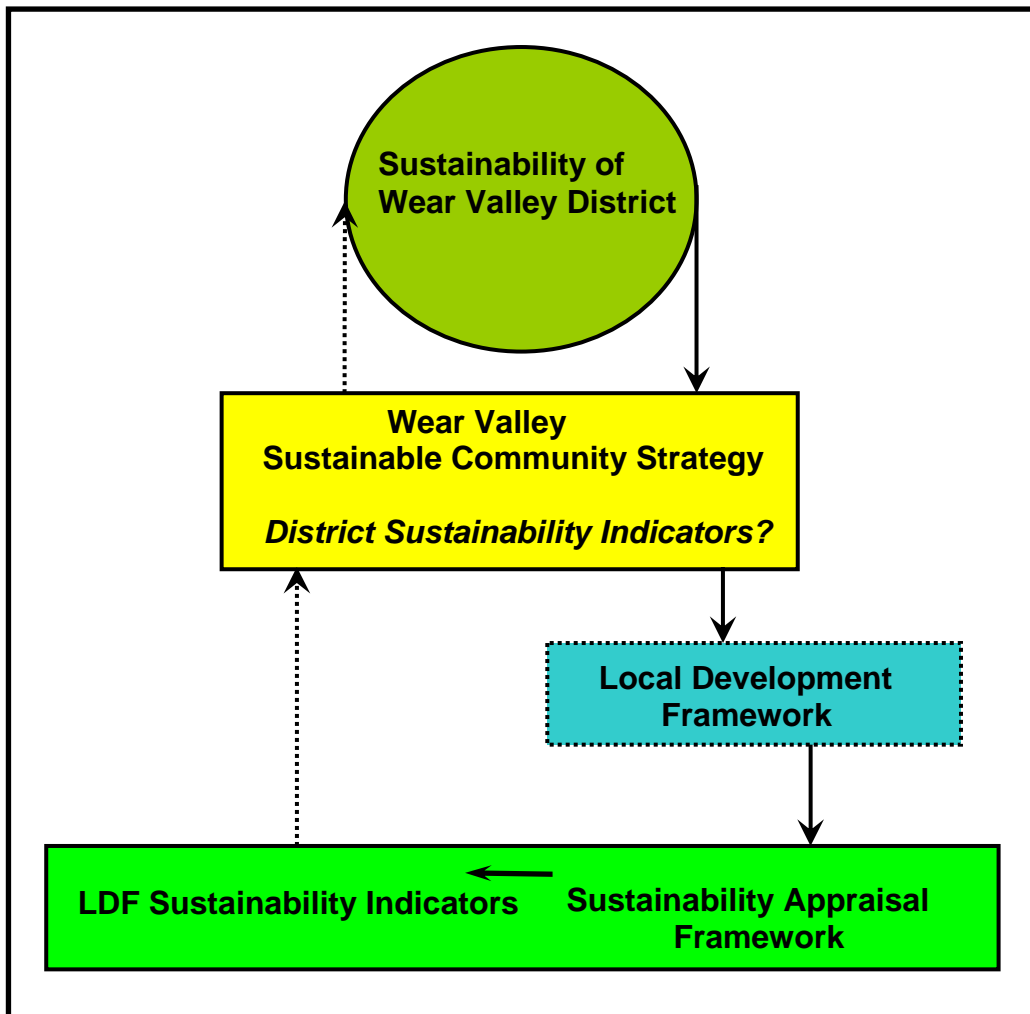


Sustainability Objective	Local Development Framework Sustainability Indicator
<b>16. Reduce the need to travel by motor vehicle and encourage the use of integrated and sustainable forms of transport</b>	<i>Number of approved and completed development providing;</i> a) <i>cycle racks</i> b) <i>new bus links</i> c) <i>footpath links</i> d) <i>Green Travel plans</i>
	<i>Number of approved planning applications amended to incorporate;</i> a) <i>cycle racks</i> b) <i>new bus links</i> c) <i>footpath links</i> d) <i>Green Travel plans</i>
	<i>Percentage of approved and completed new dwellings within 30 minutes public transport time of key services</i>
	<i>Percentage of approved and completed new dwellings within 15 minutes walk of a hourly bus/rail service</i>
	<i>Kilometres of new cycle routes and footpaths provided from completed new development</i>
<b>17. Ensure sustainable and balanced population growth</b>	<i>Area (ha) of open space/play areas/sports facilities improved through new development (S106)</i>
	<i>All housing completions compared to identified housing need by a) number, b) type/size and c) location (inc sub-area)</i>

### Monitoring the Sustainability of Wear Valley District

4.16 The Local Development Framework sustainability indicators are not intended to measure the overall sustainability of the District. In this regard there is potential for the Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership to revise the sustainability indicators (**Appendix 3**) for the purposes of the forthcoming Sustainable Communities Plan that will supersede the existing Community Plan. This could be attained through further development and adaptation of the Sustainability Appraisal framework and sustainability indicators to which this Scoping Report relates. **Figure 6** shows a possible Sustainability Monitoring Model that could be applicable within the District.

Figure 6. Possible District Sustainability Monitoring Model



## **5 Overview of Task B1: Testing the Local Development Framework Strategic Objectives and Generic Development Control Policies Objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

### **Background**

- 5.1 The Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy document set out what it is aiming to achieve in spatial planning terms. These objectives also establish the direction and scope that all other Local Development Framework policy documents should take.
- 5.2 It is critical that the Strategic Objectives comply with the principles of Sustainable Development if the new development plan is to be successful in delivering such development. This is achieved by appraising or testing the compatibility of the objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework, described in **Chapter 4**. The compatibility test is the first application and implementation of the Sustainability Appraisal Framework in the Strategic Objectives and the Generic Development Control Policies. This assists in refining the strategic objectives as well as identifying future planning policy options. The compatibility test is a way of ensuring that each of the Local Development Framework Strategic Objectives are consistent with one another.

### **Methodology and Outcomes**

- 5.3 The following steps were taken to complete **Task B1**;
- Formulation of Local Development Framework Draft Strategic Objectives,
  - Compatibility testing of Draft Strategic Objectives,
  - Formulation of Generic Development Control Policies Objectives,
  - Compatibility testing of draft Generic Development Control Policies Objectives.
- 5.4 These steps are detailed below.

### **Development of the Strategic Objectives**

- 5.5 The Council's Forward Planning Officers have identified draft Strategic Objectives based upon the findings of the context review and baseline data. Two Local Development Framework workshops were held. At these workshops, elected members, Council officers and stakeholders were asked to amend and revise the objectives. The resulting draft Strategic Objectives are listed in **Table 13**.

**Table 13. Draft Strategic Objectives**

<b>Draft Strategic Objectives</b>	
<b>1</b>	Meet the needs of those who live, work and visit the District
<b>2</b>	Improve social, economic and environmental well-being within Wear Valley
<b>3</b>	Reduce health deprivation and improve the social well-being of the District's population
<b>4</b>	Support the provision of and accessibility to existing and new services and facilities within and beyond the District
<b>5</b>	Deliver well designed, cleaner, safer environments within the District
<b>6</b>	Promote equality and build upon community cohesion and involvement
<b>7</b>	Assist and promote the development of continuous lifelong learning opportunities for the population of Wear Valley
<b>8</b>	Increase the potential for the District's current and future population to have the opportunity of living in a decent and affordable home and choice of type and tenure
<b>9</b>	Minimise the amount of waste produced and encourage sustainable waste management within the District
<b>10</b>	Maintain and enhance the quality of the District's natural resources, including land, water and air
<b>11</b>	Protect and enhance the geological, bio-diversity and conservation interests within the District and beyond
<b>12</b>	Manage changes in the built and natural environment in a manner which avoids the causes, and minimises the impacts, of climate change
<b>13</b>	Make prudent use of natural resources
<b>14</b>	Pay special attention to the protection and enhancement of the landscape quality and distinctiveness of the North Pennines AONB and other landscapes and townscapes of the District
<b>15</b>	Conserve, enhance and promote the District's cultural and historic heritage
<b>16</b>	Secure the sustainable use of land within the District
<b>17</b>	Secure the principles of sustainable design and construction
<b>18</b>	Develop and retain a flexible and higher skilled workforce through training and education
<b>19</b>	Facilitate the development of an economically sustainable and prosperous area where investment is encouraged and retained and new and existing businesses are supported
<b>20</b>	Strengthen the role, vitality and viability of the District's market towns and villages whilst respecting their individual character
<b>21</b>	Provide greater opportunities for those who live, work or visit the District to utilise sustainable modes of transport

## Compatibility Testing of Draft Strategic Objectives

- 5.6 The purpose of the compatibility test is to document the effect that each draft Strategic Objective will have on the sustainability objectives in the Sustainability Appraisal Framework. *i.e.* how does each draft Strategic Objective contribute towards Sustainable Development.
- 5.7 The Council's Sustainability Appraisal officers completed the compatibility test using the Sustainability Appraisal Framework and outcome categories, set out in **Chapter 4**. In accordance with best practice the test was performed independently from the Council's Planning Policy Team who devised the original draft Strategic Objectives. It is not advisable that policy or plan makers undertake the Sustainability Appraisal of their own policy or plan.
- 5.8 The outcomes of the compatibility test for each of the Strategic Objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal objectives are shown in **Table 14**. In addition **Table 15** includes a commentary that summarises the potential effects and where appropriate, suggests amendments to the original draft Strategic Objectives.



**Table 14. Compatibility Testing the Draft Strategic Objectives of the Local Development Framework.**

Sustainability Objectives	Draft Strategic Objectives 1-8							
	1. Meet the needs of those who live, work and visit the District	2. Improve social, economic and environmental well-being within Wear Valley	3. Reduce health deprivation and improve the social well-being of the District's population	4. Support the provision of and accessibility to existing and new services and facilities within and beyond the District	5. Deliver well designed, cleaner, safer environments within the District	6. Promote equality and build upon community cohesion and involvement	7. Assist and promote the development of continuous lifelong learning opportunities for the population of Wear Valley	8. Increase the potential for the District's current and future population to have the opportunity of living in a decent and affordable home and choice of type and tenure
1. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	✗
2. Reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life for all residents	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Improve educational achievement and access to qualifications and life long learning skills for all residents	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
4. Ensure everyone has access to good quality sustainable affordable homes that meet their needs	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	0	✓
5. Improve community safety and reduce crime and the fear of crime	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓
6. Support and enhance community activity and increase public involvement in all decision making	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	✓/✗
7. Protect and improve the quality of land, air and water	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
8. Reduce the District's contribution to global Climate Change and ensure we are prepared for associated impacts	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	✗	✓	0	✓	✗
9. Provide high and sustainable levels of employment and improve access for all to employment opportunities	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	0	0	✓	✓
10. Promote and enhance a sustainable dynamic and diverse economy	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗

11. Promote sustainable waste management practices to reduce waste and waste disposal and promote reuse, recycling and recovery	✓/x	✓/x	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓/x
12. Ensure the sustainable and efficient use of energy and natural resources	✓/x	✓/x	✓	✗	✓/x	0	✓	✗
13. Ensure access for all to essential facilities, services and leisure opportunities	✓/x	✓/x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14. Protect and enhance our significant built cultural and historic heritage	✓/x	✓/x	✓	✓/x	✓/x	0	✓	✓/x
15. Protect and enhance the high quality of Wear Valley's townscapes, settlements and rural landscapes	✓/x	✓/x	✓	✓/x	✓/x	0	✓	✓/x
16. Reduce the need to travel by motor vehicle and encourage the use of integrated and sustainable transport	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x
17. Ensure sustainable and balanced population growth	✓/x	✓/x	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	✓
<b>Sustainability Objectives</b>	<b>Draft Strategic Objectives 9-14</b>							
	9. Minimise the amount of waste produced and encourage sustainable waste management within the District	10. Maintain and enhance the quality of the District's natural resources, including land, water and air	11. Protect and enhance the geological, bio-diversity and conservation interests within the District and beyond	12. Manage changes in the built and natural environment in a manner which avoids the causes, and minimises the impacts, of climate change	13. Make prudent use of natural resources	14. Pay special attention to the protection and enhancement of the landscape quality and distinctiveness of the North Pennines AONB and other landscapes and townscapes of the District		
1. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life for all residents	✓/x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/x	✓	✓
3. Improve educational achievement and access to qualifications and life long learning skills for all residents	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	✓



4. Ensure everyone has access to good quality sustainable affordable homes that meet their needs	✓/x	✓	x	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x
5. Improve community safety and reduce crime and the fear of crime	0	0	0	✓	0	0
6. Support and enhance community activity and increase public involvement in all decision making	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0
7. Protect and improve the quality of land, air and water	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8. Reduce the District's contribution to global Climate Change and ensure we are prepared for associated impacts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9. Provide high and sustainable levels of employment and improve access for all to employment opportunities	✓/x	✓	x	x	0	0
10. Promote and enhance a sustainable dynamic and diverse economy	✓/x	✓/x	x	x	✓/x	✓/x
11. Promote sustainable waste management practices to reduce waste and waste disposal and promote reuse, recycling and recovery	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/x
12. Ensure the sustainable and efficient use of energy and natural resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/x
13. Ensure access for all to essential facilities, services and leisure opportunities	✓/x	0	x	✓/x	0	✓/x
14. Protect and enhance our significant built cultural and historic heritage	0	✓	0	✓/x	0	✓
15. Protect and enhance the high quality of Wear Valley's townscapes, settlements and rural landscapes	✓/x	✓	✓	✓/x	✓/x	✓
16. Reduce the need to travel by motor vehicle and encourage the use of integrated and sustainable transport	0	✓/x	✓/x	✓	✓	✓/x
17. Ensure sustainable and balanced population growth	x	✓/x	✓/x	x	✓/x	0
<b>Sustainability Objectives</b>	<b>Draft Strategic Objectives 15-21</b>					

	15. Conserve, enhance and promote the District's cultural and historic heritage	16. Secure the sustainable use of land within the District	17. Secure the principles of sustainable design and construction	18. Develop and retain a flexible and higher skilled workforce through training and education	19. Facilitate the development of an economically sustainable and prosperous area where investment is encouraged and retained and new and existing businesses are supported	20. Strengthen the role, vitality and viability of the District's market towns and villages whilst respecting their individual character	21. Provide greater opportunities for those who live, work or visit the District to utilise sustainable modes of transport
1. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
2. Reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life for all residents	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓
3. Improve educational achievement and access to qualifications and life long learning skills for all residents	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	0	✓/✗
4. Ensure everyone has access to good quality sustainable affordable homes that meet their needs	✓/✗	✓	✓	0	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓/✗
5. Improve community safety and reduce crime and the fear of crime	0	✓	✓	0	✓	0	✓
6. Support and enhance community activity and increase public involvement in all decision making	0	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗
7. Protect and improve the quality of land, air and water	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓/✗
8. Reduce the District's contribution to global Climate Change and ensure we are prepared for associated impacts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓/✗
9. Provide high and sustainable levels of employment and improve access for all to employment opportunities	0	✓	0	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗
10. Promote and enhance a sustainable dynamic and diverse economy	✓/✗	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗

11. Promote sustainable waste management practices to reduce waste and waste disposal and promote reuse, recycling and recovery	✓/x	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	0
12. Ensure the sustainable and efficient use of energy and natural resources	✓/x	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓/x	✓/x
13. Ensure access for all to essential facilities, services and leisure opportunities	✓/x	✓	0	✓	✓	✓/x	✓/x
14. Protect and enhance our significant built cultural and historic heritage	✓	✓	✓/x	✓	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x
15. Protect and enhance the high quality of Wear Valley's townscapes, settlements and rural landscapes	✓	✓	✓/x	✓	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x
16. Reduce the need to travel by motor vehicle and encourage the use of integrated and sustainable transport	✓/x	✓/x	0	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x	✓
17. Ensure sustainable and balanced population growth	0	✓	0	✓	✓	✓/x	✓/x

Table 15. Commentary on the Compatibility of the Draft Core Strategy Objectives with Sustainability Objectives

Draft Strategic Objective	Commentary on Compatibility with Sustainability Objectives
<p><b>1. To meet the needs of those who live, work and visit the District</b></p>	<p>This objective is very ambiguous. "Meet the needs" is a broad term and aim for the objective. As such it is impossible to adequately appraise. This resulted in a variable outcome across all sustainability objectives. The objective (together with objective 2 below) summarises a key aim of the Local Development Framework. Perhaps combined with objective 2 to form an overarching vision statement for the Local Development Framework? Otherwise delete.</p>
<p><b>2. To improve social, economic and environmental well-being within Wear Valley</b></p>	<p>This objective is very broad. As such it is impossible to adequately appraise. This resulted in a variable outcome across all sustainability objectives. The objective seeks to ensure the Local Development Framework contributes to sustainable development. This is the main aim of the Local Development Framework and if combined with objective 1 could serve as an overarching vision statement, <i>i.e.</i> <b>"The Local Development Framework will improve social, economic and environmental well-being and meet the needs of those who live, work and visit the District"</b>. Otherwise delete.</p>
<p><b>3. To reduce health deprivation and improve the social well-being of the District's population</b></p>	<p><b>Compatible</b> with most sustainability objectives although improved social inclusion may generate more travel and increase emissions of greenhouse gases. Ensure new facilities are located in proximity to main areas of need and are accessible by public transport.</p>

Draft Strategic Objective	Commentary on Compatibility with Sustainability Objectives
<p><b>4. To support the provision of and accessibility to existing and new services and facilities within and beyond the District</b></p>	<p>This objective aims to achieve two things, the provision of services and facilities and the accessibility to them. The need to support accessibility could be combined with objective 21 to ensure facilities and services are accessible by sustainable forms of transport. The provision of new services/facilities could be incompatible with the sustainability objectives for biodiversity (e.g. through habitat loss), environmental pollution (e.g. emissions from travel to facilities and through construction and operation) and resource use (e.g. increased resource use from construction and operation of new facilities and services). New facilities/services will need to be located in close proximity to areas of need to reduce need for travel, and incorporate sustainable design/construction, pollution control, energy efficiency and renewable energy. Potential effects on historic townscapes and landscapes should be avoided through appropriate building design and site selection. However, all negative impacts could be reduced if existing facilities/service are improved. As the improvement of existing facilities/services will reduce the need for new facilities/services. The objective also seeks to provide new services/facilities outside the District. This is incompatible with the scope and scale of the Local Development Framework. Suggested wording <b>“To improve existing facilities/services and support the provision of new facilities/services”</b>.</p>
<p><b>5. To deliver well designed, cleaner, safer environments within the District</b></p>	<p><b>Compatible</b> with most sustainability objectives. However, there is the potential for negative impacts on biodiversity (e.g. scrub clearance, inappropriate lighting and planting), increased travel (e.g. emissions) and inappropriate design of environmental improvements on townscapes, historic building character and landscape. Any environmental improvement schemes should enhance biodiversity and be designed in keeping with sensitive built and natural areas. Perhaps strengthen the objective by clarifying what “well designed” means, <i>i.e.</i> sustainable design? Suggested wording <b>“To deliver a sustainably designed, cleaner and safer local environment”</b>.</p>

Draft Strategic Objective	Commentary on Compatibility with Sustainability Objectives
6. To promote equality and build upon community cohesion and involvement	<b>Compatible or neutral</b> with the sustainability objectives. Perhaps reword objective to remove jargon e.g. “community cohesion” to inclusive <i>etc.</i> Suggested wording “ <b>To promote equality and inclusive communities</b> ”
7. To assist and promote the development of continuous lifelong learning opportunities for the population of Wear Valley	<b>Compatible or neutral</b> with the sustainability objectives. Shorten objective by removing unnecessary reference to population of Wear Valley, also continuous and life long mean the same thing. Suggested wording “ <b>To assist and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.</b> ” Could combine with objective 18 to include skills and training?
8. To increase the potential for the District's current and future population to have the opportunity of living in a decent and affordable home and choice of type and tenure	This objective has the potential to have significant negative impacts on the sustainability objectives for biodiversity (e.g. land take for housing sites), increased environmental pollution (e.g. urban run-off) and increased resource use (e.g. construction and energy use throughout life time of the housing stock). In addition other impacts could occur on the built and natural landscape through inappropriate location and design. Housing sites should also avoid areas of known flood risk. The objective does not specifically mention sustainable design or construction. The objective is also lengthy and perhaps could be shortened to remove jargon e.g. tenure. It is also not clear if the objective will actually seek to deliver housing, as there is only a reference to increasing the potential for residents. Objective could be strengthened to “provide” the population with decent and affordable homes. Suggested wording “ <b>To provide all current and future residents with a range of decent and affordable homes</b> ”.

Draft Strategic Objective	Commentary on Compatibility with Sustainability Objectives
<p><b>9. To minimise the amount of waste produced and encourage sustainable waste management within the District</b></p>	<p><b>Compatible or neutral</b> with the sustainability objectives. Although conflicts with sustainability objective to increase the population. Increased population will inevitably increase demand for resources and increase waste. The Local Development Framework will also need safeguard waste management sites identified by Durham County Council. Their location could have negative impacts on receiving communities and settlement character. Objective could also be strengthened if “encourage” is replaced with “ensure”. Perhaps give example of “sustainable waste management” e.g. specific reference to reduce, reuse and recycle.</p>
<p><b>10. To maintain and enhance the quality of the District's natural resources, including land, water and air</b></p>	<p><b>Compatible or neutral</b> with the sustainability objectives.</p>
<p><b>11. To protect and enhance the geological, bio-diversity and conservation interests within the District and beyond</b></p>	<p>Potential conflicts with sustainability objectives for housing, employment and new services. There will be competing demands with land allocated for employment, housing and services. Site or species protection may restrict development. It is not clear what the term “conservation interests” refers to. The objective correctly recognises that protection of biodiversity will benefit biodiversity outside of the District, however, is this exceeding the scope and scale of the Local Development Framework?</p>

Draft Strategic Objective	Commentary on Compatibility with Sustainability Objectives
<p><b>12. To manage changes in the built and natural environment in a manner which avoids the causes, and minimises the impacts, of climate change</b></p>	<p>May conflict with economic growth, employment and population growth. Potential impacts on landscape and built heritage if inappropriate siting of renewable energy schemes e.g. wind turbines. Mitigation should ensure renewable energy generation is in keeping with the sensitivity of location. The objective seeks to “avoid” the causes of climate change, unless all future development is carbon neutral this objective is unlikely to be achieved. Suggest rewording to “reduce the causes” of climate change. It is also unclear what “in a manner” refers to, suggest this phrase is deleted from the objective. The objective could be strengthened to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Suggested wording <b>“To ensure all development reduces the causes, minimises the impacts and adapts to climate change”</b>.</p>
<p><b>13. To make prudent use of natural resources</b></p>	<p><b>Compatible or neutral</b> with the sustainability objectives. It is unclear what “prudent” use will entail. Strengthen the objective by referencing sustainable resource use and include energy to highlight link to climate change. Combine this objective with 16 to include land? Suggested wording <b>“To make sustainable use of natural resources, energy and land”</b>.</p>
<p><b>14. To pay special attention to the protection and enhancement of the landscape quality and distinctiveness of the North Pennines AONB and other landscapes and townscapes of the District</b></p>	<p><b>Compatible or neutral</b> with the sustainability objectives. However, there is the potential for this objective to constrain development in areas of need with high landscape character. Ensuring sensitivity of development site selection and appropriate design will be required to mitigate adverse impacts. It is unclear whether “pay special attention” will afford a satisfactory level of protection for the AONB. The objective correctly states that the AONB requires a high level of protection but the inclusion of “other landscapes” dilutes this principle and affords the same level of protection to all areas. The objective could be split, or changed to a sub-objective one for the AONB and another for other landscapes and townscapes.</p>
<p><b>15. To conserve, enhance and promote the District’s cultural and historic heritage</b></p>	<p><b>Compatible or neutral</b> with the sustainability objectives. Does the Local Development Framework have the ability to “promote” any aspect of the Districts assets?</p>



Draft Strategic Objective	Commentary on Compatibility with Sustainability Objectives
16. To secure the sustainable use of land within the District	<b>Compatible</b> with the sustainability objectives. It is unclear what “secure” in this context actually means. Combine with 13? (see objective 13 commentary).
17. To secure the principles of sustainable design and construction	<b>Compatible or neutral</b> with the sustainability objectives. Removal of “principles” may improve clarity. Principles could be used as sub-objectives? Strengthen the objective by replacing “secure” with “ensure”. Suggested wording <b>“To ensure the use of sustainable design and construction”</b> .
18. To develop and retain a flexible and higher skilled workforce through training and education	<b>Compatible or neutral</b> with the sustainability objectives. Duplication with objective 7 (lifelong learning), could combine both? Lifelong learning, skills and training <i>etc.</i>
19. To facilitate the development of an economically sustainable and prosperous area where investment is encouraged and retained and new and existing businesses are supported	This objective could have significant negative impacts on the sustainability objectives of biodiversity, resource use, climate change, environmental protection and waste. New sites for economic development should be located close to existing public transport services and in areas of economic deprivation. Mitigate impacts by avoiding sites of ecological importance, enhancing biodiversity in all new developments, sustainable design and construction, encouraging high standards of energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy generation. Encourage economic development to adopt “Green Travel Plans” and environmental management systems.
20. To strengthen the role, vitality and viability of the District's market towns and villages whilst respecting their individual character	This objective could have significant negative impacts on the sustainability objectives of biodiversity, climate change and waste. There is also the potential for impacts on transport, local built heritage, environmental protection and townscapes and landscapes. However, the approach of the objective will reduce the impact on biodiversity and landscape character of un-developed areas. Implementation of this objective will need to conserve and enhance biodiversity, protect environmental quality and character of townscapes of the existing settlements.

Draft Strategic Objective	Commentary on Compatibility with Sustainability Objectives
<p><b>21. To provide greater opportunities for those who live, work or visit the District to utilise sustainable modes of transport</b></p>	<p>This objective is very ambiguous. As such it is difficult to adequately appraise. This resulted in a variable outcome across most sustainability objectives. The objective could be strengthened. Suggested wording to <b>“Reduce the need to travel and provide access to sustainable transport for those who live, work or visit the District”</b>.</p>

**Compatibility Testing of Draft Generic Development Control Policies Objectives.**

- 5.9 The Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan Document will contain a limited suite of non site-specific policies, that are based upon generic themes and which are applicable to all new development. As with the Strategic Objectives for the Local Development Framework, which will be contained within the Core Strategy policy document, the Generic Development Control Policies policy document also requires objectives to focus the plan and inform future planning policies. These were derived in a similar manner to the draft Strategic Objectives.
- 5.10 The Generic Development Control Policies objectives are shown in **Table 16** and have also been subjected to the compatibility test using the Sustainability Appraisal Framework and outcome criteria.

**Table 16. Draft Generic Development Control Policies Objectives**

<b>Draft Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan Objectives</b>	
<b>1</b>	To ensure new development contributes towards delivering sustainable communities throughout the District
<b>2</b>	To ensure all new developments work towards delivering cleaner, safer environments across the District
<b>3</b>	To protect and enhance the quality of the District’s built and natural environment by managing the impacts of new development
<b>4</b>	To manage new development in a manner which contributes towards a prosperous and viable District.

- 5.11 The outcome category from the compatibility test for each of the draft Generic Development Control Policies objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal objectives are shown in **Table 17**. In addition **Table 18** includes a commentary that summarises the potential effects and where appropriate, suggests amendments to the original draft Generic Development Control Policies objectives.

**Table 17. Compatibility Testing the Draft Generic Development Control Policies Objectives**

Sustainability Objectives	Draft Generic Development Control Policies Objectives			
	To ensure new development contributes towards delivering sustainable communities throughout the District	To ensure all new developments work towards delivering cleaner, safer environments across the District	To protect and enhance the quality of the District's built and natural environment by managing the impacts of new development	To manage new development in a manner which contributes towards a prosperous and viable District
1. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x
2. Reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life for all residents	✓/x	✓	✓	✓
3. Improve educational achievement and access to qualifications and life long learning skills for all residents	✓/x	0	0	✓
4. Ensure everyone has access to good quality sustainable affordable homes that meet their needs	✓/x	✓	✓	✓/x
5. Improve community safety and reduce crime and the fear of crime	✓/x	✓	✓	✓
6. Support and enhance community activity and increase public involvement in all decision making	✓/x	0	0	✓
7. Protect and improve the quality of land, air and water	✓/x	✓/x	✓	✓/x
8. Reduce the District's contribution to global Climate Change and ensure we are prepared for associated impacts	✓/x	✓/x	✓	x
9. Provide high and sustainable levels of employment and improve access for all to employment opportunities	✓/x	0	✓	✓
10. Promote and enhance a sustainable dynamic and diverse economy	✓/x	✓/x	✓	✓
11. Promote sustainable waste management practices to reduce waste and waste disposal and promote reuse, recycling and recovery	✓/x	✓	✓	x
12. Ensure the sustainable and efficient use of energy and natural resources	✓/x	0	✓	x

Sustainability Objectives	Draft Generic Development Control Policies Objectives			
	To ensure new development contributes towards delivering sustainable communities throughout the District	To ensure all new developments work towards delivering cleaner, safer environments across the District	To protect and enhance the quality of the District's built and natural environment by managing the impacts of new development	To manage new development in a manner which contributes towards a prosperous and viable District
13. Ensure access for all to essential facilities, services and leisure opportunities	✓/x	✓	0	✓
14. Protect and enhance our significant built cultural and historic heritage	✓/x	✓	✓/x	✓/x
15. Protect and enhance the high quality of Wear Valley's townscapes, settlements and rural landscapes	✓/x	✓	✓/x	✓/x
16. Reduce the need to travel by motor vehicle and encourage the use of integrated and sustainable transport	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x
17. Ensure sustainable and balanced population growth	✓/x	✓	✓	✓

**Table 18. Commentary on the Compatibility of the Draft Generic Development Control Policies Objectives with Sustainability Objectives**

Draft Generic Development Control Policies Objective	Commentary on Compatibility with Sustainability Objectives
<p><b>1. To ensure new development contributes towards delivering sustainable communities throughout the District</b></p>	<p>This objective is very ambiguous and it is impossible to adequately appraise. This resulted in a variable outcome across all sustainability objectives. Effects will depend on implementation. “towards delivering” is a broad term and aim and offers little direction or lead. This could be removed to strengthen the objective and offer a clearer direction towards achieving sustainable communities. The objective recognises that new development can “contribute” to sustainable communities and this should be retained, although this should include “all” new development. The objective is similar to draft Core Strategy objective 2 and could be revised as the vision for the Draft Generic Development Control Policies objectives. Remove reference to “throughout the District”. Suggested wording <b>“To ensure all new development contributes to sustainable communities”</b>.</p>
<p><b>2. To ensure all new developments work towards delivering cleaner, safer environments across the District</b></p>	<p><b>Compatible</b> with most sustainability objectives. Potential conflicts with biodiversity. The objective duplicates draft Core Strategy objective 5 although the reference to “well designed” is omitted. Focus the objective by removing “work towards”. Suggested wording <b>“To ensure all new development delivers a cleaner, safer and sustainable environment”</b>.</p>
<p><b>3. To protect and enhance the quality of the District’s built and natural environment by managing the impacts of new development</b></p>	<p><b>Compatible</b> with most sustainability objectives. Although the variable outcomes would become positive if the objective is altered. The objective is confusing, as negative “impacts” are contradictory to the aims to “protect and enhance”. By definition an impact is detrimental and results in a decline/reduction in quality. The objective indicates that negative impacts are acceptable. Prevention of any impacts is preferable and more sustainable. Suggested wording <b>“Ensure all new development protects and enhances the quality of the natural and built environment”</b>.</p>
<p><b>4. To manage new development in a manner which contributes towards a prosperous and viable District</b></p>	<p>It is unclear if this objective is related to the local economy. There are potential conflicts with resource use, waste and climate change e.g. increased economic activity will result in increased resource use, pollution and emissions of greenhouse gases. There are variable effects on biodiversity and environmental protection, transport and affordable homes. These negative and variable objectives could become positive (or at least variable) if the objective is reworded. Suggest remove vague statements “in a manner” and “towards”. Replace “manage” with “ensure” to focus the objective. Broaden objective to include “all” new development. Suggested wording <b>“To ensure all new development contributes to a sustainable, prosperous and viable local economy”</b>.</p>

## 6 Summary

6.1 The scoping stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process has provided the following;

- A review and list of plans, policies and programmes that influence the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan objectives and the Sustainability Appraisal Framework,
- A detailed baseline of the main social, economic and environmental aspects of the District of Wear Valley,
- A review and description of the key District sustainability issues that the Local Development Framework and the Sustainability Appraisal should address,
- The preparation of a draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework containing sustainability objectives and indicators,
- Use of the draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework to produce a sustainability appraisal, with suggested amendments, of the draft objectives of the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents,
- This Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for consultation.

6.2 **This report completes Stage A and B1 of the Sustainability Appraisal process for the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents.**

6.3 The comments received from the consultation will be incorporated into the next stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process.

### **Next Steps**

6.4 In early 2007, we will publish two separate "Issues and Options" reports one for the Core Strategy and one for Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents. These reports will suggest a range of strategic alternative options that could be developed into future Local Development Framework policies.

6.5 The next stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process (Stage B2) will then begin by amending the draft Sustainability Appraisal Framework, as required, from the comments received from consultees during the statutory 6 week consultation period.

- 6.6 Once the Sustainability Appraisal Framework is completed we will appraise the sustainability effects of the various strategic alternative options identified in the Core Strategy Issues and Options report. This process will also be repeated for the Generic Development Control Policies Issues and Options report. The Sustainability Appraisal methodology for the strategic alternative options (and future planning policies) options will be more detailed than the simple compatibility test used for the plan objectives in **Chapter 5**. In particular, we will need to assess potential sustainability effects in terms of their magnitude, duration and cumulative nature.
- 6.7 The results of the more detailed Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies Development plan Documents will then be published, for consultation, in separate final Sustainability Appraisal reports in late 2007.

**END**



ANNEX 3

draft

ENVIRONMENT AND  
REGENERATION  
Department  
Service Plan  
2007/08

Environment and Regeneration Department  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### **Statement by the Chair of Regeneration**

The work of this large body of staff is critical to the prosperity and environment of the whole District area. In commending the Service Plan, I am very much aware how much work goes into the planning of work, whether in delivering the large case load in Development Control and Building Control, or in progressing many projects and capital schemes in Economic Development and Regeneration. There has been an upswing in priorities for Conservation and Tourism, with for example the important bid being concluded now for the proposals for Auckland Castle Park.

A notable feature of the last year of the Committee's work has been the level of understanding of the members of all parties for the way in which difficulties are being overcome in understaffed areas, and the Committee's warm reception of the wide range of projects which are well spread across the District and cater for its different needs. Much depends on the vicissitudes of competition for different kinds of external grants, but we cannot help noticing that the Department is generally alert and successful in these bids, as witnessed by the biggest success of the year, the share of a large scheme for LEGI (the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative).

### **Statement by the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration**

The forthcoming year presents the service with great and exciting challenges, as some of the Council's major initiatives take a significant step forward.

At the same time, as a result of restructuring within the Council, the Regeneration Service has been augmented by the addition of Environmental Health and Public Protection. Assimilations of these functions provide opportunities for joining up regulatory services and enforcement. In addition, a focus will be given to environment and conservation, both to address the need for protection and to realise the great economic opportunity that the environment of the District presents.

On the policy side the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies for the new Local Development Framework (the former Local Plan) will be published for consultation; and a new Economic Strategy will be presented. Work is also underway on a Climate Change Strategy to help present the Council's response to tackling climate change and energy conservation.

Strategic developments will also be developed. It is anticipated that the Eastgate Renewable Energy Village will be subject to the planning process and a start will be made to the urban renaissance programme in Bishop Auckland town centre. A submission for Heritage Lottery Funding for the restoration of Auckland Castle Park will be considered and if approved lead to further development work later in the year. These developments will have a significant impact on the future economic prospects of the District.

Implementing such initiatives will place significant pressure on staff time and resources. It is, however, important that a continued focus is given to maintaining existing services to our customers, whether they are applicants for building or planning control, licensing or environmental health customers, or businesses. It is pleasing that through this past year levels of customer satisfaction has been high. We intend to continue this in the coming year.

## 2. DEPARTMENTAL PROFILE

### Main Services

2.4 The Council's Environment and Regeneration Service comprises two areas of service as follows:-

#### Planning and Environmental Control

- Development Control
- Building Control
- Forward Plans
- Public Protection
- Environmental Health

#### Economic Regeneration

- Economic Development and Tourism
- Regeneration
- Conservation and Environment

2.2 These comprise both statutory and discretionary services, as follows:-

#### Statutory

##### *Forward Planning:*

- Input into Regional Plans
- Input into Strategic Planning (including waste and minerals) Development Frameworks)
- Development Plan (Local Development Framework) Preparation (including policies, supplementary guidance and sustainability appraisal)
- Site Development Briefs
- Project Implementation
- Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans and Enhancement Programmes
- Statistical Data/Information Collection and Analysis
- Input into Local Transport Plans
- Monitoring Policy Performance and Effectiveness (Annual Monitoring Report)
- GIS Management and Development
- National Land and Property Gazetteer Management and Development
- Land Use Related Studies (e.g. Retail Study/Employment/Land Review/Housing Market Assessment)

##### *Development Control and Enforcement:*

- Planning and Pre-application Advice
- Determination of Planning Applications
- Determination of Listed Building and Conservation Area Applications
- Advertisement Regulations
- Planning Appeals
- Response to Searches

- Environmental Assessments
- Planning Enforcement
- Tree and Forestry Regulations.

*Conservation Area Protection and Enhancement*

*Building Control and Regulation:*

- Determination of Building Regulations and Building Inspection Notices
- Disability Access Issues
- Enforcement of Building Regulations
- Dangerous Structures Requirements
- Demolition Notices

*Contaminated Land Strategy*

*Public Protection*

- Food safety
- Occupational health and safety
- Environmental protection and pollution control
- Enforcement
- Local Air Quality Management
- Dog control
- Pest control
- Licensing
- Statutory nuisance investigation and control

**Discretionary**

*Environmental Policy and Protection:*

- Town Centre Strategies and Development
- Local Agenda 21
- North Pennines AONB
- Environmental Improvement Schemes
- Land Drainage Strategies and Projects

*Land Reclamation and Enhancement*

*Economic Development and Tourism*

- Economic Strategy Formulation and Implementation
- Inward Investment and Business Formation
- Industrial Land and Property development
- Financial Incentives to Business
- Tourism Strategy Formulation and Implementation
- Promotion and Marketing
- Task Force Activity
- Market Towns Programme
- Local Enterprise Growth Initiative
- Forum for Business

*Regeneration Initiatives and Programmes*

- Neighbourhood Renewal
- European Programmes
- Community Development and Support

*Public Protection Services*

- Car parks
- Markets and street trading
- Horse control
- Private water supplies
- Waterway management
- Sewer and drainage investigations
- Unauthorised encampments
- Infectious disease control

**Staff**

- 2.3 To deliver these services the Department has been structured in two divisions led by Assistant Directors. In addition a Business Support Unit provides administrative and financial support to the department. The following structure (diagram 1) indicates the number of posts currently identified (at 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007) in each section:-

Diagram 1

## Environment and Regeneration

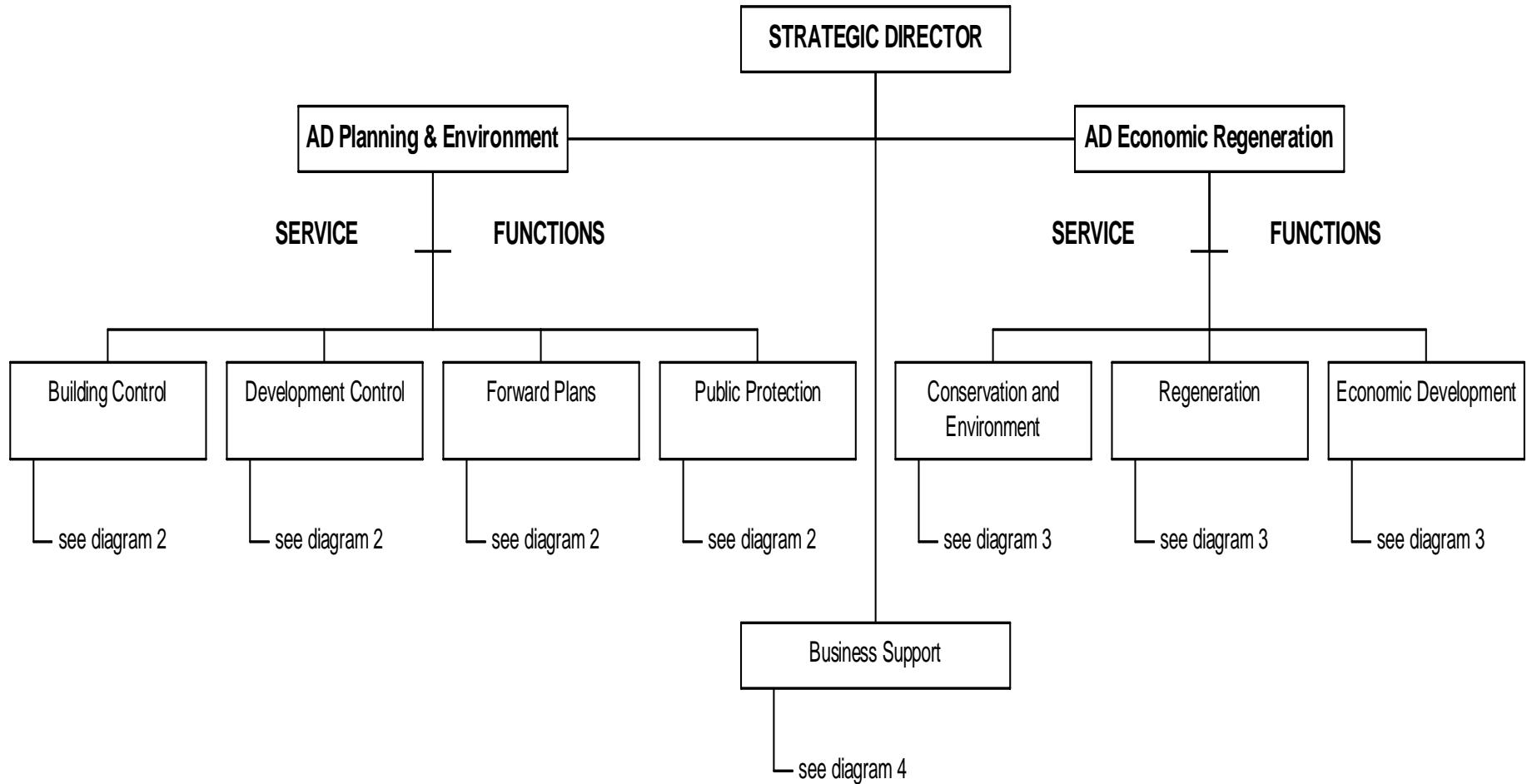




Diagram 2

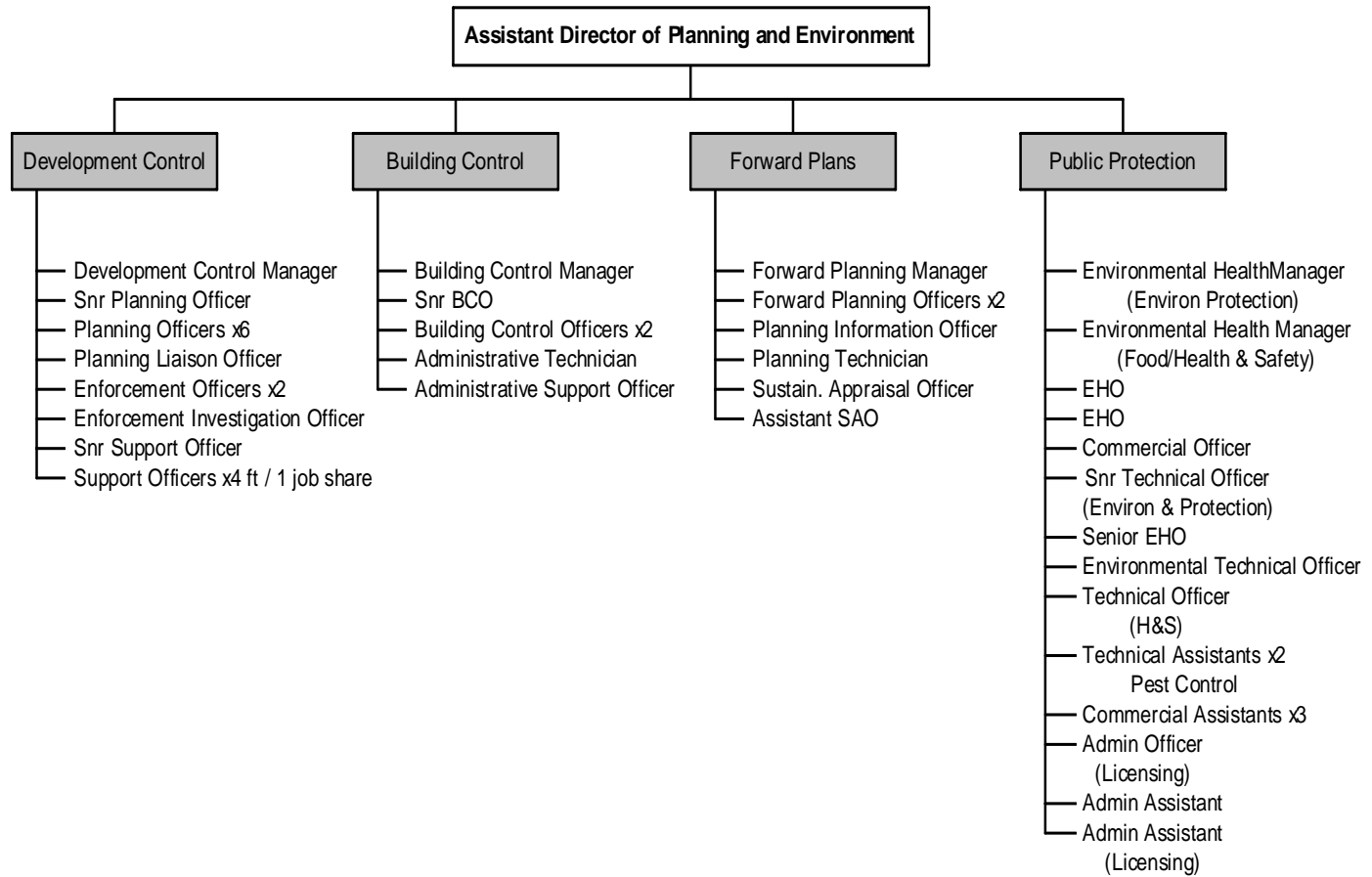


Diagram 3

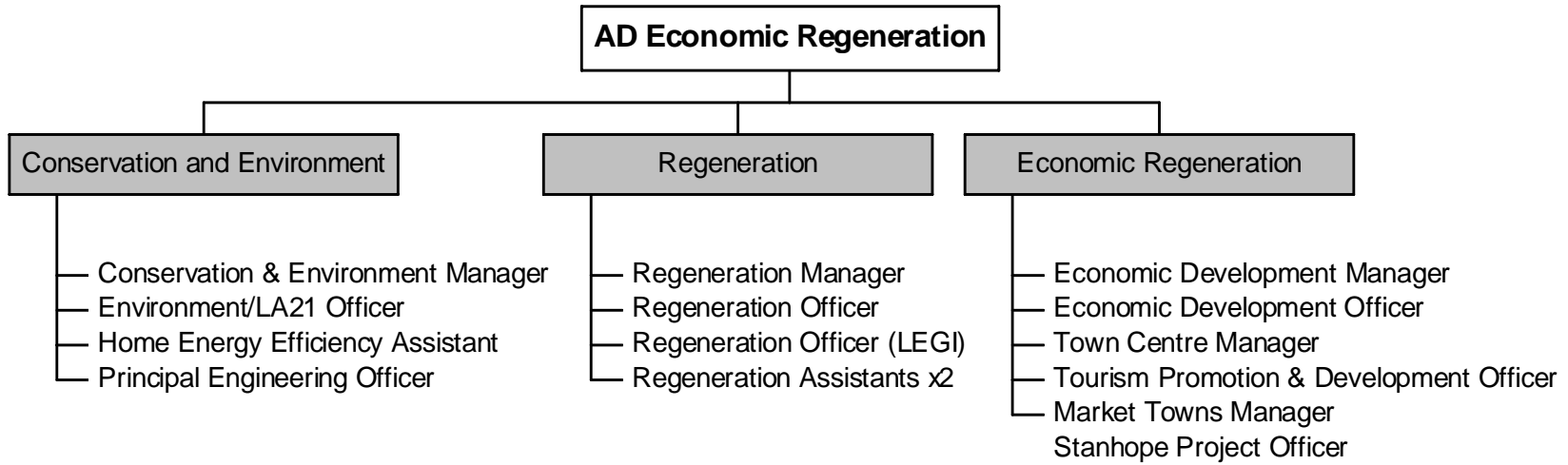
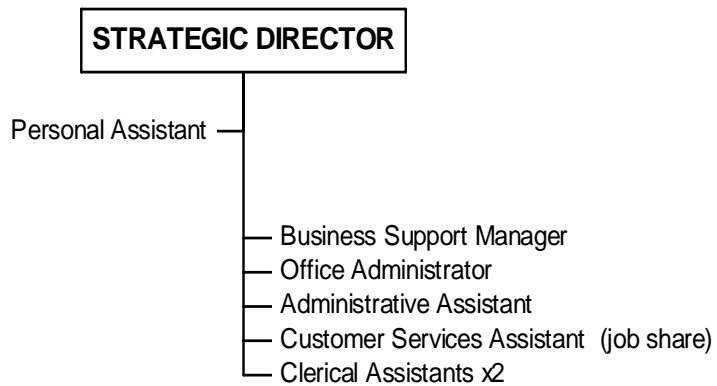


Diagram 4



## Financial resources

- 2.4 The financial resources available to deliver the Environment and Regeneration Service for year 2007/08 are presented below:-

Table 1

Section	Budget 2007/8		
	Expend	Income	Net Cost
Service	Expend.	Income	Net Cost
Building Control	353,210	-306,060	47,150
Economic Development	554,677	-329,709	224,968
Planning	1,190,688	-641,863	548,825
Reclamation/Conservation	122,615	-15,033	107,582
Regeneration	431,780	-217,220	214,560
Tourism	72,216	-775	71,441
Public Protection	816,668	-661,200	155,468
Business Support	154,660	-15,244	139,416
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,696,514</b>	<b>-2,187,104</b>	<b>1,509,410</b>

## Equality and Diversity

- 2.5 Like every part of the Council, the Environment and Regeneration Service Department is committed to treating all people equally with dignity and respect. The Environment and Regeneration Service Department fully supports the removal of all barriers to effective participation arising from ethnicity, religion, geographic location, special needs, language differences, learning difficulties, sexual orientation, gender, age or disability. We are committed to ensuring that Council services are easily accessible by all irrespective of where they live, disability, age, gender, race, religion or sexuality.
- 2.6 A three-year timetable to review the department's functions by carrying out impact assessments is shown below.

	Function	Responsible Officer
Year 1	enforcement	D Townsend/T Carver
Year 2	building control	D Townsend
	planning policy	C Dillon
Year 3	listed building/construction	S Dawson
	planning applications	D Townsend

### 3 REVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR 2006/07

#### Development Control

- 3.1 The Department provides all the statutory services required of the Council to **control development** in a way which reflects both the aims and objectives of the Council and the professional vision and understanding of the Department's staff. In pursuing the effective control of development the Department has to try to meet the needs of two different and often conflicting client groups. These groups are on the one hand the existing community, who require residential amenity and the District's environment to be protected, and on the other hand, builders and developers, who seek to realise the investment and development potential of land and buildings. Reconciling such conflicts requires a high level of skill, understanding and commitment on the part of staff. Demand on the service is shown below.

	2003/4	2004/5	2005/06	2006/7 (to 18 Feb 2007)
Applications received	1012	1011	1047	860
How many applications decided	874	851	899	803
Approved	803 (94%)	782 (92%)	848 (94%)	738 (92%)
Delegated	791 (92.7%)	777 (91.3%)	831 (92.4%)	703 (87.6%)
Appeals	13	14	18	13
Appeals Approved	5	6	8	6

- 3.2 The **Development Control Service** is an entirely statutory function, which involves the processing of various different types of applications including those involving listed buildings (there are over 570 in the District), Conservation Areas (20), preserved trees and advertisements as well as those for new building. This level of demand on the service has remained high and in 2006/7 (to 18 Feb 2007) 860 applications were received. The introduction of a new scheme of **delegation of decisions to officers** in 2001 and further modifications agreed in 2002 and 2003 brought the Council more in line with the national target of 90% of all applications to be delegated. In 2006/7 87.6% of decisions have been delegated to officers. This fall is explained by the fact that there have been a number of applications reported to Committee because they were departures from the Local Plan.
- 3.3 In 2003/04, of **applications decided**, 94% resulted in approval compared to a national approval rate of 84%. This fell to 92% in 2004/05. The national approval rate for 2004/5 was 83%. The percentage approved in 2005/06 was 94%. The national approval rate for 2005/6 was 82%. The approval rate for the Council in 2006/7 is 92%. Of those that were refused only a small percentage were the subject of **appeals** to the Planning Inspectorate. Appeals can take the form of written representation, informal hearings or public inquiries. In 2006/07, 6 appeals have been allowed out of 13 decisions issued by the Planning Inspectorate.

3.4 The **Government regularly monitors the performance of local authorities in processing all planning applications in an efficient and speedy fashion.** The method of monitoring such performance changed in 2002/03. Previously local authorities were encouraged to reach a target of processing 80% of all applications within an 8-week period. From 2002/03 Government targets have been set for specific categories of applications as follows:-

- major applications ( 60% in 13 weeks),
- minor applications ( 65% in 8 weeks) and
- other applications ( 80% in 8 weeks).

Year	Percentage of all applications determined	
2003/04		
• Major applications	61% (60% target)	13 weeks
• Minor applications	78% (65% target)	8 weeks
• Other applications	89% (80% target)	8 weeks
2004/5		
• Major applications	59% (60% target)	13 weeks
• Minor applications	57% (65% target)	8 weeks
• Other applications	73% (80% target)	8 weeks
2005/6		
• Major applications	61% (60% target)	13 weeks
• Minor applications	72% (65% target)	8 weeks
• Other applications	88% (80% target)	8 weeks
2006/7 (to 18 Feb 2007)		
• Major applications	86% (60% target)	13 weeks
• Minor applications	81% (65% target)	8 weeks
• Other applications	90% (80% target)	8 weeks

3.5 As can be seen from the above table there was significant progress made in 2003/04, and all national targets were exceeded. Because of the tremendous improvement in performance within the Planning service, the Council was awarded by the ODPM the third highest Planning Delivery Grant in the region.

3.6 Due to the fall in performance on minor applications in the year to end of June 2005 the Council was once again designated a Planning Standards Authority by ODPM for the 2006/07 financial year. As can be seen, however, from the figures for 2005/06 and 2006/07 performance has once again improved and **all** targets have been achieved.

3.7 **Enforcement** of planning decisions is an important element of the Council's work. In recent years a number of high profile cases have been handled resulting in legal action. The introduction and monitoring of an enforcement procedure in 1998 has helped improve the process. However, continued monitoring and improvement of the procedure are required. An additional temporary enforcement officer was recruited and took up appointment in June 2005. A scoring system is used to prioritise complaints and an advice note is available so that the public can understand how this works. Also the iPlan

Complaints has been developed to help improve efficiency and record keeping. The Department is active in the County Durham Enforcement Officer Group.

- 3.8 A procedure manual produced by Trevor Roberts Associates is used by all staff (planners, support officers, enforcement officers).
- 3.9 **Building Control** forms a specialist part of the Environment and Regeneration Department, with its professional staff geared to meet the needs of developers, architects and the public at large.
- 3.10 The Building Regulations are concerned primarily with the safety of buildings and the health of people living in and around them. The Building Control section vets all plans for new building work requiring approval under the Building Regulations. In addition, once building work has commenced, inspection at various stages by the Department's staff is required to ensure that it is being carried out in the proper manner. Part P of the Building Regulations was introduced 1 January 2005 and this required electrical work to be approved by the local authority. Part L was revised on 6 April 2006 which refers to conservation of fuel and power in existing dwellings and this requires calculations to be made in respect of heat loss.
- 3.11 The building control staff also undertake enforcement with respect to the Building Regulations, as well as a wide range of ancillary services such as considering various types of licences for building use, to ensure that they are suitable for the purpose proposed. Inspectors also attend the Magistrates' Court in connection with Means of Escape and Structural Fire Precautions to all licensed premises. The section also co-ordinates matters relating to access for the disabled and provides a major contribution to the work of the Wear Valley Access Forum.
- 3.12 The integration of Planning and Building Control staff within one department enables a comprehensive service to be offered to builders, developers and members of the public on a "one-stop shop" basis. The Department also co-ordinates with other departments of the Council, external agencies and statutory undertakers with regard to the future development of the District.

**Achievements in 2006/07 (to 18 Feb 2007)**

- 803 planning applications determined of which 92% approved.
- 86% of major applications determined in 13 weeks.
- 81% of minor applications determined in 8 weeks.
- 90% of other applications determined in 8 weeks
- 572 building control applications (full plans) and building notices determined.
- 48% of all building control applications (full plans) considered in 5 weeks.

**Economic Regeneration**

- 3.13 Completion of an Economic Futures Strategy to provide a comprehensive long term vision and economic strategy for Wear Valley. During the coming year we will begin to implement the development strategy and investment programme, that form part of the strategy.

- 3.14 Eastgate Renewable Energy Village: Completion of pre-planning works carried out during 2006/07, including completion of the revised master plan for the redevelopment allows the proposal to move into the third and final pre-development phase with the appointment of the technical specialists required to prepare the proposed hybrid planning application for submission in early Autumn 2007. The master plan has been subject to substantial work to establish the feasibility and viability of the proposals and has been revised taking into account the public consultation exercises carried out and the expressions of interest from the private sector. The proposed redevelopment will create an eco-village a 'Unique Village' linked to the generation of renewable energy, providing high-spec mixed-use development including recreation, tourism, business accommodation and housing projects, creating significant job opportunities.
- 3.15 A skills and employment action plan is being developed in light of the Eastgate redevelopment with the LSC, JCP and local schools an element of which is to consider the development of a pilot GCSE in Environmental Science – Renewable Energy.
- 3.16 Working with the Forum for Business, other LSP thematic Groups and the Wear Valley Employability Working Group a comprehensive Programme of activities has been developed under the 'Choices' Programme to improve employability in Wear Valley. The coordinated, partnership working demonstrated by the 'Choices' programme has been cited as an example of best practise by DCC Overview and Scrutiny Committee-Worklessness Working Group.
- 3.17 Funding for the Crook Market Town Programme was secured to allow time to develop and establish a sustainable exit strategy with Crook Community Partnership. Funding was secured for Stanhope to continue the Programme to 31 March 2008 to allow time to develop proposals aimed at securing One NorthEast support post 2008, taking into account the redevelopment proposals at Eastgate.
- 3.18 Bishop Auckland has seen ongoing progress to further develop proposals and plans to implement the 'Red Box' masterplan. Progress has been made in working to secure new investment in the town to implement plans for the Market Place/North Bondgate/Fore Bondgate area. Work includes the restoration of the historic Auckland Castle Park as a major visitor attraction as an integral part of the Urban Renaissance programme for Bishop Auckland.
- 3.19 Working with Derwentside, Easington and Sedgefield Borough Council, Wear Valley were one of ten round one winners of the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) which will provide £10.2m of funding in the first three years. The bid entitled "Enterprising Communities-transforming the local economy of East and west Durham" aims to help the areas become the fastest improving area for enterprise and productivity in England.
- 3.20 Funding was secured for the fifth and final year of the Coundon and Leeholme Settlement Renewal Initiative following an evaluation of the scheme by EKOS Consulting for County Durham Economic Partnership, which acknowledges the importance of the Programme. Plans are well advanced for the transfer of the Programme to Coundon and Leeholme Community Partnership, from 31 March 2007.

- 3.21 Ongoing work to provide a comprehensive business support service, working in Partnership with the Enterprise Agency for Wear Valley and Teesdale. The Agency is the first point of contact for business support and advice and the Council provides a premises/investment enquiry service. Work has continued to raise awareness of Wear Valley as an investment destination building on the 'Locate Wear Valley' brand and further developing the database of available business premises to allow an on-line search for information.
- 3.22 An energy efficiency pilot project is being developed aimed at reducing business energy costs to improve their competitiveness, with the Enterprise Agency for Wear Valley and Teesdale.
- 3.23 Ongoing work to raise awareness of the district as a visitor destination working with the Market Towns Team, County Durham Tourism Partnership and West Durham Rural Pathfinder through the market test of the 'Durham Dales' brand. Accommodation guides, Walk and Cycle guides, bedroom browsers and a DVD have been produced. In addition to local food initiatives, farmers markets and the Mine Host programme working with key Public Houses.
- 3.24 Following the success of the tourism awareness familiarisation events for national coach operators, tour organisations and travel writers a similar event has been organised for TV and Film location managers with Northern Film and Media. A third tourism information distribution day has been held and we supported the third annual food festival at Auckland Castle and the BBC Antiques Roadshow.

#### **Achievements in 2006/07**

- Completion of a £1.395m extension at Innovation House creating a further 26 'Start-up' office units.
- Funding applications approved and work re-started to create 1,547 sqm of high spec office accommodation at Low Willington, working jointly with DCC.
- Feasibility works started at South West Crook to open up 14.5 acres of serviced land.
- Negotiations with Priority Sites to develop Phase I of the Bracks Farm 2,000sqm office development at Bishop Auckland have successfully been concluded with a planned start date of Feb 07.
- As part of West Durham Rural Pathfinder ADIT were commissioned to map broadband provision throughout the District and then provide solutions to address lack of provision in certain parts of the district.
- Local Supply Chain project 'Interbiz Wear Valley' developed in partnership with the Enterprise Agency for Wear Valley and Teesdale to encourage collaboration and inter-trading between local businesses across the District with events, training and the development of [www.durhamdales.co.uk](http://www.durhamdales.co.uk)
- Following the success of Wolves Lair – a competition to encourage young people to learn more about the world of business a second event is planned in March.
- Following the success of the 'Mine Host' pilot project, aimed at improving the tourism product in Weardale, funding has been secured to continue the initiative until March 2008.



- Significant investment in land at South Church Enterprise Park Phase III. Over the last 12 months 10.5 acres of land has been sold and a further 6.5 acres reserved, where negotiations are at an advanced stage.
- Wear Valley Employment Team - Secondment of three JCP staff to the Council to help bridge the gap between benefits and employment, part of the 'Choices' programme to improve employability in our SOAs.
- Completion of major public realm environmental and building improvements in Crook Town centre to increase the economic viability of the town.

## **Planning & Environmental Policy**

- 3.25 Throughout this year the Forward Planning team has concentrated primarily on preparing the new District Plan; the Local Development Framework which will be ongoing for a number of years. This has resulted in the preparation and publication of several key documents. In May 2006 the Council's Statement of Community Involvement was approved by the Secretary of State without the need for significant alteration or public examination. It was subsequently adopted by the Council in August 2006. Being one of the components of the new plan. It sets out the Council's strategy for engaging third parties in the planning process.
- 3.26 A series of member, officer and stakeholder workshops were held in July and November 2006 to consider the key issues facing the district together with potential strategic planning options, objectives for the new plan and associated framework for assessing its sustainability. These workshops have informed the preparation of 2 separate Issues and Alternative Options Reports relating to the proposed Core Strategy and Generic Development control Policies documents. There are scheduled for public consultation in May and June 2007. A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report which includes a proposed framework for assessing the likely social, economic and environmental effects of any such policy options has also been prepared and is scheduled for public consultation at the same time.
- 3.27 Throughout the year the Forward Planning Team has continued to build upon the previous years development plan monitoring and activity. This has culminated in the further development of internal systems and the publication of the Council's second comprehensive Annual Monitoring Report in accordance with Government guidance and within the statutory deadline. The results of this activity will inform preparation of the new plan.
- 3.28 The Annual Monitoring Report has highlighted the need to review and revise the adopted project plan relating to the emerging Local Development Framework. The current Local Plan is due to expire in September 2007. Therefore there has been a need to prepare a submission to the Secretary of State which identifies current Local Plan policies which the Council wishes to "save" beyond this period until appropriate coverage can be secured by the new district plan. Both of these documents have subsequently been submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. The outcome is awaited.

- 3.29 The team has also contributed to the progression of the Durham Coalfields Programme in collaboration in the preparation of 2 Area Development Frameworks for Coundon/Leeholme and Tow Law which identify the current issues facing these areas and potential opportunities for regeneration activity. These documents will inform the financial bidding process which the Council will need to partake in.
- 3.30 Throughout 2006 the Council worked jointly with Sedgefield Borough and Teesdale District Councils to establish a solution to resourcing the Sustainability Appraisal of each Council's respective new plan. This has resulted in the joint recruitment of 2 Sustainability Appraisal Officers in order that this work may be carried out in-house and internal capacity of this discipline can be built through the team and wider Council.
- 3.31 A bid prepared to seek funding from English Heritage to contribute towards the recruitment of an in-house Conservation Manager, whose principle remit will be to improve the Council's performance by preparing Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, has been successful. The recruitment process is now underway.
- 3.32 Several studies have been commissioned throughout the year to inform the preparation of the new plan and consultants briefs for others have been prepared. These include an update of the District Retail Study, Employment Land Review, Housing Market Assessment, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 3.33 The team has continued to represent the Council's interests in respect to emerging national and regional planning policies and other relevant plans and strategies. The team has also continued to provide third parties with planning policy advice.
- 3.34 Throughout the year the team has continued to support Planning Aid North in the delivery of the Countywide "planning and Young Persons Project" which aims to raise school children's awareness of planning. Two schools have benefited from this project in the district, with a further 6 being scheduled next financial year.
- 3.35 The team is continued to develop and manage the Council's GIS electronic mapping system and National Land and Property Gazetteer over the past 12 months. This has included securing a solution to potential data quality issues resulting from changes in the base maps provided by Ordnance Survey. The data quality improvement project is scheduled to be completed by the end of May 2007.

#### **Achievements in 2006/07**

- Submission of Annual Monitoring Reports
- Adoption of Statement of community Involvement (SCI)
- Implementation of "Planning and Young Peoples Project"
- Funding for Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme for West Auckland

## **Public Protection**

### **Food Safety**

- 3.36 The food safety service enforces food hygiene legislation in 650 commercial food premises in Wear Valley. The inspection frequencies are set out by the Food Standards Agency with the highest risk A rated premises visited 6 monthly, B rated premises visited 12 monthly and C rated premises visited 18 monthly. Alternative enforcement strategies can be used for the lower risk premises rated D to F. 70% of planned inspections were achieved April 05 / April 06
- 3.37 Food hygiene legislation changed completely in January 2006 with the introduction of the new Food Hygiene England Regulations. The effect of the legislation change was to outdate all the existing food hygiene enforcement codes and legal notices. The knock on effects to the food safety section were considerable as officers needed training in the requirements of the new legislation, all enforcement procedures needed updating based on a new food law guide and code of practice. A major new requirement of the legislation requiring businesses to have a written food safety management system led to more time being needed on each inspection visit to give support to businesses in achieving compliance. The Food Standards Agency produced a suggested approach in the form of a manual *called* Safer Food Better Business which inspectors had to coach businesses in how to complete and implement the manual. 400 were achieved Jan 06 – Jan 07. Additional time had to be spent at subsequent visits for inspectors to audit the implementation of the food safety management system.
- 3.38 Free Workshops on Safer Food Better Business for food businesses were run throughout Wear Valley with funding from Lifelong learning.

### **Health and Safety**

- 3.39 In 2006 the health and safety inspection service pledged 70 hours of officer time to the revitalising health and safety proactive intervention approach. This approach involves Wear Valley inspectors carrying out topic focussed work on certain problem topic areas and occupational sectors which research has shown contribute significantly to work related ill health. Campaign toolkits are made available by the Health and Safety Executive to inform inspectors on the key hazards and risk control measures for each topic. The inspectors then communicate the risk control measures to local employers by visits, workshops, partnership working or publicity.

### **Environmental Protection**

- 3.40 The Environmental Protection team is involved in the implementation, administration and enforcement of various statutory instruments concerned with the regulation, monitoring and control of pollution from domestic, industrial and commercial sources. Local air quality management involving the assessment, review and monitoring of atmospheric pollution, principally from road traffic and industrial sources, is another of the team's main activities.
- 3.41 13 industrial premises operating potentially polluting processes were inspected and risk rated in accordance with guidance from Central Government. As a consequence of their

work in this area, 26 programmed industrial pollution control improvements were identified and implemented by local industry. This will result in improvements in local air quality and helping to safeguard the health and quality of life of those living in the vicinity of the factories and industrial processes. National Best Value Performance Indicator 217 is concerned with the percentage of programmed pollution control improvements that were completed within established time scales. 70 percent of such improvements were completed in time in 2006/07.

- 3.42** New legislation relating to industrial air pollution control, statutory nuisance and clean neighbourhoods came into force, increasing the powers, responsibilities and workload of the Environmental Protection team. Officers received and investigated over 400 complaints concerning noise, vibration, odours, dust, premises, animals and other sources of alleged nuisance from domestic, commercial and industrial activities.

### **Licensing**

- 3.43** The licensing sections main responsibilities relate to the administration and regulation of various statutory licensing laws involving the processing of applications and the provision of licenses, permits and authorisations. The principal licensing functions include the following licensable activities: the sale of alcohol, various forms of public entertainment, gambling activities, taxis and street trading/collections.

- 3.44** Associated with the introduction of new legislation concerning the licensing of premises for the sale of alcohol and gambling was a massive increase in workload and a steep learning curve for all those involved. 2006/07 has seen a substantial increase in license applications processed resulting in the provision of more than 700 licenses. The team has worked closely with the public, Durham Constabulary and other sections of Council departments to process 24 contested license applications and to deal with associated hearings and various aspects of licensing enforcement activity.

### **Markets**

- 3.45** During the year the traditional market at Crook has remained strong in terms of the number of stalls and footfall. The market at Bishop Auckland has lost some ground. However, two successful continental markets were held in Bishop Auckland. In addition there were two farmers markets held in conjunction with the Antiques Roadshow and the Walk of Light.

- 3.46** The Council also took responsibility for the Stanhope farmer's market and is working with the Market Town Initiative to establish it firmly in the Weardale calendar.

### **Off-street car parking**

- 3.47** We have continued to manage the pay and display car parks in Bishop Auckland. Improvements have been undertaken in the Tenter Street, Victoria Street, and South Street car parks.

- 3.48** A consultation process has begun in Crook to establish pay and display parking. Improvements have been made to the West Road and Glenholme car parks.

### **Pest and dog control**

- 3.49 2006/07 was a difficult year for the pest and dog control section. Over 1200 complaints and requests for service were received and actioned. July for example was a particularly busy month for wasps with over 120 requests for treatment received in that one month alone. Some assistance from an external service provider was necessary to enable the Council to fulfil its responsibilities in relation to pest control during this period of time.
- 3.50 The other main role is in relation to the capture of stray dogs, many of which are eventually returned to their owners. 170 stray dogs were collected from the streets and other public areas by the technical assistants in addition to the pest control work also carried out by the same personnel.

## **4 INSPECTION RESULTS**

### **Planning Service (2004)**

- 4.1 The Planning Service was subject to a “light touch” Best Value Inspection by the Audit Commission in September 2004.
- 4.2 The Audit Commission considered the service to be a good service (two stars) with promising prospects for improvement. On 3 November 2004 the Regeneration Committee agreed an Improvement Plan. Implementation of the plan is on-going.
- 4.3 On 30 September 2004 Trevor Roberts Associates submitted their report entitled “A review of Development Control Procedures in Wear Valley District Council”. The report has made recommendations in respect of staffing levels, managerial responsibilities, changes to procedures and the role of Members in the planning process. Consultants produced an on-line Procedure Guide for use by staff, which incorporates the recommended changes to procedures. A Protocol on Planning has been agreed which incorporates this recommendation.

### **Regeneration Service**

- 4.4 The whole of the Regeneration Service is currently subject to a Best Value review that commenced in 2006 and will be completed by Summer 2007.

### **Planning Administration (January 2006)**

- 4.5 An initial audit review of the administration of planning applications concluded that 6 out of 10 recommendations previously made during audit had been implemented. Those outstanding did not relate to high risk areas.

### **Planning Enforcement (February 2006)**

- 4.6 An internal audit review of planning enforcement concluded that the section is improving the way in which enforcement queries are handled. A substantial backlog, however, still exists from previous years. Regeneration Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2006 resolved to give low priority to old cases. The review also concluded that adequate controls are in place to ensure complaints are logged and dealt with as soon as possible and testing of complaints revealed no specific problem areas. The follow up report dated 30 October 2006 confirmed that the 2 recommendations identified by the auditors had been actioned.

### **Building Control (September 2006)**

- 4.7 An internal audit review of the Building Control service concluded the internal controls currently in place for the administration of building control are reasonable. The auditors found that these systems ensure all applicants receive the relevant information and guidance in addition to the section’s debtors being raised correctly. The section files retain all relevant documentation and the input of data is very accurate. The section’s performance was noted with performance targets being met. A few weaknesses were

identified, including lack of reviews, monitoring and income reconciliation. The auditor's recommendations have been actioned.

### **Public Protection**

- 4.8 A gap analysis partially completed for the Public Protection service area provides a snapshot of the current position. The areas of the service where the current position is uncertain when assessed against the Audit Commissions criteria have been highlighted and the teams are aware of the actions required for excellence. There are resource implications to developing the service to an excellent standard. Action plans and time scales are currently being drawn up although without additional resources current resources will be focused on priorities at the expense of a reduction in services in low priority outputs.
- 4.9 Communications between service providers, service users and relevant stakeholders need to be improved on and systems should be established which ensure that such matters as consultation, diversity and value for money are intrinsically associated with the work of the various sections of Public Protection. The completion of the self assessment under Key Lines of Enquiry should provide us with a clearer picture of both our current standards of service delivers and the various methods by which we can improve in future years.

## 5. DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

### CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PLAN/ BALANCED SCORECARD

The following table shows the Corporate Balanced Scorecard, which is based on the Council Plan. The items shown in bold are the prime responsibility of the Environment and Regeneration Department.

	Population	Environment	Economy	Crime	Health	Lifelong Learning
Customer centred		Improved recycling and composting rates  The number of homes meeting the DHS	<b>Increase Number of VAT registrations</b>  <b>To halt the increase in VAT de-registrations</b>		Reduced sickness absence in Wear Valley District Council	Number of employees with accredited qualifications.  Number of modern apprenticeships supported.
Citizen focused	<b>Increasing Population</b>  <b>Number of Community groups established and engaging with the Council or participating in the Community Empowerment Network</b>	Implemented regeneration programmes targeted at former coalfield settlements  Improved SAP rating and reduction of families in fuel poverty.	<b>Increase in employment</b>  <b>Percentage increase in the number of people on IB moving into employment.</b>	BV126, BV127a, BV127b, BV128 BV174, BV175, BV225.	Reduced incidences of chronic disease e.g. cardiovascular disease.  Reduction in people smoking.	Increased number of people engaging with basic skills programmes.  Number of people successfully completing basic skills programmes.



	Population	Environment	Economy	Crime	Health	Lifelong Learning
Citizen focused (cont'd)	<p><b>Increasing percentage of people who feel satisfied with Wear Valley as a place to live</b></p> <p><b>Reduce % of the population living in SOA's identified as being in the top 10% for deprivation.</b></p> <p><b>Reduction in gap between the best and worst SOAs in terms of NRF Floor Targets</b></p>			<p>Reduce number of offenders issued with ASBO's.</p> <p>Reduced percentage fear of crime in identified SOA's with the highest level of fear of crime.</p>	<p>Reduction in proportion of adults who are obese.</p> <p>A reduction in teenage pregnancy.</p> <p>More people accessing exercise.</p> <p>Increased income of those reliant on state benefits.</p>	<p>Number of working age people with qualifications in key SOA's</p>
Community led	<p><b>Increasing % of people who feel they can engage and influence decisions</b></p>	<p>An LDF which reflects the needs and aspirations of Wear Valley</p>	<p><b>A more diverse profile of employment by industrial category with higher percentage growth in industry sectors and knowledge intensive businesses</b></p>			
Finance and resources	<p>Improved Value for Money Score</p> <p>Deliver Gershon efficiency Savings</p>					

	Population	Environment	Economy	Crime	Health	Lifelong Learning
Developing and empowering	<p>Improved capacity of elected members and officers to think and act strategically.</p> <p>Improved understanding of Council priorities and objectives by all stakeholders.</p>					
Management and organisation	<p>Improved organisational capacity to engage with communities and develop priorities and programmes that meet identified community need.</p> <p>Year on year improving CPA score achieved at self-assessment.</p> <p>Improved satisfaction scores from surveys conducted with all Council stakeholders.</p>					

## 6. Customers and Consultation

The table below sets out the planned consultation within the Department covered by the period 2006/7 to 2008/9.

AREA OF CONSULTATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	TIMELINE	COMMENT ON HOW THIS IS USED AND WHAT ARE THE RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
<b>Regeneration</b>			
<b>Forward Planning</b> Consultation with public stakeholders and statutory bodies on the following Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policy documents : Joint Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report; Issues and Alternative Option Reports; Preferred Reports and Associate Sustainability Appraisal Report.	C Dillon	As set out in Revised Local Development Scheme.	Detailed comments made will inform the production of new LDF policies. Resource implication include publishing costs, consultancy fees
<b>Building Control</b> Customer Survey of agents/applicants for Building Regulations approval	D Townsend	On-going	Continual survey (100%) of all applicants and builders. Influence on delivery of service.
<b>Development Control</b> Planning applications		On-going	Consultation and neighbour notification on planning applications. On-going /continual consultation process. Influence on decision making by Council.
<b>Customer surveys</b>		On-going	Customer survey of applicants and agents for planning permission. Survey of applicants/agents. Influence on delivery of service. Proposal to establish a Planning User Panel.
<b>Customer Surveys</b>		On-going	Sample surveys of objectors and local residents. Surveys of objectors to planning applications and of local residents notified about applications. Influence on delivery of service.
<b>Focus groups – applicants/agents/objectors</b>	D Townsend	Yearly meetings	Contribute to Customer Care Improvement Plan. Influence on delivery of service.

AREA OF CONSULTATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	TIMELINE	COMMENT ON HOW THIS IS USED AND WHAT ARE THE RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
<b>Environmental Protection and Enhancement</b>			Consultation on Crook Town Centre Enhancement Scheme. Further stage for consultation to focus on Hope Street. Modifications to design to reflect public concerns before implementation.
<b>Bishop Auckland Town Centre – consultation on detailed design proposals</b>	Sue Dawson	Summer 2007	Bishop Auckland Town Centre Strategy involving consultation on town centre master plan proposals. Detailed comments on master plan.
<b>Regeneration/ Economic Development</b>  <b>Coalfields regeneration Programme – further consultation on ADF proposals</b>	Alan Weston	Autumn 2007	Programmed consultation on Coundon as part of the Coalfield Housing Renewal Programme. Detailed comments on proposals. Comments reflected in programme development.
<b>Eastgate Planning Proposals</b>	Sue Dawson	Autumn 2007	On-going consultation on implementation and redevelopment plans for Eastgate.
<b>Engagement of Business Section</b>	Sue Dawson	On-going	Consultation through the WV “Forum for Business” an Economic Policies and Strategies. Deliver Plan developed through Forum. Continued consultation on implementation.
<b>Engagement of Business Section/Customers</b>	Sue Dawson	On-going	Consultation with economic development stakeholders/Forum for Business on LEGI proposals. Endorsement of programme. Endorsement of bid for submission to DTI.

AREA OF CONSULTATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	TIMELINE	COMMENT ON HOW THIS IS USED AND WHAT ARE THE RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
<p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will continue to consult with Town and Parish Councils with regard to service delivery in their areas.</li> <li>• Departmental satisfaction index survey will be carried out.</li> <li>• Carry out detailed consultation with residents with regard to utilisation of, and requirements for, open spaces as part of the Open Space strategy.</li> <li>• Best Value satisfaction surveys for various services (corporate exercise)</li> </ul>	Town Centre Manager	On-going	Head of Service Contracts met on a regular basis with Town and Parish Councils with regard to service delivery issues. These exchanges helped to inform future design of service delivery.

## 7. SERVICE BASED ACTION PLANS

### ECONOMIC REGENERATION 2007/08

**OBJECTIVE 3: ECONOMY - The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.**

Key Actions	Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Resources
<b>EC 1 &amp; 3</b> Work with Partner Agencies to develop and implement programmes to support access to employment with particular focus on IB claimants.	Sue Dawson	Work with the 'Forum for Business' to develop new products, services & strategies to tackle worklessness throughout the District, with particular focus on SOAs.  Oversee the implementation of the range of NRF programmes aimed at tackling Worklessness to facilitate successful implementation.	31 March 2008	Staff resources
<b>EC 2</b> Work with Partners to develop infrastructure to support new and existing business growth (including social enterprise and tourism).  Work with Partners to introduce LEGI implementation plan.	Project team to develop secure resources, manage and monitor delivery of projects.	Identify future development sites to be developed in the medium term  Investigate the potential of public/private sector partnerships for speculative build on serviced sites  Develop team to manage property portfolio.	Ongoing	Within budget
EC2		Bracks Farm	Phase 1 (20,000 sq ft B1 office accommodation and 50 jobs). Ongoing – start on site Q4 2006/7	Priority Sites development
EC2		Low Willington	1,547 m <sup>2</sup> of office accomm. (joint project with DCC). Start on site March 06	£2m WVDC £50K NRF £250K

**OBJECTIVE 3: ECONOMY -**

**The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.**

Key Actions	Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Resources
EC2		South West Crook Business Park		
EC2		Site investigation, West Auckland to open up employment land	March 07	NRFFunding secured
EC2	John Parnell	Speculative Workspace Development Programme to encourage development of projects identified in the floorspace study and those falling outside mainstream funding.	March 07	NRF Funding secured
EC2	John Parnell	Industrial Estate Enhancement Scheme including broadband provision at key sites.	March 07	NRFFunding secured
<b>EC2</b>	John Parnell	In conjunction with The Enterprise Agency continue to offer a tailored package of financial support to encourage Start-ups, improve the competitiveness of existing businesses and to encourage business investment and relocation into WV.	31 March 08	NRF Funding secured
EC2	Strategic Director	Weardale Strategy – Deliver and monitor key flagship projects incl Market Towns Programme.	31 March 07	Staff resource
EC2	Interim - Steve Martin	To implement the Market Towns Programme in Stanhope (Year 5) to help restore the market towns as sustainable, economically viable service centres for their hinterland communities and to develop potential economic drivers (e.g. tourism in Weardale) within the target area.	31 March 08	Core funding from ONE NorthEast Single Programme. & growth bid.
EC2	John Parnell	Monitor the effectiveness of the Business Support Network for County Durham, to ensure the service offers a high quality, comprehensive and accessible programme of business support for all industry sectors including tourism throughout the District	Ongoing	
<b>EC 4</b> Raise the profile of the District as a visitor destination and investment location and encourage business investment.	John Parnell	Improve marketing and promotion of Wear Valley as business location using findings form economic futures research. Develop marketing strategy, to attract investors to the District capitalising on the “quality of life” the district has to offer.	On-going	Within budget

**OBJECTIVE 3: ECONOMY -**

**The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.**

Key Actions	Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Resources
EC4	John Parnell	Continue 'Property Liaison Group' to ensure flow of information with Commercial Agents and Developers. Work with other agencies such as CDDC and ONE to promote Wear Valley as a destination for 'quality of life' businesses.	Ongoing. Quarterly meetings	Staff resources
EC4	Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration	Progress the re-development of the Eastgate Cement Works	Planning application submitted by Summer 2007.	Capital programme/One NorthEast Single Programme
EC4	Bob Hope  Project team to be established to develop, manage and monitor delivery of projects.	Review existing strategy and integrate Council led activities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying new development opportunities and planning policies</li> <li>environmental enhancements</li> <li>measures to prevent anti-social behaviour</li> <li>street cleansing</li> <li>promotion and marketing</li> <li>Urban Renaissance activities</li> <li>Traffic and parking improvements</li> </ul> (Review activities Mar 06 and produce new plan to deliver improvements)  Bishop Auckland Renaissance – to seek significant improvement to the environmental quality of public spaces & buildings & to identify & promote critical development opportunity proposals. Two elements.	Integrated  approach with clear activities, responsibilities, timescales and resources developed by target date  Town centre “health check” to be formulated from retail consultancy  Ongoing – Mar 08	Capital programme



**OBJECTIVE 3: ECONOMY -**

**The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.**

Key Actions	Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Resources
EC4	Alan Weston	<p><u>Tourism Renaissance</u></p> <p>Stage 2 – 2006 and beyond – implement tourism renaissance project.</p> <p><u>Urban Renaissance</u></p> <p>2006 – 2008 Develop projects to implement Urban Renaissance Action plan</p>	Phase 1 HLF bid 2006/07	Potentially £5.1m - £2.1m Heritage Lottery Funding, £0.7m Single programme & £2m Single Prog Urban Renaissance. WVDC £300K.
EC4	Mike Richardson	<p>Improve marketing and promotion of WV as a visitor destination. Encourage and support new tourist developments and attractions.</p> <p>Develop and implement a programme of promotion &amp; marketing; including internet marketing; promotion of local attractions, events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update and reprint Visit guide</li> <li>▪ Update &amp; reprint Walking/Cycling Guide</li> </ul> <p>Continue successful events calendar at Tourist Information Points.</p>	Ongoing – March 07	Staff resources
EC4	Mike Richardson	Work with other bodies such as One NorthEast and with County Durham Tourism Partnership to ensure the District benefits from regional and county promotional campaigns.	Ongoing	Staff resource
To support EC1 to EC4 To maximise the opportunities for public sector regeneration investment.	Economic Regeneration Team	To continue to work with funding partners to identify and develop new projects, and maximise the funding opportunities to bring about regeneration initiatives in the area.	Ongoing	Staff resources
To support EC1 to EC4	Economic Regeneration Team	To continue to assist with the implementation and monitoring of existing projects funded through Single Programme and any other funding source successfully brought to the area to undertake regeneration activity.	Ongoing	Staff resources

**OBJECTIVE 4: ENVIRONMENT - *The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.***

Key Actions	Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Resources
Implement Bishop Auckland Town Centre Strategy	Strategic Director  Project team to be established to develop, manage and monitor delivery of projects.	Bishop Auckland Renaissance – to seek significant improvement to the environmental quality of public spaces & buildings & to identify & promote critical development opportunity proposals. Two elements.	Ongoing – Mar 08	Capital programme  ONE NorthEast
	Alan Weston	<u>Tourism Renaissance</u>  Stage 2 – 2006 and beyond – implement tourism renaissance project.  <u>Urban Renaissance</u>  2006 – 2008 Develop projects to implement Urban Renaissance Action plan	Phase 1 HLF bid 2006/07	Potentially £5.1m - £2.1m Heritage Lottery Funding, £0.7m Single programme & £2m Single Prog Urban Renaissance. WVDC £300K.
Deliver the Weardale Strategy	Strategic Director	Deliver and monitor key flagship projects.  Priority progress the re-development of the Eastgate Cement Works  Stanhope : continue to implement the MTI programme on behalf of the Stanhope MTI Steering Group in order to revitalise the area, both economically and socially.	Projects delivered to timescale and budget according to project plans  Planning application submitted by Autumn 2006.	Capital programme

## PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY 2007/08

**OBJECTIVE 1: POPULATION -** *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.*

Key Actions	Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Resources
To produce a new plan (LDF) to cover period 2006-2021.	C Dillon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparatory work for the Local Development Framework "Core Strategy" (Development Plan Document)</li> <li>▪ Preparation of Core Strategy Document (Development Strategy) and Generic Development Control Policies Document.</li> <li>▪ Preparation of Proposals Map.</li> <li>▪ Preparatory work and commencement of major allocations, Housing DPD and Action Area Plan for South and East Bishop Auckland</li> <li>▪ Sustainability Appraisal/Environmental Assessment of DPD documents.</li> </ul>	In accordance with LDS timetable for individual LDF documents	Local Plan budget / Staff resources
To monitor the implementation and effectiveness of planning policies and development land availability.	C Dillon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To develop and implement a monitoring framework and prepare an Annual Monitoring Report.</li> <li>▪ Monitor the National Land Use Database on brownfield land development opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Review, update and publish housing and industrial land availability and housing completion schedules.</li> <li>▪ Monitor the Housing Land Availability.</li> <li>▪ Prepare a Brownfield Strategy.</li> </ul>	Base date 31 March for publication in July (annually)	Salary costs
	C. Dillon	<p>To prepare development briefs and concept statements for important housing and employment sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development brief for 'The Hollow'</li> <li>▪ Other sites as required</li> </ul>	2007/08	L. P. budget
To make full representations on the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East of England	B Hope/ C. Dillon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute/engage with Regional Spatial Strategy Working Groups.</li> <li>• Contribute to Structure Plan Monitoring Group</li> </ul>	Continuing 2007/08	Salary costs

**OBJECTIVE 2: ENVIRONMENT - *The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.***

<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
To make full representations to the County Council during any revision of the Minerals and Waste Local Plans and comment on any other Plans of neighbouring authorities on Policies which may affect the District.	C Dillon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comment and assist when necessary Durham County Council with revision production of the Waste Local Plan.</li> <li>▪ Comment on the Local Development Frameworks neighbouring authorities when consulted.</li> </ul>	Ongoing 2007/08	Salary costs
To work with Durham County Council in partnership to produce and monitor the implementation of the Annual Local Transport Plan and the Local Transport Partnership.	C Dillon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mapping of transport issues in the District to inform LDF and LTP.</li> <li>▪ Promote the implementation of District schemes agreed within the Local Transport Plan.</li> <li>▪ Facilitate the Council's involvement in the Local Transport Partnership.</li> </ul>	Ongoing 2007/08	Salary costs Local transport plan budget via County Council and Local transport Partnership
To lobby and respond to Government and other agencies when consulted on draft strategies, advice and consultation	C Dillon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider and comment upon consultations received.</li> </ul>	Ongoing 2007/08	Salary costs
To work with other Departments to assist in meeting corporate goals.	C Dillon	Assist in the preparation of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the Housing Investment programme,</li> <li>▪ Coalfield Housing Study</li> <li>▪ Open Space strategy and</li> <li>▪ Sports Action Strategy.</li> </ul>	Ongoing 2006/7	Salary costs

**OBJECTIVE 2: ENVIRONMENT - *The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.***

Priorities	Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Resources
To develop and maintain departmental IT systems and E-gov agenda.	C Dillon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SX3</li> <li>• GIS</li> <li>• National Land and Property Gazetteer</li> <li>• Departmental Website</li> </ul>	Ongoing 2007/08	
To contribute to the Councils Community Strategy.	C Dillon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assist in transforming the Council's community strategy into a sustainable Community Strategy and link it to the emerging LDF</li> </ul>	Ongoing 2007/8	Salary costs
Implement the Councils environmental protection policies and monitor adherence.	D Townsend/ C Dillon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor number of planning applications approved consistent with Local Plan Policies.</li> <li>▪ Monitor number of applications approved contrary to Local Plan Policies. (Measurement to be included in Development Control Annual Report.</li> </ul>	Ongoing 2007/8	Salary costs
Wear Valley District Local Action 21 Strategy.	I Bloomfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement Climate Change / Local Action 21 Strategy and monitor Council's environmental performance with aim of significantly improving performance by 2008.</li> <li>▪ Contribution to the Liveability Strategy</li> <li>▪ Production of Climate Change Action Plan to meet Strategic aims.</li> </ul>	early 2007  Ongoing Mid 2007	Salary costs; LA 21 Budget
	C Dillon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To assist in the review and implementation of the North Pennines AONB Management Plan</li> <li>▪ Attendance on North Pennines AONB Partnership.</li> <li>▪ Assist in the preparation of a North Pennines AONB Supplementary Planning Document.</li> </ul>	Ongoing 2007/8	Salary costs
To facilitate environmental improvement within the District.	P. Dunn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To manage Environmental Improvement Budget to implement improvement schemes.</li> <li>▪ Monitor total financial assistance received from external sources.</li> <li>▪ To work with GWD to achieve 5 environmental improvement a year</li> </ul>	Continuing 2007/08	Environmental improvement budget/assistance from external sources

**OBJECTIVE 2: ENVIRONMENT - *The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.***

Key Actions	Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Resources
To develop proposals for investment to protect and enhance Auckland Castle Park and secure the necessary funding to implement.	A. Weston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Await the outcome of the Stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund bid and if successful continue the development work necessary to finalise a stage 2 submission to enable implementation.</li> <li>▪ Continue to work with funders to secure the additional resources required to fund the implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stage 1 bid submitted March 2007</li> <li>▪ Stage 1 outcome know Sept 2007</li> <li>▪ Stage 2 development Oct 07-Sept 08.</li> </ul>	Salary costs from WVDC and as part of Bishop Auckland Renaissance. External funding (HLF/ONE).
To implement programme of reclamation of derelict land.	P. Dunn/ I. Bloomfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of identification and remediation stages of Contaminated Land Strategy</li> <li>▪ Production of Reclamation Strategy and implementation of reclamation programme.</li> <li>▪ Maximise grant available to derelict land scheme.</li> </ul>	Mid 2007  From mid 2007/8	Salary costs; Capital programme allocation; Government grant
To develop and implement projects under the Minerals' Valley Project.	P Dunn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To work in partnership with English Nature and Groundwork West Durham in the implementation of projects related to the Mineral Valleys Project.</li> <li>▪ Liaison on implementation of individual schemes</li> </ul>	Continuing 2007/8	Salary costs; capital programme allocation
To ensure that the Council's policies, particularly with respect to Listed Building and Conservation Areas, are adhered to.	D Townsend  C Dillon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor number of listed building and conservation area consents granted and endorsed by GONE (measurement in Development Control Annual Report).</li> <li>▪ Commence programme of Parish Plans.</li> </ul>	Annual return (early 2006) Continuing. Aim to complete 1 plan in 2007/8	Salary costs Local Plans Budget

**DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING CONTROL 2007/08**

**STATUTORY FUNCTIONS**

<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
To deal with planning applications as speedily as is compatible with ensuring that the correct decision is made.	Principal Planner DC Officers DC Support Team Head of Dev & Build Control	To continually monitor the procedures carried out within the Department and to bring forward improvements to the service, where necessary, in dealing with applications in order to minimise delays in the process. To choose according to criteria when to negotiate and when not. To have strict checks before validating applications.	In 2007/8 achieve the following percentages of applications determined:-  Major 60% BVPI 109(a) (within 3 weeks) Minor 65% BVPI 109(b) (within 8 weeks) Other 80% BVPI 109(c) (within 8 weeks) Householder 80% LP1 P1 (within 8 weeks)	Salary costs.
	S Harris/B Magraw Principal Planner DC Officers DC Support Team Head of Dev & Build Control	To use Crystal Report and iPlan to monitor the performance of the service.	Throughout 2007/8.	Salary costs. Capital budget through PDG.
	Head of Dev & Build Control	To review implementation of scheme of delegation.	On-going.	Salary costs
	Principal Planner DC Officers	To provide opportunities for pre-application discussions with applicants to ensure compliance with planning standards and policies, and to encourage good design and high standards of development.	On-going	Salary costs

Key Actions	Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Resources
	Principal Planner DC Officers	To continue to give priority to applications when jobs or inward investment into the District are involved.	On-going	Salary costs
	Principal Planner DC Officers DC Support Team Head of Dev & Build Control	To carry out customer satisfaction survey by means of questionnaire to be sent to all applicants/agents. To carry out customer satisfaction survey by means of questionnaire to be sent to all consultees. To carry out customer satisfaction survey by means of questionnaire to be sent to all objectors. To carry out survey by means of questionnaire to be sent to non-respondents. To improve service in response to comments received.	On-going	Salary costs
	Principal Planner DC Officers Head of Dev & Build Control	To establish a stakeholder user panel. To identify areas of the service in need of improvement and make changes accordingly.	Throughout 2007/8	Salary costs
	Principal Planner	To undertake a benchmarking exercise with good performing district planning authorities. To identify areas of the service in need of improvement and make changes accordingly.	On-going	Salary costs
	Principal Planner Diane Bowron Joanne Grant Andrea Lee	To maintain procedure manual	Throughout 2007/8	Salary costs
	Head of Dev & Build Control	Produce an Annual Development Control Report.	End of June	Salary costs
	Head of D&BC Planning Info Officer	To develop and maintain Public Access SX3 so that the public can view and comment on planning applications, and find useful planning information, on-line.	Throughout 2007/8	Salary costs/capital budget through PDG



<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
	Head of Dev & Build Control	To carry out tour by Committee.	July	Salary cost
To maintain and where possible improve the quality of the Building Control Service	Principal Building Control Officer BC Officers	To continually monitor the procedures carried out within the Department and to bring forward improvements to the service where necessary, to ensure a quality and speedy service is provided.	Throughout 2007/8	Salary cost
	Administrative Technician	Continue to develop use of the iBuild system, to enable improvements to be made to the administrative procedures and to monitor performance of the plan vetting/inspection services.	Throughout 2007/8.	Salary cost/capital budget through PDG
	Principal Building Control Officer	To keep a Procedure Manual up to date. To ensure correct procedures are followed. To ensure consistency of approach at all stages.	Throughout 2007/8.	Salary cost
	BC Officers	To carry out all statutory inspections within the prescribed period.	Within one working day.	Salary cost
	Administrative Technician	To carry out customer satisfaction surveys by means of a questionnaire to be sent to all applicants/agents, and builders for both the plan vetting and site inspection services.	Throughout 2007/8	Salary cost
	Principal Building Control Officer BC Officers	To provide opportunities for pre-application advice on Building Regulations, Means of Escape and Access for the Disabled.	Throughout 2007/8	Salary cost
	BC Officers	To revisit sites within 3 months of last inspection.	On-going	Salary cost Monitoring

<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
To ensure that the Planning and Building Control legislation is complied with in the District.	Planning Enforcement Officer Principal Planner Principal Building Control Officer	To investigate speedily alleged breaches in planning or building control and in accordance with agreed procedures.	On-going	Salary cost
	Planning Enforcement Officer Principal Planner Head of Dev & Build Control	To continually monitor and review the planning enforcement procedures and bring forward improvements where necessary to ensure a speedy service.	Throughout 2007/8.	Salary cost
	Planning Enforcement Officer Principal Planner Support Officers	To develop and make full use of iPlan (Complaints) to assist in the administration and monitoring of the enforcement service.	Throughout 2007/8	Salary cost/capital budget through PDG
	Administrative Technician Principal B C Officer	To develop and make full use of iBuild to assist in the administration and monitoring of the enforcement service.	Throughout 2007/8	Salary cost
	Planning Enforcement Officer Principal Planner DC Officers Principal Build Control Officer BC Officers	To exploit opportunities for the development and building control sections to assist one another in the investigation of enforcement cases. To promote closer working links with the Environmental Health Enforcement Officer.	Throughout 2007/8	Salary cost

Key Actions	Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Resources
	Planning Enforcement Officer Principal Planner Principal Build Control Officer	To serve appropriate notices, following up where necessary with prosecution.	On-going	Salary cost
	Planning Enforcement Officer Principal Planner	To keep Members informed on planning enforcement cases.	Weekly list to be sent to all Members.	Salary cost

**PUBLIC PROTECTION 2007/08**

<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>Food Health and Safety</b>	J Burke	Foster a culture of proactive health improvement approach rather than legalistic approach by changing the service boundaries to have a wider role in the promotion of health and safety/food safety issues. For example develop networks and partnerships with common interests, establish a relationship with the media on regulatory issues such as smokefree legislation.	On-going	Salary costs
	J Burke	Educate businesses during programmed inspection visits so that priority areas for both food and health and safety are covered. For example when a residential home is due for a planned food safety inspection officer also allocated awareness raising on smokefree, dermatitis, musculoskeletal disorders, slips, trips & falls and asbestos	On-going	Salary costs
	J Burke	Premises-based interventions for priority health and safety areas enforcement action in medium to large organisations, awareness raising in smaller premises, as follows:	On-going	Salary costs
	J Burke	-Musculo-skeletal-disorders, Dermatitis, Asbestos, Slips, trips & falls in Residential care homes -Asbestos in Retail shops & for Building managers -Asbestos & Slips, trips & falls in Food retailers -Slips, trips & falls & Dermatitis for Fresh meat retailers -Moving Goods Safely & Asbestos for Retailers and Warehouse operatives.	On-going	Salary costs
	J Burke	Manage officer workloads by allocating each topic to be covered at inspection visit on MVM / hard copy inspection print outs.	On-going	Salary costs
	J Burke	Educational events for businesses about the new smokefree legislation working with Internal and external partners. For example Bishop Auckland Town Centre Manager, Durham Dales Smoke Free Alliance, Health and Safety Liaison Group Durham District, Police, Bishop Auckland College, Wolsingham comprehensive.	On-going	Salary costs

Key Actions	Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Resources
	T Carver	Regulate the new smoke free legislation	On-going	Salary costs
	J Burke	Follow up enforcement on non compliant hairdressers following advisory campaign.	On-going	Salary costs
	J Burke	Awareness raising event in August with Bishop Auckland College to ensure trainees will leave college knowing the controls for dermatitis in the hair, beauty industry.	On-going	Salary costs
<b>Environmental Protection</b>	C Rudman	Further assessment and review of local air quality, principally in relation to pollution from road traffic congestion in some areas of Bishop Auckland.	On-going	Salary costs
	C Rudman	Implement a customer satisfaction survey reporting system for pollution control inspections and investigations	October 07	Salary costs
	C Rudman	Introduce a cost accounting system for industrial pollution control services	March 2008	Salary costs
	C Rudman	Assess the service against the findings of the recent central government regulatory review and reform studies and implement any identified changes that will lead to improvements in management and delivery of pollution control services.	December 2007	Salary costs
<b>Licensing</b>	C Rudman	Complete the implementation of the administrative and regulatory provisions associated with the Gambling Act 2005	December 2007	Salary costs
	C Rudman	Risk assess all licensed premises subject to the Licensing Act 2003 against the four licensing objectives	March 2008	Salary costs
	C Rudman	Review the application of the joint licensing enforcement protocol	On-going	Salary costs

<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>Markets</b>	T Carver	Continue to develop the farmer's market with a view to establishing a regular presence in Bishop Auckland	On-going	Salary costs
	T Carver	Continue to work with Bishop Auckland Town Centre Forum to have presence at events in the town	On-going	Salary costs
	T Carver	Improve the appearance and branding of Wear Valley Markets	On-going	Salary costs
<b>Off-street car parking</b>	T Carver	Implement pay and display arrangements in Crook	On-going	£28,000 from capital allocation
<b>Pest and dog control</b>	C Rudman	Carry out promotional work in relation to good dog ownership in conjunction with our partners, the NCDL and Deerness Kennels	On-going	Salary costs
	C Rudman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop closer links with private sector pest control service providers in order to provide or facilitate the provision of a wider range of pest control services to local residents.</li> </ul>	On-going	Salary costs

## DEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT

**To provide for staff development and effective internal communication**

<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
To assess, provide and monitor staff training and development of all staff	Heads of Service	Undertake Departmental Service Plan/Personal Development Plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop Training Plan</li> <li>▪ Introduce mentoring programme for new/in-experienced staff</li> <li>▪ Support training programmes for staff including personal and professional training)</li> <li>▪ Develop team approach to major developments</li> </ul>	Annual	Within budget
To continue to monitor and develop progress at Business Unit level	Heads of Service	Departmental Service Plan	Annual	Within budget
To monitor and evaluate sickness absence	Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement sickness policy</li> <li>▪ Set sickness target</li> </ul>	Annual	Within budget

## 8. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

### 1. Best Value Performance Indicators

*The following table shows all Departmental BVPI's. The targets set are considered achievable and demonstrate service based performance ambitions.*

BVPI	DESCRIPTION	LINK TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	PREVIOUS YEAR PERFORMANCE AND QUARTILE	2006/7 TARGET	2007/8 TARGET	2008/9 TARGET	TARGETED QUARTILE PERFORMANCE BY 2008/09
BV109	a) Major applications determined within 13 weeks.	Environment / Economy	D K Townsend	61%	60%	60%	60%	Q1
	b) Minor applications determined within 8 weeks.	Population	D K Townsend	72%	70%	70%	70%	Q1
	c) All other applications determined within 8 weeks.	Population	D K Townsend	88%	80%	80%	80%	Q1
BV111	Percentage of applicants/agents satisfied with the service received.	Population	D K Townsend	88%	75%	85%	85%	Q1
BV204	% of appeals allowed against the authorities decision to refuse planning applications	Population	D K Townsend	44%	25%	25%	25%	Q1
BV205	Quality of service checklist	Population	D K Townsend	89%	88%	88%	88%	Q1
BV-EC2	Proportion of the working population who are unemployed and claiming benefit.	Population	Sue Dawson	3.3%	2.8	2.6%	2.4%	N/A
BV-EC17 (a)	Total number of investment enquiries dealt with per annum	Population	Sue Dawson	158	120	120	120	N/A
BV-EC17 (b)	Number of re-locations and re-investments annually as a result of "inward investment"	Population	Sue Dawson	8	10	12	12	N/A



BVPI	DESCRIPTION	LINK TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	PREVIOUS YEAR PERFORMANCE AND QUARTILE	2006/7 TARGET	2007/8 TARGET	2008/9 TARGET	TARGETED QUARTILE PERFORMANCE BY 2008/09
BV-EC17 (c)	Number of jobs created and safeguarded from firms moving to, or re-locating within, the area following "inward investment" enquiries.	Economy	Sue Dawson	78	60	70	80	N/A
BV-EC19	Number of new business start-ups assisted/receiving financial assistance.	Economy	Sue Dawson	20	16	18	20	N/A
BV106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land.	Environment / Economy	C Dillon	55	65	70	75	Q1
BV200	(a) Does Council have a development plan (or alterations to it) that has been adopted in the last 5 years and the end date of which has not expired?	Environment / Economy	C Dillon	N/A	No	No	No	N/A
	(b) If 200a is 'no', are there proposals on deposit for an alteration or replacement, with a published timetable for adopting those alterations or the replacement plan within three years?	Environment / Economy	C Dillon	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A

BVPI	DESCRIPTION	LINK TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	PREVIOUS YEAR PERFORMANCE AND QUARTILE	2006/7 TARGET	2007/8 TARGET	2008/9 TARGET	TARGETED QUARTILE PERFORMANCE BY 2008/09
	(c) Did the local planning authority publish an annual monitoring report by December of the last year?	Environment / Economy	C Dillon	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
BV216	(a) Number of 'sites of potential concern', within the local authority area, with respect to land contamination	Environment / Economy	I Bloomfield	N/A	534	520	500	N/A
	(b) Number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary, as a percentage of all 'sites of potential concern'.	Environment / Economy	I Bloomfield	N/A	0%	5%	10%	N/A
BV219	(a) Total number of conservation areas in the local authority area.	Environment / Economy	C Dillon	N/A	20	20	20	N/A
	(b) Percentage of conservation areas in district with an up-to-date character appraisal.	Environment / Economy	C Dillon	N/A	0%	20%	60%	N/A

BVPI	DESCRIPTION	LINK TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	PREVIOUS YEAR PERFORMANCE AND QUARTILE	2006/7 TARGET	2007/8 TARGET	2008/9 TARGET	TARGETED QUARTILE PERFORMANCE BY 2008/09
	(c) Percentage of conservation areas with published management proposals.	Environment / Economy	C Dillon	N/A	0%	10%	30%	N/A
BV166	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health trading standards.	Environment	Tom Carver	100%	100%	100%	100%	Top
BV217	The percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations that were completed on time.	Environment / Health	C Rudman	N/A	100%	100%	100%	Top

## 2. Local Performance Indicators

<b>LPI Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>LINK TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>PREVIOUS YEAR PERFORMANCE AND QUARTILE</b>	<b>2006/7 TARGET</b>	<b>2007/8 TARGET</b>	<b>2008/9 TARGET</b>	<b>TARGETED QUARTILE PERFORMANCE BY 2008/09</b>
LP-R5	Percentage of householder applications determined within 8 weeks	Environment / Economy	D K Townsend	91%	85%	85%	85%	N/A
LP-R8	Percentage of industrial/economic applications determined within 8 weeks	Environment / Economy	D K Townsend	78%	80%	80%	80%	N/A
LPI 6	Percentage of applications vetted and approved within 5 weeks.	Environment / Economy	D K Townsend	59%	75%	85%	65%	N/A
LPI 7	Percentage of inspections undertaken in one working day.	Environment / Economy	D K Townsend	100%	100%	100%	100%	N/A
LP-R12	Percentage of alleged breaches responded to within 15 working days.	Environment / Economy	D K Townsend	84%	100%	100%	100%	N/A
LPI 1	Respond to workspace enquiries within 3 working days	Economy	Sue Dawson	100%	100%	100%	100%	N/A
LPI 2	Process grant applications within 8 weeks	Economy	Sue Dawson	100%	100%	100%	100%	N/A
LPI 3	Jobs created through business grants & other assistance	Economy	Sue Dawson	110%	60%	70%	80%	N/A
LPI 4	Occupancy rates of WVDC (or jointly owned) factory units & workshops	Economy	Sue Dawson	85%	90%	95%	95%	N/A
LPI 5	Issue at least 10 press releases	Economy	Sue Dawson	23	18	20	20	N/A

<b>LPI Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>LINK TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>PREVIOUS YEAR PERFORMANCE AND QUARTILE</b>	<b>2006/7 TARGET</b>	<b>2007/8 TARGET</b>	<b>2008/9 TARGET</b>	<b>TARGETED QUARTILE PERFORMANCE BY 2008/09</b>
LP-CS11	Percentage of food premises due to be inspected that were inspected	Environment / Health	J Burke	75%	67%	100%	100%	N/A
LP-CS12	Percentage of health and safety premises due to be inspected that were inspected	Environment / Health	J Burke	77%	75%	100%	100%	N/A
LP-CS13	Percentage of authorised processes due to be inspected that were inspected	Environment / Health	C Rudman	62%	100%	100%	100%	N/A

## 9. USE OF RESOURCES

### 1. Value For Money

The following table represents the departments' contribution toward the Corporate Value for Money Framework and evaluates cost against performance and customer satisfaction (quality).

SERVICE	COST DRIVER	COST PERFORMANCE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE (BVPI/LPI)	MOST RECENT PERFORMANCE	TARGET PERFORMANCE 3 YEARS	CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
Planning; - Major applications determined in 13 weeks - Minor applications determined in 8 weeks - Other applications determined in 8 weeks	Xx	£xx	BVPI 109 (a)	86%	60%	Xx%
	Xx	£xx	(b)	81%	70%	xx%
	Xx	£xx	(c)	90%	80%	xx%

## 2. Procurement

This section defines all the contracts applicable to the department that are to be reviewed during the coming year.

### 2006/07

Contract Description	Supplier	Responsible Officer	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date	Extension Period	Contract Type	Review Date	Comments
Broadband Provision	Onyx Internet		03/02/06	02/02/07		Annual		Innovation House
Refuse Collection	Cleanaway		01/04/06	31/01/07		Annual		Innovation House
Sanitact	Initial Health Care		01/04/06	01/04/07		Annual		Innovation House
Lift	ADT Redcare		16/04/06	15/04/07		Annual		Innovation House
SX3 Planning System Support and Maintenance	Northgate					Annual		
GGP GIS System Support and Maintenance	GGP					Annual		
MVM Environmental Health System Support and Maintenance	MVM					Annual		

### 3. Asset Management

Asset	Ownership	Value £000,000	Service Provided by Asset	Link to Corporate Objective	Replacement Strategy
Dales Centre, Stanhope 7 units totalling 208 <sup>2</sup> m	WVDC/DCC	N/A	Retail/Craft Units	Economy	Maintenance to property and land
South Church Enterprise Park 10.4 hectares (not developable)	WVDC/DCC	N/A	Industrial Land	Economy	Maintenance to property and land
South Church Enterprise Park 9 units totalling 1254 <sup>2</sup> m	WVDC/DCC	N/A	Industrial Units	Economy	Maintenance to property and land
Innovation House 17 units totalling 770 <sup>2</sup> m with Phase II, 43 units at 1657 <sup>2</sup> m	WVDC	N/A	Business Centre	Economy	Maintenance to property and land
Low Willington Industrial Estate 10.4 hectares (not developable)	WVDC/DCC	N/A	Industrial Land	Economy	Maintenance to property and land
Low Willington Industrial Estate	WVDC/DCC	N/A	Industrial Units	Economy	Maintenance to property and land
Crook Business Centre	WVDC/DCC/ ONE	N/A	Business Centre	Economy	Maintenance to property and land
Crook Industrial Estate	WVDC	N/A	Industrial Land	Economy	Maintenance to property and land
Tow Law Industrial Estate	WVDC	N/A	Industrial Land	Economy	Maintenance to property and land
<b>Public Protection</b>					
Car Parks	WVDC	286,300	Car Park	Economy	Review to be taken of charging scheme with possible increase and expansion to Crook by 1st August 2006.
Fishing Rights	WVDC	16,000	Fishing Rights on River Wear	Environment	To continue as per service delivery in 07/08 2005/2006.
Market Rights		86,000	Market Rights	Economy	To continue as per service delivery in 07/08 2005/2006.



#### 4. Capital Programme

This years capital programme, as detailed in the Action Plan, involves some major economic schemes, including Bracks Farm Office development, South West Crook site servicing, new business units at Low Willington and preparation of the planning application for Eastgate Redevelopment. These are very dependent upon external funding. This programme will be monitored quarterly.

Scheme Description	Budget 2007/8			Link to Corporate Objective
	Expend	Income	Net Cost	
<b>Capital Programme</b>				
Bishop Auckland Town Centre Development <i>(additional income from ONE/DCC anticipated to be secured to support delivery)</i>	300,000	0	300,000	Economy
West Auckland Improvement Scheme - Year 2 <i>(contribution to DCC partnership project. Estimated gross expenditure is £339,000 from all sources)</i>	23,000	0	23,000	Environment/ Economy
Contaminated Land	100,000	0	100,000	Environment
Eastgate Development - Stage 3 <i>(second of 3 year project, £178k income and expenditure in year 1 and £150k estimated year 3)</i>	718,000	-622,000	96,000	Environment/ Economy
Wear Valley Building Enhancement Scheme <i>(second of 2 year programme, £270k NRF allocated in 2006/7)</i>	0	0	86,000	Environment/ Economy
Capitalisation of Economic Development Fund	30,000	0	30,000	Economy
Renewable Energy at Innovation House	45,000	-22,500	22,500	Environment
Alternative Energy Grants	30,000	0	30,000	Environment
Alternative Energy Systems in Public Buildings	60,000	0	60,000	Environment
West Auckland Industrial Feasibility	30,000	30,000	0	Economy
S W Crook	350,000	350,000	0	Economy
<b>Sub-totals</b>	<b>1,407,000</b>	<b>-768,500</b>	<b>747,500</b>	

Scheme Description	Budget 2007/8			Link to Corporate Objective
	Expend	Income	Net Cost	
<b>Programmes carried forward from 2006/07</b>				
South West Crook Industrial Extension <i>(feasibility work started 2006/7 using external income)</i>	249,406	0	249,406	Economy
West Auckland Improvement Scheme - Year 1 <i>(contribution to DCC partnership project. Estimated gross expenditure is £114k from all sources)</i>	30,000	0	30,000	Environment / Economy
<b>Sub-totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>279,406</b>	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,407,000</b>	<b>-768,500</b>	<b>1,026,906</b>	

5. **Asset Management PI's**

PI	Description	Last Year Performance	Target 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09
LPI 4	Occupancy levels at business space	85%	90%	95%	95%

## 10. RISK MANAGEMENT

### Departmental risks

COUNCIL PLAN ACTION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	RISKS	RISK MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
1. Economic	R Hope S Dawson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduction in resources available to service.</li> <li>▪ Availability of external funding.</li> <li>▪ Reduction in economic performance of District leading to reduction in demand on service (building rates).</li> </ul>	Scale back programme, seek partners. Pro-active approach to external funding regimes. Robust financial planning/ management.
2. Political	R Hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduction/change in priority accorded to tasks</li> </ul>	Have contingency work programme available.
3. Social		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ageing population.</li> </ul>	Need to ensure flexibility of response in relevant service delivery areas to accommodate changing demographics.
4. Technological	All Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Computer failure</li> </ul>	No current problems (paper system remains relevant)
5. Managerial/ Professional	D Townsend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Loss of staff/no replacement.</li> <li>▪ Middle management capacity.</li> </ul>	Use PD Grant constructively. Restructuring of service. Seek to provide appropriate developmental opportunity.
6. Financial	D Townsend  T Carver	<p>Reduction in resources</p> <p><b>Revenues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Failure of revenue bids to fund additional staff.</li> <li>▪ Environmental resources limited.</li> <li>▪ Reliance on external funds to support mainstream service activity.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Car parking staff</li> <li>▪ Licensing</li> </ul>	See "Economic" above.  Use of Planning Delivery Grant.  Seek external assistance.

DEPARTMENTAL RISKS	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	RISKS	RISK MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
Financial (cont'd)	S Dawson	<b>Capital</b> Scale of projects reduced.	
7. Physical	R Hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of office accommodation/cramped working conditions.</li> </ul>	Negotiate space elsewhere.
8. Legislative / Regulatory	D Townsend  T Carver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in demand on strategy planning/building control facilities leads to more complaints.</li> </ul> <p>Within the department there are a number of areas of service delivery which are affected by legislative and/or regulatory requirements or industry standards of best practice, for example, the inability to fill some posts (for various reasons) compromises the ability of the department to discharge its responsibilities in the areas affected. Examples of areas of service delivery affected in this way are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Car parking</li> <li>Licensing duties, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Extra resources required to ensure effective service delivery.</p> <p>Judgements will be made as to priorities. On the basis of such judgements responsibility for ensuring that the department meets its obligations and responsibilities in areas of legislative and regulatory requirement will be allocated to appropriate officers within the department.</p>
9. Environmental	C Dillon/ D Townsend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flood risk assessment more onerous</li> </ul>	Follow National Planning Policy Statements and set procedures (with Environment Agency). Carry out Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of District.
10. Competitive	D Townsend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External Building Control providers.</li> </ul>	Building Control runs at surplus (on fee paying service). Cut back in non-fee activities if service demands decrease.

## **Corporate risks**

<b>Corporate risk</b>	<b>Responsible officer</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk management actions</b>
Reduce Sickness Absence	Strategic Director	Failure to act	Ensure all staff trained and understand procedure
Improve CPA	Strategic Director	Effort is misdirected	Continued focus on improvement
Deliver Gershon Savings	Strategic Director	Savings impact on service quality	Target areas of budget where minimal impact on customer satisfaction and quality of service.
Improved Customer Satisfaction	Strategic Director	Data collection and fact finding	Ensure follow-up of results.

The above will only be completed where the department has been allocated a corporate risk to manage.

## **Statement of Internal Control**

### **1. Fulfilment Of Corporate Responsibilities**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Area of Responsibility</b>	<b>Confirmation (Yes / No)</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Exceptions &amp; Action Plan</b>
1.1.	<p>2. key controls over systems and arrangements are in place to ensure Council assets are safeguarded from error or irregularity</p> <p>3. key controls are kept under review and action taken to address internal control weaknesses identified.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Segregation of duties Up to date procedures Asset Management plan Budget monitoring</p> <p>Internal audit reviews Team meetings Action plans</p>	

Reference	Area of Responsibility	Confirmation (Yes / No)	Evidence	Exceptions & Action Plan
1.2	4. All resources are deployed in the achievement of Council corporate objectives	Yes	Budget process Service planning Service plan review	
1.3	<p>The departmental service plan contributes to the Council's wider business priorities and is reflective of existing policies and strategies. This can be demonstrated by:</p> <p>5. Key performance targets and indicators</p> <p>6. Budget setting and allocation of resources</p> <p>7. Identifiable improvements in service, including achievement of explicit outputs and/or milestones</p> <p>8. Action plans prepared to assist with achievement of objectives, further improvements in service delivery and performance, or to overcome service delivery and performance failures.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Evaluation of budget bids</p> <p>PI's in top quartile Customer survey results Actions contained within service plans</p> <p>Departmental service plan Action plans e.g. planning performance</p>	

Reference	Area of Responsibility	Confirmation (Yes / No)	Evidence	Exceptions & Action Plan
1.4	<p>With regard to business risk management:</p> <p>9. business risks are identified and assessed arising from new initiatives</p> <p>10. action is taken to manage and review business risks that are within my department</p> <p>11. These business risks are included in the Department's Risk Register</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Option appraisal Use of risk matrix</p> <p>Regular risk management update to members</p> <p>Regular risk management update to members</p>	
1.5	<p>All staff have access to, are familiar with and work in accordance with the following and that action is taken where non-compliance is identified:</p> <p>12. The Council's Financial Regulations and Procedures</p> <p>13. Employee Code of Conduct</p> <p>14. Standing Orders Relating To Contracts</p> <p>15. General Scheme of Delegation</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Financial regulations available on lotus notes database</p> <p>Standing orders available on lotus notes database</p> <p>Report writing protocol</p> <p>Staff training</p>	



Reference	Area of Responsibility	Confirmation (Yes / No)	Evidence	Exceptions & Action Plan
1.6	<p>decisions are taken and the activities of the department are done with due regard for:</p> <p>16. The Councils' corporate objectives</p> <p>17. Value for money and service improvement</p> <p>18. Legality</p> <p>19. Financial implications</p> <p>20. Staffing &amp; other resource implications</p> <p>21. Equal opportunities implications</p> <p>22. Community safety implications</p> <p>23. Health &amp; Safety improvement implications</p> <p>24. Asset Management implications</p> <p>25. Anti-Fraud &amp; Corruption implications</p> <p>26. Business risk.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Integration of service plan with council plan</p> <p>Benchmarking of activities</p> <p>Report writing protocol</p> <p>Ongoing liaison with HR function</p> <p>H &amp; S standing item on team meeting agenda</p> <p>Asset Management Plan</p> <p>Anti-fraud and Corruption Strategy</p> <p>Risk management strategy</p>	

## 11. DATA QUALITY

Please list all sources of data and how we ensure its accurate. This section must include the calculation of all performance indicators

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>DATA QUALITY ISSUE</b>
Annual Monitoring Report (LDF)*	C Dillon	Data Entry Quality Checks (SX3) – manual
GIS	C Dillon	Implementation of Positional Accuracy Tool
National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG)	C Dillon	Continuous Data Cleansing (manual)
National Land Use Data Base (NLUD)	C Dillon	Annual Update – manual check
Sustainability Appraisal Framework	C Dillon	Continuous Update – manual check
* covers all BVPI's attached to Forward Planning Section.		

## 12. PARTNERSHIP PROFILE

In order to achieve the initiatives suggested in the Service Plan the Department works in partnership with a whole range of outside organisations. The key partners include:-

- ONE North East
- Government Office for the North East
- Durham County Council
- Wear Valley Development Agency
- Groundwork Trust
- Bishop Auckland College
- Durham Rural Community Council
- Countryside Agency
- Other Local Authorities
- Local Chambers of Commerce/Trade
- 2D Voluntary Sector for Wear Valley and Teesdale
- Resident and Community Groups.
- Planning Aid North

The nature and purpose of the departments partnership involvement is presented below:-

Name of Partnership	Purpose	Specifying/monitoring arrangements
Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership (and sub groups)	To enable main public service providers to establish and agree common approach with the community to co-ordinate service delivery in the district.	Monitoring of LSP/NRF activity undertaken at board and sub-group level.
County Durham Strategic Partnership	To provide strategic approach for LSP activities	
County Durham Economic Development Strategy	To agree and deliver an economic strategy for County Durham as sub-regional partnership for the Regional Economic Strategy and agree allocation of ONE Single Programme.	Activity programmed by 3 year Investment Plan set against ONE NorthEast target. Activity monitored quarterly at Strategy Steering Group.
European Objective 2 Partnership (and sub groups)	To agree strategy and implementation of European programmes within County Durham	Activity programmed by EU Delivery Plan monitored quarterly by GONE.

Name of Partnership	Purpose	Specifying/monitoring arrangements
Market Towns Partnerships for Crook and Stanhope	To agree and delivery programme to achieve economic development in identified towns in the ONE initiative	Market Towns Action Plans included within County Economic Strategy Investment Plan. Monitoring quarterly by local, and sub-regional partnerships and ONE NorthEast.
Weardale Task Force (Eastgate Development sub group)	To agree and deliver an integrated regeneration programme for Weardale in the wake of the closure of major sources of employment	Activity agreed in Delivery Plan. Monitoring by Task Force and Eastgate sub-group.
County Durham Regeneration (SRB5/6) Partnership	To agree and delivery SRB 5/6county – wide programme	Activity agreed in Delivery Plan. Monitored by GONE quarterly and by Sub-Regional partnerships.
South Bishop Auckland SRB Partnership	To finalise SRB 6 programme in Bishop Auckland area and provide sub-district forum for LSP matters	Complete SRB6 evaluation.
Bishop Auckland Town Centre Forum	To deliver SRB 6 programme and this centre strategy in Bishop Auckland town centre	Activity agreed within strategy (currently under review) and monitored by Forum (quarterly) and by report to Regeneration Committee.
Dene Valley Housing Renewal Area Partnership	To agree and deliver programme of housing renewal in Eldon Lane, Bridge Place and Coundon Grange	Monitoring undertaken by Department and report to Regeneration Committee
Coundon Settlement Renewal Initiative	To agree and deliver settlement renewal programme in Coundon and Leeholme	SRI Action Plan included within County Economic Strategy Investment Plan. Monitoring quarterly by local and sub-regional partnership, and by ONE NorthEast.
Regional Spatial Strategy Management Group	To manage and direct the production of the RSS. to agree policy and content of the RSS	Strategy currently under preparation. Monitoring of progress by NEA and report to Regeneration Committee.
County Planning Working Group (Structure Plan, Mineral Plan, Work Plan Monitoring)	To give direction to the production of county-wide plans and strategies.	Plans currently under preparation. Monitoring reports to Regeneration Committee.
Local Transport Plan Partnership	To agree strategy and implementation plan for transport development and use in County Durham.	Programme activity agreed for 2001/2006. Monitored by Partnership and submission of Annual Progress Report to GONE. Programme 2006/11 currently under preparation.
West Durham Rural Transport Partnership	To work with local communities to identify and delivery sustainable transport solutions for West Durham	Activity agreed by partnership to influence LTP. Monitored by partnership.

Name of Partnership	Purpose	Specifying/monitoring arrangements
County Durham Local Agenda 21 Forum	Discussion forum for environmental and LA 21 matters	Activity promoted for implementation by local groups (including LSP Environment Group)
North Pennines Partnership	To agree and deliver North Pennines Management Plan	Programme activity agreed to Management Plan in March 2004. Annual monitoring report agreed by Partnership and reported to Regeneration Committee.
Groundwork West Durham	To manage and deliver environmental, education, environmental training activities	Programme activity agreed by Board (continual process) and monitoring by Board on quarterly basis. Schemes within the district receive prior approval by Regeneration Committee.
West Durham Rural Pathfinder	To experiment with and test ways of: 1) achieving more joined up delivery of services in rural areas; 2) innovation in rural development and delivery of services; 3) better prioritisation of resource.	Steering Groups and Task Groups established.  Action Plans being developed.
EAGA Partnership	To manage and deliver energy efficiency measures to appropriate private sector households on behalf of the Government.	Activity promoted and managed by partnership and monitored annually.
NEA (National Energy Action)	To develop and promote energy efficiency services to tackle fuel poverty and instigate projects that benefit the local environment.	A partnership driven activity with the assistance of utility companies monitored annually and reported to Regeneration Committee.
Planning Aid North	To develop and deliver the Countywide Planning and Young People Project so as to increase awareness of planning in schools.	Steering Group established to monitor performance. Annual Report published.

### 13. MAKING THE PLAN WORK

The following identifies the data monitored by the Department both for the purpose of BVPI monitoring and for activity based monitoring.

Indicator	Description	Report	Frequency
<b>Planning Control</b>			
BV 109	(a) Major applications determined within 13 weeks. (b) Minor applications determined within 8 weeks. (c) All other applications determined within 8 weeks.	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Twice Yearly  Quarterly Twice Yearly
BV 111	Percentage of applicants satisfied with the service received.	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Twice Yearly  Quarterly Twice Yearly
BVPI 204	Planning appeals.	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Quarterly
BVPI 205	Quality of Planning Services Checklist	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Yearly
LP-R5	Percentage of householder applications determined within 8 weeks	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Twice Yearly  Quarterly Twice Yearly
LP-R8	Percentage of industrial/economic applications determined within 8 weeks	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Twice Yearly  Quarterly Twice Yearly
<b>Building Control</b>			
LPI 6	Percentage of applications vetted and approved within 5 weeks.	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Twice Yearly  Quarterly Twice Yearly
LPI 7	Percentage of inspections undertaken in one working day.	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Twice Yearly  Quarterly Twice Yearly
<b>Enforcement</b>			
LP-R12	Percentage of alleged breaches responded to within 15 working days.	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Twice Yearly  Quarterly Twice Yearly
LPI 8	Percentage of alleged breaches of building regulations responded to within 2 working days.	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Twice Yearly  Quarterly Twice Yearly

Indicator	Description	Report	Frequency
<b>Forward Planning</b>			
BV 106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land.	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Twice Yearly
	Land available for housing development	Dept M.T	Quarterly
	Housing Land Supply	Dept M.T	Quarterly
BV 200a	Plan Monitoring : Development Plans	C.M.Team Via MSU Dept M.T, Members	Twice Yearly  Regeneration Committee
BV 200b	Plan Making : Milestones in LDS	C.M.Team Dept M.T	Annually
BV 200c	Publication of Annual Monitoring Report by Dec each year	C.M.Team Dept M.T	Annually
<b>Environment</b>			
BV 216a	Number of 'sites of potential concern' within the local authority area, with respect to land contamination.	C.M.Team Dept M.T	Annually
BV 216b	Number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary, as a percentage of all 'sites of potential concern'.	C.M.Team Dept M.T	Annually
BV 219a	Total number of conservation areas in the local authority area.	C.M.Team Dept M.T	Annually
BV 219b	Percentage of conservation areas in district with an up-to-date character appraisal.	C.M.Team Dept M.T	Annually
BV 219c	Percentage of conservation areas with published management proposals.	C.M.Team Dept M.T	Annually
<b>Economic Regeneration</b>			
BV-EC2	Proportion of the working population who are unemployed and claiming benefit.	DMT Members	Annually
BV-EC17(a)	Total number of investment enquiries dealt with per annum	Dept. M. T.	Quarterly
BV-EC17(b)	Number of re-locations and re-investments annually as a result of "inward investment"	Dept. M. T.	Quarterly
BV-EC17(c)	Number of jobs created and safeguarded from firms moving to, or re-locating within, the area following "inward investment" enquiries.	Dept. M. T.	Quarterly
BV-EC19	Number of new business start-ups assisted/receiving financial assistance.	Dept. M. T.	Quarterly
LPI 1	Respond to workspace enquiries within 3 working days	Dept. M. T.	Quarterly
LPI 2	Process grant applications within 8 weeks	Dept. M. T.	Quarterly
LPI 3	Jobs created through business grants & other assistance	Dept. M. T.	Quarterly
LPI 4	Occupancy rates of WVDC (or jointly owned) factory units & workshops	Dept. M. T.	Quarterly
LPI 5	Issue at least 10 press releases	Dept. M. T.	Quarterly

Indicator	Description	Report	Frequency
Public Protection			
BV217	The percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations that were completed on time.	C.M.Team Dept M.T	Annually
BV166	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health trading standards.	C.M.Team Dept M.T	Annually
LP-CS11	Percentage of food premises due to be inspected that were inspected	Dept MT	Twice yearly
LP-CS12	Percentage of health and safety premises due to be inspected that were inspected	Dept MT	Twice yearly
LP-CS13	Percentage of authorised processes due to be inspected that were inspected	Dept MT	Twice yearly





# Wear Valley Economic Strategy, 2006-2021

Prepared on behalf of Wear Valley District Council

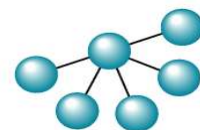
**SHARED INTELLIGENCE**

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November 2006

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# I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Executive Summary

The Economic Strategy for Wear Valley 2006-21 sets out a challenging and aspirational vision for how we want the District to be in 2021, and details a series of objectives and actions- for the Council and its partners- to undertake to achieve that vision. The Economic Strategy recognises that continuation of the “status quo”- a stagnating economy and population- is fundamentally not sustainable.

## The Vision

Our Vision for Wear Valley in 2021 is described in Box E.1. This Vision emerged from a workshop attended by key stakeholders in September 2006.

### Box E.1: Vision for Wear Valley in 2021

It is 2021. Over the past 15 years, the economy of Wear Valley has witnessed a remarkable renaissance. It is now considered a major driving force in the economy of the sub-region and region, and is continuing to witness rapid growth in population, employment, educational attainment and rates of business start-up.

#### Economy and Business: A Successful Local Economy in a Globalised World

One of the major drivers of the Wear Valley economy over the past 15 years has been the new energy economy. The Eastgate development acted as a major catalyst for this- it acts as a unique demonstration for all forms of renewable energy, including wind, solar and geothermal, it acted to attract inward investment from a number of businesses in the new energy sector, it served as a test-bed for geothermal energy, and it became the location for a hub of University research activity. Building on this, a one-stop shop for renewable energy providers was established, and a task-force was set-up to investigate and promote supply-chain opportunities for existing businesses. Wear Valley is now a recognised centre of excellence in renewable energy and related sectors and the District has set out its Vision to become a carbon neutral economy by 2030.

The success of the new energy sector has led to a renaissance in value-added manufacturing in the District. Whereas 15 years ago the traditional manufacturing sector was in rapid decline, the drive to create a carbon neutral economy in Wear Valley has acted as a catalyst to attracting a number of high-tech new firms. This, and the increased levels of collaboration between manufacturers in the District, has acted to shift the manufacturing sector up the value chain.

The rate of start-up of knowledge-based businesses is now higher in Wear Valley than in any other part of the North East. Many of these start-ups have been established by returning Wear Valley residents, having completed periods of study or work elsewhere in UK and Europe, and many are located in our attractive rural areas. But an equal number have been established by in-migrants from around the country and world, who capitalise on Wear Valley’s modern and efficient business infrastructure, combined with its high quality of life.

The District is now home to a new breed of mobile, rural entrepreneur, attracted by the quality of life, communications infrastructure, and premises available in the District. The new live/work units at Eastgate acted as an important catalyst for this trend. Many of these entrepreneurs have located in the District from elsewhere in the North East, and many have set-up in the tourism, and creative sectors.

The increase in high-value manufacturing and knowledge-based businesses has not happened by accident. The District has continually improved its stock of incubation and “move-on” premises, working in partnership with the private sector and using the Council’s own land assets creatively. The whole District is broadband enabled and wireless internet coverage is second to none, with wireless hubs in all public buildings.

The Darlington- Bishop Auckland Growth Corridor is recognised as a major strategic growth area within the region. A joint public-private sector growth corridor steering group has since 2007 promoted and marketed the growth corridor to key businesses clusters, encouraged collaboration between those businesses and promoted high-quality transport links within the corridor.

### **A Strong Rural Economy and a High-Value Tourism Sector**

Another of the District's core economic sectors is sustainable tourism. In many ways, the catalyst for this was Eastgate, which established Wear Valley on the map as a location for a range of visitor activity, centred around the nationally-renowned geothermal hot springs, but also acting as an attraction in terms of its approach to renewable energy. The boutique spa hotel at Eastgate is extremely popular, and is fully booked up to 6 months in advance.

The activity at Eastgate has acted as a catalyst for the development of a more holistic package of small-scale visitor facilities in the Dale, including a range of small workshops and galleries, it has unlocked the potential for craft industries, and enabled the establishment of some of the region's most renowned cafes and restaurants. The Dale's gourmet trail is now an attraction in its own right. Eco-holidays are also very popular in the Dale, where visitors stay in carbon neutral accommodation and where menus are based around local produce. Grants for the conversion of redundant buildings to use renewable energy were a key driver in this.

Key to the successful development of the tourism sector generally was promoting the Durham Dales brand, and the buy-in to this from tourism businesses and attractions across Wear Valley, Teesdale and Derwentside. Working together, they achieved much more.

### **A growing population**

The housing offer in Wear Valley is now modern, affordable and diverse. The District is perceived throughout the region as a desirable location for families with an abundance of family homes in safe, attractive neighbourhoods. Many of these homes have been designed and built to high environmental standards, and are powered by photovoltaics, wind power and geothermal heating. The new housing throughout the District is renowned for its design quality, and the Council encouraged this through planning large schemes required to generate 20% of all energy through sustainable sources.

Moreover, improved transport links have further added to the attractiveness of the District as a place to live. Substantially improved bus links, as part of the Tees Valley Passenger Transport Agency, have improved the situation for those travelling to and from the Tees Valley city-region, and acted as a catalyst for the Darlington- Bishop Auckland Growth Corridor. The regular and rapid rail links from Eastgate to Darlington via Bishop Auckland have also served to integrate the District more strongly into the Tees Valley City-Region and Durham City. A series of high-quality, sustainable communities have become established along the route of the railway, creating a sustainable extension to the urban core.

The result of the improvements to the housing market and transport links has seen the reversal in the trend of population decline that had been observed during the 1980s and 90s. The District's population now stands at some 70,000, up from 60,000 in 2005. The majority of this increase is accounted for by increases in families and workers in the service sector, and most of this increase has been in the revitalised east of the District. Some of the in-migrants have chosen Wear Valley as a place to live while commuting to work elsewhere in the city-region; but many also work in the District itself, and in particular in the growth sectors of new energy technologies, creative industries, and tourism.

### **Education, Skills and Learning: an economically active District**

Education in Wear Valley has improved markedly over the past 15 years. GCSE results are now among the best in the North East, and a substantial number of students stay on to study further education at the District's FE College and 6<sup>th</sup> Forms, which have been linked to offer a great diversity of offers.

The turnaround in the District's education offer has been driven by a number of factors. These include the successful Building Schools for the Future programme which provided a modern infrastructure for education delivery, and saw every primary and secondary school

rebuilt or improved. Strong linkages were established between business and schools, particularly in terms of the establishment of the University of Newcastle's Centre of Excellence for Renewable Energy Technologies based at Eastgate, and the College's support for the high-value manufacturing sector. The College is now delivering over 1,000 apprenticeships and has developed innovative partnerships with global manufacturing and engineering businesses, including BAe and Ford. The local education offer also benefited from the drive to attract the best teachers to the District, the ability to develop a local curriculum, the establishment of specialist schools, and the College's broadening offer in terms of foundation degrees.

This has further contributed to the District's popularity as a base for those with families, whether they work in the District or commute to work elsewhere in the city-region.

### **Vibrant Places**

Bishop Auckland has now cemented its position as the most important shopping and employment centre in the County after Durham. The increase in the District's population, and the successful evolution of the economy to one based on high-value manufacturing, knowledge-based, and creative sectors, has instigated major change in the vibrancy of the retail offer. Bishop Auckland now has a large catchment and the ability to attract shoppers away from other retail centres at Durham and Darlington.

What makes Bishop Auckland a success is the diversity of the shopping offer. The town recently came out top in a national survey to find the most distinctive market town, and a large proportion of retailers in the town are independents. This distinctiveness results in part from the growth in the independent sector, and partly through the mix of national multiples that have been attracted to the District. The area around Chester St/ Railway St is now the focus for a professional services cluster, while the revitalised Fore Bondgate has become the town's creative quarter. The marketplace features a weekly market for locally produced food and non-food goods.

Key to the success of Bishop Auckland has been the development and delivery of a vision for the town that was produced in 2007. This was backed-up by small grants to support retailers transform and maintain their exteriors, a comprehensive marketing and business advice service, and a flexible and responsive planning system. The improvement and diversity of the housing offer in the town has also been a major driver in its success.

The success of Bishop Auckland has acted as a driver for the continued development of surrounding towns such as Crook, Willington and Stanhope. No longer seen as marginal, rents and yields continue to increase in these towns while the number of vacant units falls. These towns offer a range of services in their own right, and have contributed further to reducing the previously high levels of retail leakage from the District.

The Economic Strategy is focussed on a strong set of spatial priorities. In the east of the District, Bishop Auckland will form the key anchor, or driver of economic growth, particularly through the Bishop Auckland-Darlington growth corridor which capitalises on Bishop Auckland's connectivity to the Tees Valley city-region. In the rural west of the District, the flagship Eastgate development will act as the key transformational growth driver for Weardale and the rural economy. Crook and Willington will not have as much of a transformational role on the wider District, but are nonetheless expected to increase these towns vibrancy and sustainability.

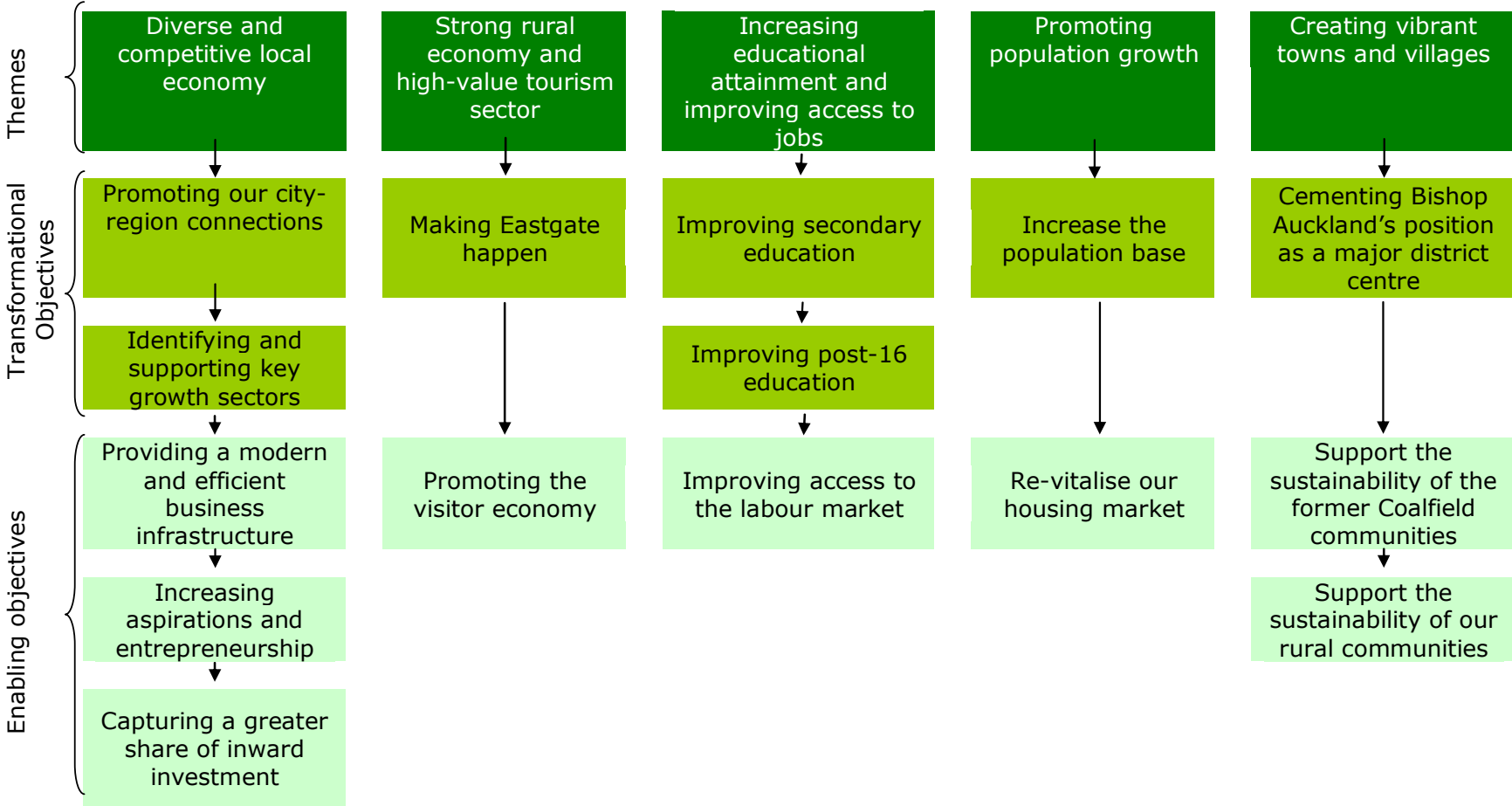
### **From Vision to Objectives**

The bulk of the Strategy describes how we will make our Vision for the District a reality. For each of the five themes described above, the Strategy identifies a series of more detailed objectives. Transformational objectives are those which will result in a step-change in the economic performance of the District. Enabling objectives are those which will

support transformational activity and ensure that the impacts are fully realised.

For each objective, the Strategy describes a series of specific actions for the Council and a range of other partners to deliver the strategy. A more detailed Action Plan is presented in Annex 1.

An overview of the structure of the strategy- including the transformational and enabling objectives- is shown in the diagram overleaf.



## Key Measures of Success

We will measure our success between now and 2021 according to the following high-level indicators:

- **Population:** currently 62,000, the target is for this to increase to 67,000 (8% growth)
- **Jobs:** Increase the number of jobs in our economy from 20,000 to 23,000.
- **Employment rate:** Increase the employment rate from 72% to 80%, in line with the government's national target.
- **Employment in growth sectors:** Increase the numbers employed in growth sectors (finance, IT and other business activities), closing the gap between Wear Valley and the North East region (employment in these sectors is 6.9% in Wear Valley, and 15.6% in the north east).
- **Educational attainment:** our target is for the District to achieve GCSE results as good as the average for the North East (currently, 47.5% of our pupils achieve 5 or more GCSEs at A-C, against 53.5% in the north east).
- **Visitor economy:** To increase by at least 20% the number of visitor days spent in the District per year (currently 2.2m); and to increase visitor expenditure by at least 30% in real terms (currently £40m).

## Objectives and Actions

We now describe the principal actions proposed under each objective.

### Transformational Objective A1: Identifying and supporting key growth sectors

Our economy is small (around 20,000 jobs), and continues to suffer from declining employment in our traditional sectors- manufacturing, agriculture and extractive industries. We need to diversify our economic base by attracting more knowledge-based and higher value businesses, including higher value added manufacturing.

We will support the diversification of our economy by:

- Retaining and supporting our existing manufacturing base- by encouraging greater collaboration between businesses, providing diagnostic support for our fastest growing businesses, and encouraging those businesses to act as mentors to other manufacturing companies.
- Capitalising on Eastgate- the Renewable Energy Village which will utilise all forms of renewable energy- to ensure that the new energy sector is one of the key drivers in our economy. To do this we will establish a clear stance on energy efficiency in all our activity, and market the Eastgate opportunity to relevant businesses.



- Using Netpark- the University of Durham’s high-tech business park located in neighbouring Sedgefield- as a catalyst for growth by establishing links between our existing incubators and Netpark, and developing a joint marketing and branding strategy.
- In addition, we will continue to improve business support by ensuring the new regional Business Link delivers enhanced support for Wear Valley businesses, strengthen collaboration and networking among the business community, and continue to support our voluntary and community sector and social enterprises to grow.

**Enabling Objective A2: Promoting our city-region connections**

Wear Valley already has strong links to Darlington, Durham and Sedgefield. In addition to growing the Wear Valley economy, we must improve access to the wider labour market for Wear Valley residents. There are flows of working and studying commuters from the District to both Darlington in the Tees Valley and Durham, as well as commuting flows from both cities to Wear Valley. However, we need to build stronger links with these cities, as they will form the key engines of regional growth in the future.

We will strengthen our links to the Tees Valley City-Region by promoting the Darlington- Bishop Auckland Growth Corridor. This will promote highways and public transport improvements, market and promote the corridor to businesses, and encourage collaboration between businesses, and between Darlington and Bishop Auckland colleges and employers.

**Enabling Objective A3: Providing a modern and efficient business infrastructure**

We have a number of high-quality business locations within the District, and some further developments in the pipeline, including the Bracks Farm prestige office site, Innovation House Phase 2, and quality office developments at Low Willington. However, there are also some pressing constraints which need to be urgently addressed. These include a shortage of readily available sites for office and industrial use (particularly around Bishop Auckland), limited provision of premises for lease and shortages of move-on space and managed workspace. Furthermore, there are some areas of the District that have weak broadband connectivity.

We will address these issues by:

- Adopting a pipeline approach to the provision of employment sites and premises so as to stimulate developer interest without swamping the market;
- Allocating a new prestige employment site to meet spillover demand from the South Church employment site;
- Developing further follow-on workspace units for lease, by working alongside a private sector developer;
- Working with BT to address broadband capacity issues in certain parts of the District, particularly around Frosterly and Bishop Auckland;

- We will also work with our partners to continue to improve public transport connections to the outlying rural communities, and to the Durham and Darlington conurbations.

#### **Enabling Objective A4: Increasing Aspirations and Entrepreneurship**

Rates of entrepreneurship in the District, and the business and employment aspirations of our residents, are below average. This is particularly the case in our more deprived wards and communities. Our successful bid for Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) funds provides a great opportunity to tackle these challenges.

We will use LEGI funds to increase entrepreneurship in the District by:

- Offering a comprehensive and tailored package of advice, grants, loans and aftercare support through local delivery of the regional business support programme;
- Improving access to incubator and managed workspace accommodation;
- Establishing a package of start-up financial support;
- Establishing homworking hubs in rural areas where home-based workers can come together to learn, collaborate and combine spending power;
- Encouraging the provision of live/ work units in new developments.

#### **Transformational Objective A5: Marketing the District**

Rates of inward investment from overseas and elsewhere in the UK to the District are low. The UK is no longer a favoured destination for overseas investors but Wear Valley has the potential to strengthen its profile to UK investors by stressing its quality of life and links to the A1. We will raise levels of inward investment by:

- Updating our existing marketing material and using this to target businesses in our priority sectors;
- Ensuring that a proportion of the Council's capital receipts from land sales and from Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) grants are ear-marked specifically for marketing activity;
- Continuing to work with inward investment agencies at regional and County level to communicate the District's offer and ensure that these agencies direct enquiries to Wear Valley where appropriate.

#### **Transformational Objective B1: Making Eastgate happen**

The proposals to develop a renewable model village at Eastgate- featuring all forms of renewable energy technology, high quality workspace, and a range of visitor attractions including spa hotel, nature reserve, visitor centre, funicular railway and toboggan run- will provide a fantastic opportunity to transform and revitalise the economy of Weardale and indeed the District. Eastgate will be unique in the UK, and possibly the world, by being the only village powered solely by five different types of renewable technology.

We will accelerate progress on Eastgate by:

- Producing a clear business plan which clarifies the implementation programme, capital and revenue requirements and finalises the operating arrangements for the Single Purpose Vehicle;
- Securing the engagement of research partners including the University of Newcastle to ensure that the focus on renewable energy technology remains at the centre of the project;
- Pro-actively marketing the site to boutique spa hotel operators.

**Enabling Objective B2: Promoting the visitor economy**

Weardale has significant untapped potential as a visitor destination. The area benefits from a rich natural environment and a number of diverse attractions, but does not currently capitalise on these opportunities. There is not currently the critical mass of visitors required to encourage development of further visitor services. We will encourage the development of the visitor economy by:

Raising Weardale's profile through the Durham Dales marketing campaign- we will work with the Area Tourism Partnership to ensure that the Durham Dales brand is a key element of the County marketing strategy, and we will promote and roll-out the activity of the Weardale Visitor Network;

We will support the development of visitor services by promoting opportunities for farm diversification and establishing an investment package to support smaller scale interventions in the tourism offer (such as improvements to signage, walking routes, information boards, picnic sites etc.)

**Transformational Objective C1: Improving secondary education**

Secondary school attainment, at both Key Stage 2 and GCSE, is below regional and County averages. Low attainment acts as a brake on future economic development in the District. We will address low secondary school attainment by:

- Modernising delivery of secondary education by supporting schools in introducing new vocational diplomas and building links with FE providers to improve access to vocational courses;
- Using the Building Schools for the Future Programme as an opportunity to review secondary school provision in the District to ensure that our schools have the premises needed to deliver a high-quality offer;
- Improving educational quality and engagement by tackling low aspirations through engaging parents in schools and after-school clubs, by recruiting the best head-teachers to our schools, and by promoting enterprise in education, using the Northern Way and LEGI as spring-boards for this.

**Enabling Objective C2: Improving post-16 education**

Bishop Auckland College is being rebuilt, and this provides a fantastic opportunity to re-inspire Wear Valley residents to engage in further education. However, the non-vocational FE offer in the District is limited,

and the needs of local employers are not always addressed by the FE courses on offer in the District. We will address these issues by:

- Exploring how we can bring together Bishop Auckland College and some or all of Wear Valley's 6<sup>th</sup> Forms to enhance both the vocational and non-vocational offer, creating a campus style environment within Bishop Auckland.
- Building on the work of the College's Services Design Group to widen the range of vocational courses and Foundation Degrees delivered at the College.

### **Enabling Objective C3: Improving access to the labour market**

Despite relatively low levels of unemployment in the District, levels of worklessness generally are quite high, with large numbers of our working age population claiming Incapacity Benefit. Significant work is already underway to address this issue, including activity delivered through the Pathways to Work programme, and the Neighbourhood Renewal programme, although we must explore how we can make better use of existing resources, and how the various delivery organisations can work more effectively together.

To address this, we will create a Local Employment Partnership, bringing together key partners- including LSC, JC+, College, Schools, Council and voluntary and community sector to improve the way that support for jobless people is coordinated and delivered on the ground.

We will also target particular vacancies within the Council at those who are long-term unemployed or returning to the labour market, encouraging JC+ to act as a job broker.

### **Transformational Objective D1: Increase the population base**

A critical challenge for the District is to reverse the trend of population decline that has been observed over recent years, and to balance economic and housing growth. In particular, we need to encourage more young people, and those with higher-level skills, to remain within, or locate in, Wear Valley.

Our overall objective is to build on the recent modest population increase to achieve sustainable growth to 67,000 by 2021, with a balanced programme of housing and employment growth combining with this. We will do this by:

- Working with the private sector to bring forward brownfield housing sites and accelerate house building completions to 300 per year to increase housing choice;
- Consider how we might develop a talent recruitment and retention programme to encourage the District's young to stay and others to move-in.
- Work with other County Durham Local Authorities and GONE to create a positive regional planning framework for housing growth.

### Enabling Objective D2: Revitalise our housing market

Our housing market is increasingly buoyant, particularly in parts of Bishop Auckland and rural Wear Valley. Some of the district's communities show evidence of housing market failure- reflected by low demand, empty homes, and associated anti-social behaviour. A key priority for the district must be to help turn round these areas, partly through stock improvement so meet the Decent Homes standard, and in some cases through more comprehensive restructuring of local housing markets.

In order to revitalise the district's housing market, we will:

- Focus our Decent Homes investments in locations where improvements can achieve a significant extension of housing lifecycle and serve as a catalyst for regeneration.
- Promote housing market renewal in three areas identified as having the most pressing need: priority wards in Bishop Auckland, Coundon, and Tow Law. We will also seek further qualitative improvements to the housing stock in Crook, Willington and the West Auckland/ St Helen Auckland area as part of medium/ long-term plans.

### Transformational Objective E1: Cement Bishop Auckland's position as a major district centre

Bishop Auckland is a key retail and service centre, not just for the District, but for the County as a whole. There are some weaknesses and gaps in provision, notably a poor quality physical infrastructure in some places, a high proportion of "value" shops and lack of independent boutique shops that attract visitors, and limited availability of quality premises for service businesses. There are also a number of opportunities, including the prospect of further retail development at North Bondgate and the Newgate Centre, office development at Bracks Farm, and increasing developer interest in housing developments.

We will promote Bishop Auckland as the key driver or engine of growth for the District to increase employment opportunities and the vibrancy of the centre. We will do this by:

- Implementing the recommendations of the Bishop Auckland Masterplan- we will enhance the role of the town as a visitor destination by improving existing attractions, signage and gateways; we will promote opportunities for residential development in the town centre; and we will make improvements to the physical fabric of the town.
- We will attract more national multiples to the town centre, as these are able to retain greater levels of local retail expenditure.
- We will also ensure that Bishop Auckland retains its distinctiveness by supporting our existing independent businesses. Furthermore, we will establish a cultural quarter around the historic Fore Bondgate by promoting the area to appropriate businesses and

establishing a small grants programme for physical improvements to the area.

- We will ensure that strong pedestrian and cycle links are established between the Bracks Farm office site and the town centre.

### **Enabling Objective E2: Support the sustainability of the former coalfield communities**

In common with other coalfield areas, our former coalfield communities, including Crook, Willington and Tow Law, face challenges relating to population decline, changing age profiles, low educational attainment and low housing demand. Nonetheless, there are also significant opportunities- Crook is playing an increasingly important role as a local service and employment centre, while Willington has opportunities to further capitalise on its proximity to Durham, and Area Development Frameworks for Tow Law and Coundon which will form the basis for funding bids to the national Coalfields programme.

Building on these opportunities, we will support the sustainability of these communities by:

- Taking forward the findings of the Area Development Frameworks for Crook and Willington by making funding applications to support these settlements development;
- Supporting Crook's role as a vibrant district centre and administrative centre location- we will bring back into use various vacant premises, support improvements to the physical infrastructure of the town, and support the Community Centre and a dedicated resource centre for the cultural sector;
- Promoting Willington's role as a location for spill-out growth from Durham;
- Enhancing Crook and Willington connectivity to Durham, both in terms of public transport links, and the key A610 route generally.

### **Enabling Objective E3: Support the sustainability of our rural communities**

The rural west of the District consists of a number of relatively remote communities. Stanhope is the key service centre in Weardale and has benefited from its Market Town status which is promoting the town as the "Gateway to the Dales". Wolsingham is the second largest town in the rural sub-area, and will continue to act as a focus for new housing and employment growth in the future. Eastgate is the location for one of the District's key developments in future years- a renewable energy village featuring tourist attractions- which provides significant opportunities for Weardale and the district as a whole.

We will support the continued sustainability of our rural communities by:

- Bringing forward and promoting the Eastgate developments as the key driver of economic growth in the Dale;
- Promoting Stanhope's role as a Gateway to Weardale by promoting opportunities for tourism in the rural area;

- Supporting the Market Town Initiative in Stanhope;
- Bringing forward key sites in Wolsingham;
- Maintaining public transport infrastructure between all rural settlements.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## The Economic Strategy

1.1. This is the Economic Strategy for Wear Valley, 2006-21. The aim of the Strategy is to present a challenging and aspirational, yet realistic, vision for the District over the next fifteen years. The Strategy:

- Describes our Vision for the District in 2021;
- Maps out the challenges and barriers facing the District in attaining this Vision;
- Identifies our core objectives to foster sustained growth in employment and quality of life throughout Wear Valley;
- Proposes a number of specific actions to help us deliver these objectives over the next 5 years; and
- Identifies a set of targets against which we will measure our progress.

1.2. The economic regeneration landscape is changing rapidly and the balance between the Council's role in leadership and in direct delivery of services is also changing. The recently published Local Government White Paper Strong and Prosperous Communities and the inter-related proposals from the Lyons Inquiry calls for local authorities to put *place shaping* at the heart of their efforts. Place shaping role sees Local Authorities exercise their *leadership role* to influence and coordinate other bodies to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their residents.

1.3. For Lyons, economic regeneration underpins place shaping - whereby local authorities exercise leadership to bring together a range of partners to deliver economic, social and environmental well-being- and economic renewal. This Economic Strategy for Wear Valley describes how we will do this. As Lyons states<sup>1</sup>:

*"The arguments for a local role in determining the actions of government and the provision of public services are becoming stronger. In addition, economic analysis continues to identify local factors and institutions as important influences on economic change and growth."*

1.4. In his review of local government, Lyons emphasizes the need for a wider, strategic role for local government, which he terms 'place-shaping' – the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well-being of a community and its citizens. Place shaping includes the following components:

- building and shaping local identity;
- representing the community;
- regulating harmful and disruptive behaviours;

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<sup>1</sup> Lyons Inquiry into Local Government, March 2007.



- maintaining the cohesiveness of the community and supporting debate within it,
  - ensuring smaller voices are heard;
  - helping to resolve disagreements;
  - working to make the local economy more successful while being sensitive to
    - pressures on the environment;
    - understanding local needs and preferences and making sure that the right services are provided to local people; and
    - working with other bodies to response to complex challenges such as natural
  - disasters and other emergencies.
- 1.5. Lyons sees economic prosperity at the very heart of local authorities place shaping efforts. This is reinforced by the Local Government White Paper which acknowledges the “convening” role of local authorities in taking responsibility for outcomes across an area even when those outcomes are most directly affected by other agencies. As Lyons states, “convening requires local government to be able to identify a direction of travel, articulate a sense of the future and enthuse others to be part of a common mission.” Local authorities must “adopt a leadership style that engages partners, build alliances and secures support for joint priorities. It should facilitate, advocate, arbitrate and influence rather than dominate.” Within this context, Local Authorities should prepare Sustainable Community Strategies – the mechanism to establish a shared vision for an area.
- 1.6. This Economic Strategy is the first step towards building a shared vision for the District. We will use the Economic Strategy to influence our partners- and our ability to influence the Local Area Agreement will be a key mechanism for bringing proposed activities together and holding our partners to account.
- 1.7. The Economic Strategy is ambitious, and will require us to be proactive in leadership, influencing and delivery.

### **Wear Valley Today**

- 1.8. Wear Valley District is located on the western side of County Durham, bordered by Teesdale to the South, Cumbria to the West, Tyndale and Derwentside to the North, and Durham and Sedgefield to the East. The population of the District is currently just over 60,000.
- 1.9. Spatially, the District comprises three distinct sub-areas:
- Bishop Auckland (including the surrounding communities of Coundon and West Auckland) is the key settlement in the District. Located in the south-east of the District, Bishop Auckland has good links with Darlington and Newton Aycliffe. The town is one of the

three main shopping centres in the County and is undergoing significant change, including improvements to the retail, housing and business premises offer. It has the potential to act as a strong economic driver for the rest of the District and County Durham.

- To the north and east of Bishop Auckland are the former coalfield communities centred on Crook, Willington and Tow Law. These areas have suffered from the decline of traditional manufacturing and mining industries and are characterised by high levels of worklessness and deprivation. These communities tend to have stronger links to Durham than to the south. Reducing worklessness by tackling skills deficiencies and improving access to employment is the key priority in these areas, along with improvements to the housing stock.
- Weardale is the rural west of the District. It has beautiful moorland scenery, sparse settlements and low population density. Overall levels of deprivation are less pronounced, although the physical isolation of some communities poses a particular set of challenges. There are real opportunities to develop Weardale as a location for tourism and leisure activity and as a location for smaller, footloose businesses.

1.10. Traditionally, the economy of the District has been based on manufacturing, coalmining and other extraction industries, and agriculture. These sectors- particularly coalmining- have declined over recent decades.

1.11. A SWOT analysis for Wear Valley is presented below.

**Wear Valley SWOT Analysis**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beautiful natural environment</li> <li>- Locational advantages close to A1</li> <li>- Manufacturing/ engineering base</li> <li>- Cheap land and premises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Culture of low aspirations and entrepreneurship/ attitudinal barriers</li> <li>- Economic base- not sufficiently diverse, and under-represented in key growth sectors</li> <li>- Low skills base in many sectors, including basic skills</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eastgate</li> <li>- Tourism/ Visitor Economy in rural areas and Bishop Auckland and the South West Heritage Corridor</li> <li>- Economic diversification- through promoting the District as a place to live and work</li> <li>- Bishop Auckland- as a key County economic driver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Globalisation- decline of traditional economic sectors</li> <li>- Further loss of farm businesses</li> <li>- Continued out-migration of young people</li> <li>- Widening urban v. rural economic divide</li> </ul>

1.12. The key challenges now facing the District are:

- **A declining and ageing population**- the population of the District declined slowly but steadily from 64,000 in the early 1980s to 61,000 in 2002. The population since has increased to 62,100 in 2005, although the long-term trend is forecast to decline to 59,000 by 2028. Our population is also ageing. In 2005, people in their 20s made up 9.3% of the District's population, compared to 12.5% across the region and 12.8% nationally. Ten years ago, 12.8% of our population were aged in their 20s- little different than the national and regional average of 14%.
- **An economy which has failed to diversify**- Manufacturing employment in the District declined from 4,090 in 1999 to 2,949 in 2004. Manufacturing now accounts for 15% of jobs in the District. The District economy is now dominated by health and social work (16% of jobs); retailing (15% of jobs); education (11%); and construction (7%). The public sector in total accounts for 33% of total jobs<sup>2</sup>. Only 10% of the District's business stock operates in knowledge-based sectors, compared to 12-13% in most other County Durham authorities and 15% across the North East region.
- **Low rates of enterprise and entrepreneurship**- In 2004, there were 28 business start-ups per 10,000 adult population in the District. Although this compares favourably with many of our County Durham neighbours, it is significantly below the England average of 38 start-ups per 10,000 population.
- **High rates of unemployment and worklessness**- Our unemployment rate, at 5.1% (1,400 residents), is marginally higher than the national average, and considerably better than the County or regional averages (7.1% and 6.2% respectively). However, rates of worklessness are high. Economic inactivity rates in the District are at 24%, less than the County average (26%) but above the English average of 21%. Of our 8,800 economically inactive residents, over half (4,500) claim Incapacity Benefit, representing 8% of the working age population.
- **Low skills** - only 47.5% of our pupils attained 5 or more GCSEs at grades A-C, compared to 51% in County Durham, 53.5% across the North east, and 56% nationally. Skills levels among the adult population are below national averages- according to the Labour Force Survey 2005, 16.9% of the District's working age population has no qualifications, against 15.6% regionally and 14.1% across England.

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<sup>2</sup> Compared to 32% of total jobs across the North East.

## **Structure of the Economic Strategy**

- 1.13. The remainder of the Economic Strategy is structured as follows:
- Section 2 outlines our Vision for Wear Valley in 2021;
- 1.14. Following this, the remainder of the Strategy discusses our objectives and actions for achieving this Vision:
- Section 3 considers the Economy theme;
  - Section 4 focusses specifically on the rural theme;
  - Section 5 addresses worklessness, skills and learning;
  - Section 6 considers how we will stem the decline of our population;
  - Section 7 describes our proposals for creating vibrant towns and villages.

## 2. VISION 2021

- 2.1. This Section describes our Vision for the District in 2021. It then goes on to outline our key objectives for, and our current progress towards, achieving this Vision.

### The Vision

- 2.2. Our Vision for Wear Valley in 2021 is described in Box 2.1. This Vision emerged from a workshop attended by key stakeholders in September 2006.

#### **Box 2.1: Vision for Wear Valley in 2021**

It is 2021. Over the past 15 years, the economy of Wear Valley has witnessed a remarkable renaissance. It is now considered a major driving force in the economy of the sub-region and region, and is continuing to witness rapid growth in population, employment, educational attainment and rates of business start-up.

#### **Economy and Business: A Successful Local Economy in a Globalised World**

One of the major drivers of the Wear Valley economy over the past 15 years has been the new energy economy. The Eastgate development acted as a major catalyst for this- it acts as a unique demonstration for all forms of renewable energy, including wind, solar and geothermal, it acted to attract inward investment from a number of businesses in the new energy sector, it served as a test-bed for geothermal energy, and it became the location for a hub of University research activity. Building on this, a one-stop shop for renewable energy providers was established, and a task-force was set-up to investigate and promote supply-chain opportunities for existing businesses. Wear Valley is now a recognised centre of excellence in renewable energy and related sectors and the District has set out its Vision to become a carbon neutral economy by 2030.

The success of the new energy sector has led to a renaissance in value-added manufacturing in the District. Whereas 15 years ago the traditional manufacturing sector was in rapid decline, the drive to create a carbon neutral economy in Wear Valley has acted as a catalyst to attracting a number of high-tech new firms. This, and the increased levels of collaboration between manufacturers in the District, has acted to shift the manufacturing sector up the value chain.

The rate of start-up of knowledge-based businesses is now higher in Wear Valley than in any other part of the North East. Many of these start-ups have been established by returning Wear Valley residents, having completed periods of study or work elsewhere in UK and Europe, and many are located in our attractive rural areas. But an equal number have been established by in-migrants from around the country and world, who capitalise on Wear Valley's modern and efficient business infrastructure, combined with its high quality of life.

The District is now home to a new breed of mobile, rural entrepreneur, attracted by the quality of life, communications infrastructure, and premises available in the District. The new live/work units at Eastgate acted as an important catalyst for this trend. Many of these entrepreneurs have located in the District from

elsewhere in the North East, and many have set-up in the tourism, and creative sectors.

The increase in high-value manufacturing and knowledge-based businesses has not happened by accident. The District has continually improved its stock of incubation and “move-on” premises, working in partnership with the private sector and using the Council’s own land assets creatively. The whole District is broadband enabled and wireless internet coverage is second to none, with wireless hubs in all public buildings.

The Darlington- Bishop Auckland Growth Corridor is recognised as a major strategic growth area within the region. A joint public-private sector growth corridor steering group has since 2007 promoted and marketed the growth corridor to key businesses clusters, encouraged collaboration between those businesses and promoted high-quality transport links within the corridor.

### **A Strong Rural Economy and a High-Value Tourism Sector**

Another of the District’s core economic sectors is sustainable tourism. In many ways, the catalyst for this was Eastgate, which established Wear Valley on the map as a location for a range of visitor activity, centred around the nationally-renowned geothermal hot springs, but also acting as an attraction in terms of its approach to renewable energy. The boutique spa hotel at Eastgate is extremely popular, and is fully booked up to 6 months in advance.

The activity at Eastgate has acted as a catalyst for the development of a more holistic package of small-scale visitor facilities in the Dale, including a range of small workshops and galleries, it has unlocked the potential for craft industries, and enabled the establishment of some of the region’s most renowned cafes and restaurants. The Dale’s gourmet trail is now an attraction in its own right. Eco-holidays are also very popular in the Dale, where visitors stay in carbon neutral accommodation and where menus are based around local produce. Grants for the conversion of redundant buildings to use renewable energy were a key driver in this.

Key to the successful development of the tourism sector generally was promoting the Durham Dales brand, and the buy-in to this from tourism businesses and attractions across Wear Valley, Teesdale and Derwentside. Working together, they achieved much more.

### **A growing population**

The housing offer in Wear Valley is now modern, affordable and diverse. The District is perceived throughout the region as a desirable location for families with an abundance of family homes in safe, attractive neighbourhoods. Many of these homes have been designed and built to high environmental standards, and are powered by photovoltaics, wind power and geothermal heating. The new housing throughout the District is renowned for its design quality, and the Council encouraged this through planning large schemes required to generate 20% of all energy through sustainable sources.

Moreover, improved transport links have further added to the attractiveness of the District as a place to live. Substantially improved bus links, as part of the Tees Valley Passenger Transport Agency, have improved the situation for those travelling to and from the Tees Valley city-region, and acted as a catalyst for the Darlington- Bishop Auckland Growth Corridor. The regular and rapid rail links from Eastgate to Darlington via Bishop Auckland have also served to integrate the

District more strongly into the Tees Valley City-Region and Durham City. A series of high-quality, sustainable communities have become established along the route of the railway, creating a sustainable extension to the urban core.

The result of the improvements to the housing market and transport links has seen the reversal in the trend of population decline that had been observed during the 1980s and 90s. The District's population now stands at some 70,000, up from 60,000 in 2005. The majority of this increase is accounted for by increases in families and workers in the service sector, and most of this increase has been in the revitalised east of the District. Some of the in-migrants have chosen Wear Valley as a place to live while commuting to work elsewhere in the city-region; but many also work in the District itself, and in particular in the growth sectors of new energy technologies, creative industries, and tourism.

### **Education, Skills and Learning: an economically active District**

Education in Wear Valley has improved markedly over the past 15 years. GCSE results are now among the best in the North East, and a substantial number of students stay on to study further education at the District's FE College and 6<sup>th</sup> Forms, which have been linked to offer a great diversity of offers.

The turnaround in the District's education offer has been driven by a number of factors. These include the successful Building Schools for the Future programme which provided a modern infrastructure for education delivery, and saw every primary and secondary school rebuilt or improved. Strong linkages were established between business and schools, particularly in terms of the establishment of the University of Newcastle's Centre of Excellence for Renewable Energy Technologies based at Eastgate, and the College's support for the high-value manufacturing sector. The College is now delivering over 1,000 apprenticeships and has developed innovative partnerships with global manufacturing and engineering businesses, including BAe and Ford. The local education offer also benefited from the drive to attract the best teachers to the District, the ability to develop a local curriculum, the establishment of specialist schools, and the College's broadening offer in terms of foundation degrees.

This has further contributed to the District's popularity as a base for those with families, whether they work in the District or commute to work elsewhere in the city-region.

### **Vibrant Places**

Bishop Auckland has now cemented its position as the most important shopping and employment centre in the County after Durham. The increase in the District's population, and the successful evolution of the economy to one based on high-value manufacturing, knowledge-based, and creative sectors, has instigated major change in the vibrancy of the retail offer. Bishop Auckland now has a large catchment and the ability to attract shoppers away from other retail centres at Durham and Darlington.

What makes Bishop Auckland a success is the diversity of the shopping offer. The town recently came out top in a national survey to find the most distinctive market town, and a large proportion of retailers in the town are independents. This distinctiveness results in part from the growth in the independent sector, and partly through the mix of national multiples that have been attracted to the District. The area around Chester St/ Railway St is now the focus for a professional services cluster, while the revitalised Fore Bondgate has become the

towns creative quarter. The marketplace features a weekly market for locally produced food and non-food goods.

Key to the success of Bishop Auckland has been the development and delivery of a vision for the town that was produced in 2007. This was backed-up by small grants to support retailers transform and maintain their exteriors, a comprehensive marketing and business advice service, and a flexible and responsive planning system. The improvement and diversity of the housing offer in the town has also been a major driver in its success.

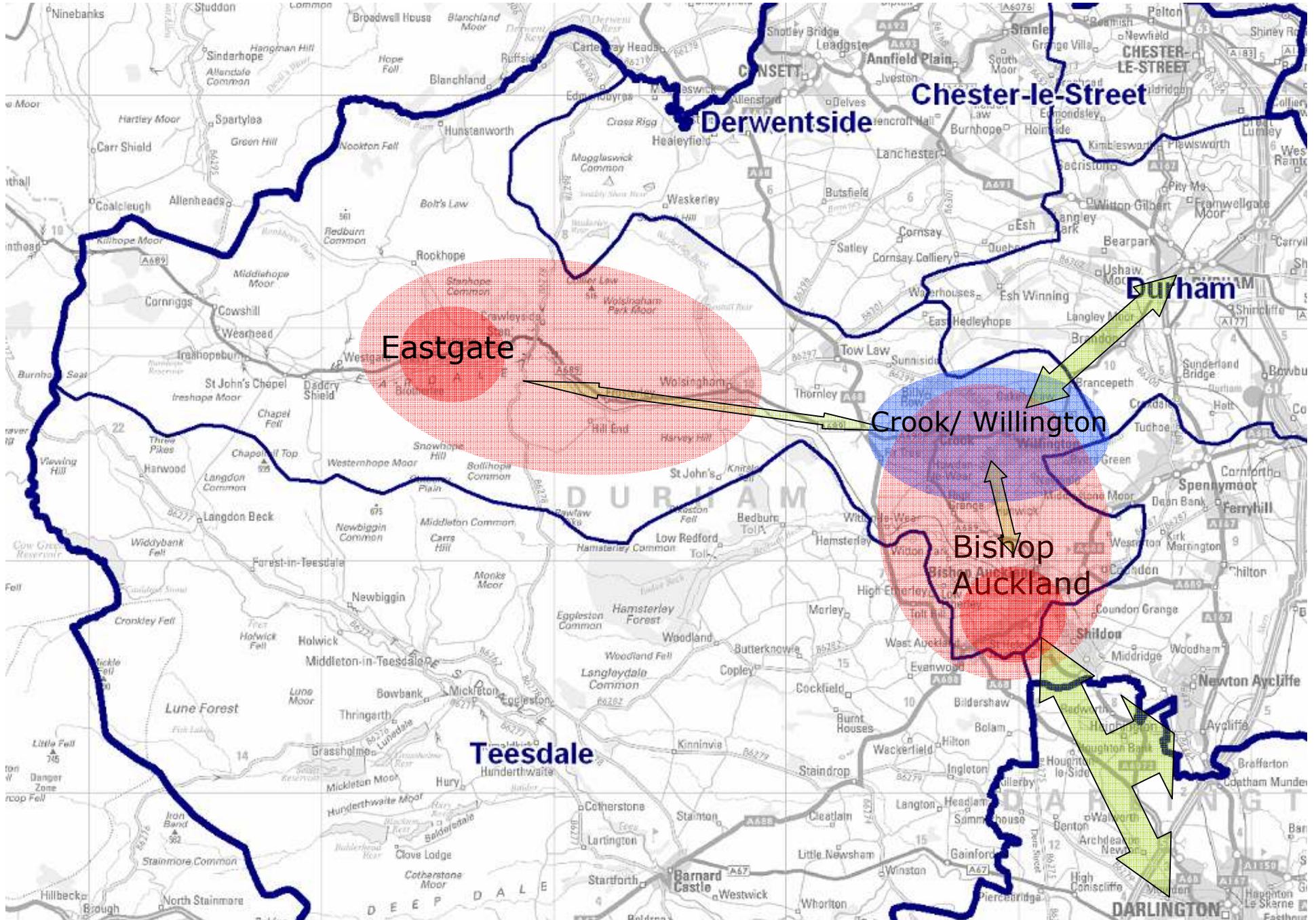
The success of Bishop Auckland has acted as a driver for the continued development of surrounding towns such as Crook, Willington and Stanhope. No longer seen as marginal, rents and yields continue to increase in these towns while the number of vacant units falls. These towns offer a range of services in their own right, and have contributed further to reducing the previously high levels of retail leakage from the District.

### **Wear Valley Economic Strategy- Key Objectives**

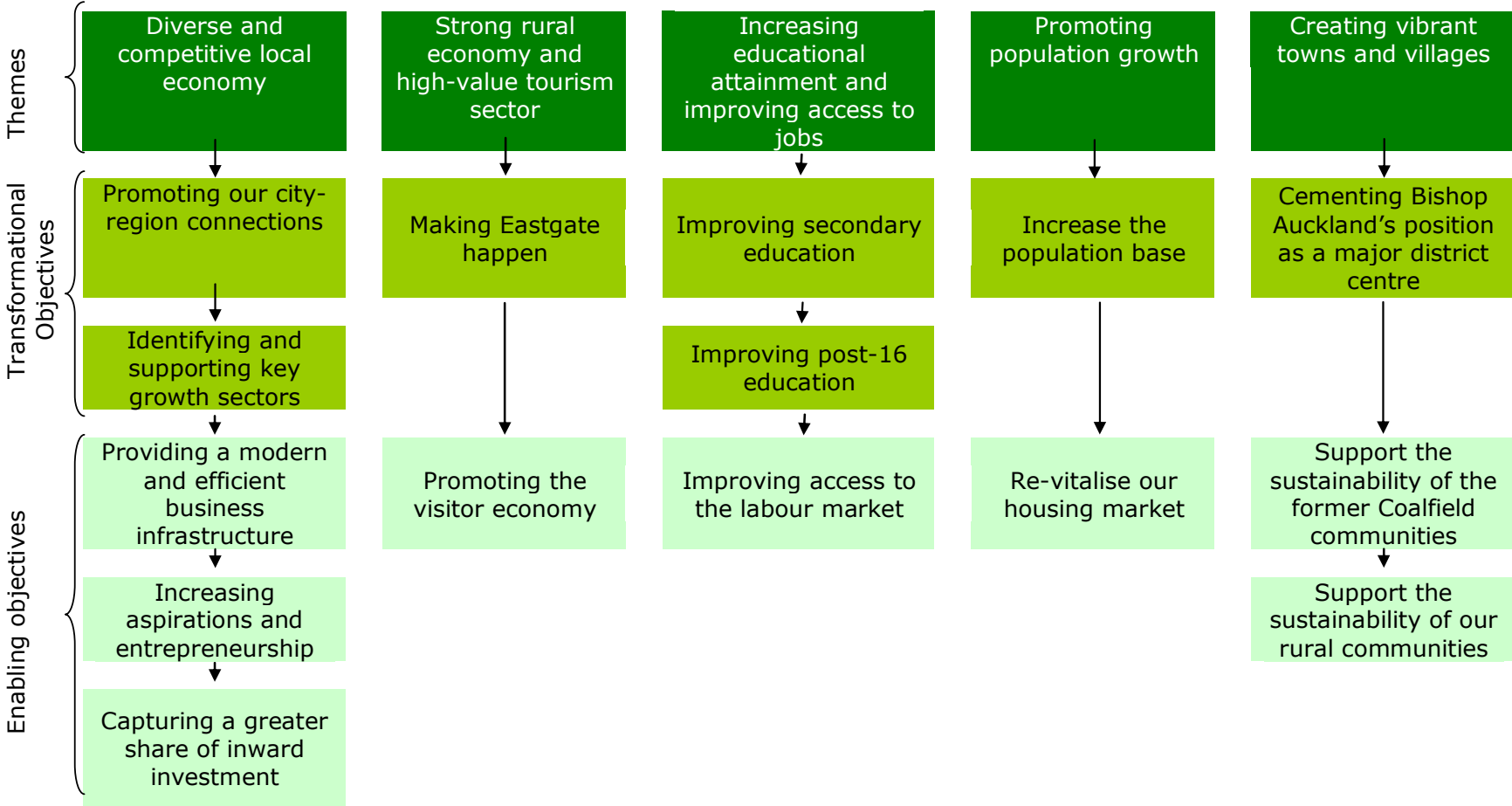
- 2.3. Wear Valley faces some important choices about its future – and only some of these can be influenced by the Council or other regeneration organisations. To realise our vision for the District, we need all partners—including the private sector, schools and the college, and our other public sector partners to recognise the opportunities that we have and to capitalise on these.
- 2.4. The Economic Strategy has been developed to follow the 5 themes of the Vision, and to outline some of the key actions that the Council and other partners need to implement to drive the Strategy forward. We will realise our Vision by:
- Building a diverse and competitive local economy (a Successful Local Economy in a Globalised World)
  - Developing a strong rural economy and a high-value tourism sector
  - Increasing educational attainment and improving access to jobs (an Economically Active District)
  - Promoting population growth (a Growing Population)
  - Creating vibrant towns and villages (Vibrant Places)
- 2.5. The Economic Strategy is focussed on a strong set of spatial priorities. In the east of the District, Bishop Auckland will form the key anchor, or driver of economic growth, particularly through the Bishop Auckland-Darlington growth corridor which capitalises on Bishop Auckland’s connectivity to the Tees Valley city-region. In the rural west of the District, the flagship Eastgate development will act as the key transformational growth driver for Weardale and the rural economy. Crook and Willington (which have strong labour market ties to Durham) will not have as much of a transformational role on the wider District, but are nonetheless expected to increase these towns’ vibrancy and sustainability. The spatial growth plan is shown in the diagram overleaf.



**WEAR VALLEY ECONOMIC STRATEGY**



- 2.6. Cutting across the whole Strategy is the over-arching objective to be more aspirational in everything we do. By articulating an ambitious, can-do attitude, we will galvanise greater levels of support from all sectors of the community, and foster a sense of common understanding among partners.
- 2.7. The overview of the structure of the Strategy is shown in Figure 2.1 below. This shows how the key themes identified above will be achieved through our pursuit of a series of transformational and enabling objectives.
- Transformational objectives are those activities which will make a real and significant difference, or step-change, in the economic development of the District. The transformational objectives are thus the real priorities we must focus on.
  - Enabling objectives are those activities which must be pursued to ensure that the impacts of the transformational objectives are fully realised.



## Progress

- 2.8. We are already making good progress towards the Vision. We have made significant improvements to our employment sites and premises. This is complemented by a range of business support activities for existing, start-up and inward investing firms, including work to develop local supply-chains and collaboration. Our successful LEGI bid (with our neighbouring West Durham authorities) will encourage entrepreneurship in more deprived areas of the District, complementing existing Education Business Partnership activity and helping to realise the recently produced County Durham Enterprise Strategy.
- 2.9. We are improving access to the labour market and improving skills on a number of fronts. The Action Team for Jobs had notable success, particularly in terms of the work to bring employment advice into GP Surgeries, which has subsequently been rolled-out nationally. Through Pathways to Work we are building on outreach activity to link isolated communities to opportunity, and 80% of our Neighbourhood Renewal Funds have been ear-marked to tackle worklessness. The re-building of Bishop Auckland College provides further opportunities to improve participation and achievement rates across a range of training.
- 2.10. Despite these successes and the activity currently underway, large challenges remain if we are to develop as a modern, successful economy operating in a global environment with low rates of unemployment and deprivation.
- 2.11. There are a number of opportunities we can build on in coming years:
- The potential for a mixed-use development at Eastgate, based on cutting-edge geothermal and other geothermal technology which will make it unique within the UK, will act as a catalyst for the revitalisation of our rural economy by creating a unique visitor attraction, and providing modern businesses premises and attractive homes;
  - The re-development of Bishop Auckland College will inspire and lift the community, stimulating greater involvement in all aspects of lifelong learning;
  - The Building Schools for the Future Programme will provide the scope to reconsider our Secondary Education provision, and re-inspire local communities;
  - The successful LEGI bid provides a fantastic opportunity to boost rates of entrepreneurship in our deprived areas;
  - There is scope to make much more of our beautiful natural heritage and our existing tourism attractions. Investments in the visitor economy can make a significant contribution to the diversification of the more rural parts of the District, as will our improved marketing strategy and better collaboration between tourism businesses;
  - Our investments in business sites and premises have been successful, and there is scope to build on this, coupled with

- appropriate marketing and advice programmes, to attract more start-ups in the District;
- There is significant scope to improve the vibrancy and sense of place of our towns, particularly Bishop Auckland, through various strategic interventions. Bishop Auckland can act as a significant economic driver not just for the District, but the County as a whole;
  - Housing growth offers the potential to stimulate further development in the District;
  - There is potential to build on our links to other neighbouring centres, particularly Durham and Darlington, which act as engines of growth at a regional level.

### Key Measures of Success

2.12. We will measure our success between now and 2021 according to the following high-level indicators:

- **Population:** currently 62,000, the target is for this to increase to 67,000 (8% growth)
- **Jobs:** Increase the number of jobs in our economy from 20,000 to 23,000.
- **Employment rate:** Increase the employment rate from 72% to 80%, in line with the government's national target.
- **Employment in growth sectors:** Increase the numbers employed in growth sectors (finance, IT and other business activities), closing the gap between Wear Valley and the North East region (employment in these sectors is 6.9% in Wear Valley, and 15.6% in the north east).
- **Educational attainment:** our target is for the District to achieve GCSE results as good as the average for the North East (currently, 47.5% of our pupils achieve 5 or more GCSEs at A-C, against 53.5% in the north east).
- **Visitor economy:** To increase by at least 20% the number of visitor days spent in the District per year (currently 2.2m); and to increase visitor expenditure by at least 30% in real terms (currently £40m).



### 3. ECONOMY AND BUSINESS: A SUCCESSFUL ECONOMY IN A GLOBALISED WORLD

- 3.1. Our economy operates from a narrow base. Our aim is to diversify so that our economy is able to provide a greater range of jobs in key growth sectors. This requires long-term action to support key growth sectors, improve the range and quality of business infrastructure, promote entrepreneurship and rates of business start-up, and capture higher rates of inward investment, particularly from knowledge-based SMEs from elsewhere in the north east. We also need to ensure that our economy is more fully integrated with the city-regions- the key drivers of regional economic growth. This section outlines how we will achieve these goals.

#### Transformational Objective A1: Identifying and Supporting Key Growth Sectors

##### Our economy has been slow to diversify...

- 3.2. Our economy is small (around 20,000 jobs in total) and has recently suffered from declining employment in its traditional manufacturing base (manufacturing employment declined from 4,090 in 1999 to 2,949 in 2004). Employment in agriculture has also declined, (although this decline has been relatively limited since 2001).
- 3.3. The table below shows changes in the numbers employed in the major SIC categories since 1998.

Sector	1998	2000	2002	2004
Agriculture and fishing	348	329	334	326
Energy and water	154	73	82	102
Manufacturing	4,873	3,935	3,869	2,949
Construction	681	1,658	1,411	1,423
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	4,658	4,533	4,934	4,959
Transport and communications	894	803	728	755
Banking, finance and insurance, etc	1,346	1,538	1,214	1,744
Public administration, education & health	6,417	5,976	6,180	6,523
Other services	1,226	953	1,292	1,127
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,598</b>	<b>19,798</b>	<b>20,043</b>	<b>19,909</b>

- 3.4. Currently, employment in our economy is dominated by the following sectors:
- health and social work (3,275 employed representing 16% of Wear Valley jobs),
  - retailing (2,909, 15%),
  - education (2,271, 11%) and
  - construction (1,423, 7%).
- 3.5. Employment in these sectors has been fairly static over recent years. In total, public sector employment accounts for some 33% of Wear Valley jobs. Other features of our economy include:

- Only 10% of our businesses operate in knowledge-based sectors, compared to 13% in Teesdale, 12% in Sedgefield, and 15% across the North East region. The rate of increase in employment in the knowledge sector has been lower in Wear Valley than in many other parts of County Durham<sup>3</sup>.
  - Activity related to financial services (180 employed in the District, having declined by 28% since 2001) and research and development (only 5 people employed) is particularly under-represented.
  - Employment in *hotels and catering*, and employment in *cultural, sporting and recreational activities*, remains low (1149 and 464 employed in Wear Valley respectively) relative to the north-east average. Moreover, employment in these sectors has remained static or declined over recent years while increasing across the region.
- 3.6. The need to diversify our economic base is arguably the most urgent priority we face. We need to be able to attract more knowledge-based and higher-value businesses, including high-value manufacturing. These are able to compete in an increasingly globalised economy, and will provide a greater range of employment opportunities. We also need to retain our competitive manufacturing and engineering businesses.
- 3.7. Future employment growth in the District is likely to be focused on: continued growth in health, education and public sector employment; retailing, hospitality and leisure; and other knowledge economy areas around finance and banking.
- 3.8. We will support the diversification of our economy through the following actions:

**Action: Retaining and supporting our existing manufacturing base.**

Manufacturing is a key knowledge-economy asset. However, in the face of globalisation, our manufacturing businesses will struggle unless they can build new markets or diversify into high value-added activity. Whilst manufacturing employment is likely to continue to decline in the near term, the contribution that the sector makes to our economy can be promoted. We will increase the support available to manufacturers by:

- Supporting the roll-out of the Derwentside Engineering Forum, a private-sector led cluster organisation to manufacturing and engineering businesses in Wear Valley.
- Identifying our fastest growing and most successful manufacturing businesses and providing “whole business” diagnostic support for those businesses, using funding from our successful LEGI bid. In return, we will encourage those businesses to act as mentors to other manufacturing companies.

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<sup>3</sup> Knowledge-economy sectors are defined by the OECD as those where greater than 25% of the workforce has Level 4 qualifications.

- We will ensure that there is adequate provision of sites and premises for those wishing to start or expand a manufacturing business in the District- this issue is discussed under Objective A3.

### **Action: Using Netpark as a catalyst for growth**

We will establish links between Netpark, the University of Durham's high-tech business park located in neighbouring Sedgefield, and our existing incubator facilities through a joint marketing and branding strategy. We will also create unified business support services across incubators at Netpark and in the District. This will enable us to capitalise on spin-out opportunities from Netpark and the university. We will take this forward through discussions with the University of Durham and Netpark.

### **Eastgate and the New Energy Economy**

- 3.9. Renewable energy technologies form the centrepiece of the Eastgate project (see box 4.1). The Eastgate development will utilise all forms of renewable energy (wind, solar, geothermal, biomass)- in this way, it will act as a demonstration project to highlight to the public and private sector what can be achieved through renewable energy generation.
- 3.10. Because of this unique, showcase role that Eastgate will have, it will attract two types of business to the District: businesses who do not necessarily operate in the environmental sector but are keen to be recognised for their "green" credentials, and businesses operating in the environmental sector and related supply-chains to install and manage the renewable energy technologies. Eastgate will therefore act as a catalyst for the instigation of a mini environmental business cluster<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.11. Work is already underway to build on the potential of Eastgate. The LSC is developing a Skills Action Plan for Eastgate, and working very closely with Wolsingham School to develop GCSEs in Environmental Sciences and Renewable Energy. Enterprise Agency advisors are receiving training so that they can advise businesses on implementing energy efficiency improvements.
- 3.12. However, there is more we can do to build on the potential of Eastgate and put the District on the map as a location for environmental technologies and services. The pre-budget report (PBR) in November 2006 announced that within 10 years, all new houses will have to be carbon neutral (i.e. net carbon emissions from energy use to be zero through a combination of energy efficiency measures and micro-generation of power from renewable sources). The PBR also set targets for new and refurbished schools to reduce carbon emissions by 60% over the next 10 years, and the government has also announced that similar zero-carbon targets for new build commercial property will be developed shortly.

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<sup>4</sup> A cluster of environmental technology based firms has started up within the eco-efficient E-centre that forms part of the Sherwood Energy Village in Nottinghamshire.



3.13. By taking a lead on these issues, and by specifically setting-out our stall as a District that is pursuing a goal of achieving carbon neutral neighbourhoods, Wear Valley can build further on the reputation of Eastgate to capitalise on the environmental technology growth sector. Achieving carbon neutral neighbourhoods can involve a variety of aspects, including:

- Design and construction of low carbon buildings through: using energy efficient and recycled materials; use of decentralised renewable energy; minimising use of fossil fuels through combined heat and power
- Low carbon planning through: ensuring good access to public transport; ensuring high-density mixed-use development; promoting green public realm and “edible” landscapes;
- Low carbon transport including: segregated pedestrian and cycle networks; zero carbon local buses and other public vehicles; encouraging local car clubs.

#### **Action: Capitalising on the Eastgate opportunity**

We will capitalise on the Eastgate opportunity by:

- Setting-out a clear stance that we intend to lead the way in terms of achieving carbon neutrality in the north east, and communicating this to partners and the private sector.
- Encouraging and in some cases ensuring, that new property development- both residential and industrial- is designed and built to high standards of energy efficiency. New homes should be assessed according to DCLG’s Code for Sustainable Homes, achieving good ratings for energy and water use; office and industrial developments should meet BREEAM Excellent standards. The use of decentralised renewable energy sources will be expressly encouraged, in line with English Partnerships Carbon Challenge programme. All major new developments will be subject to sustainability appraisal to ensure that they make appropriate provision for energy efficiency, cycle and pedestrian access, etc.
- We will ensure that, when the opportunity arises, new Council buildings (or Council delivered buildings, such as new business workspace or incubation units) are designed and built to represent best-practice in energy efficiency. We will also ensure that existing buildings in public sector use are energy efficient.
- We will work with English Partnerships to identify a site for a Carbon Challenge community development within the District.
- We will work with and support the LSC as they develop a Skills Action Plan for Eastgate
- We will ensure that the Council’s next wave of vehicle procurement prioritises a fleet of low-emission vehicles.

- Ensuring that new and existing developments and communities are better connected to pedestrian and cycle networks, and by actively encouraging walking, cycling and public transport as alternatives to car travel. We will also explore the potential for a car club scheme, possibly utilising low-carbon vehicles.
- Eastgate will be the catalyst for more developments to be powered by wind and other renewables. There are a large number of companies in the region who have the capability to diversify into component manufacture in support of wind turbine manufacture, and other renewable energy technologies. Many of these businesses are located in Teesside<sup>5</sup> or are being actively encouraged to locate there. We will identify, with One North East and Renew Tees Valley, those regionally based businesses and make them aware of the Eastgate opportunity and other opportunities arising from our stance on green planning and energy efficiency.
- In terms of biomass, we will establish contracts with farmer groups and the Forestry Commission to supply biomass to Eastgate's biomass plants.

#### **Action: Improving Business Support**

Business Link services have been restructured to operate regionally, and we will use this as an opportunity to ensure that Business Link enhances delivery of rural business support services. We will continue to provide an efficient package of business advice, support and guidance through the County Durham Business Support Network. We will ensure that this support is flexible, needs focussed, and holistic. This means that businesses will need only go to one place to access advice related to all their needs, from sites and premises requirements to supply chains, and from exporting to marketing. We need to ensure that the business support package is relevant and accessible to all sections of the community- work continues through LEGI to shape this for the "harder to reach" communities. Many of our retail businesses need support to diversify into web-based activity, and we need to provide specific support in this respect.

#### **Action: Strengthen collaboration and networking**

The capacity of our existing businesses can be improved by encouraging networking and collaboration. We are already taking forward:

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<sup>5</sup> For example, at a recent Regional Workshop of Windsupply- a supply chain and innovation support organisation funded by the DTI and the northern and Midland RDAs- in Middlesbrough, 70 regionally based manufacturing businesses (including Wear Valley based Mechetronics) attended to find out about business opportunities in wind turbine and wind farm technology.

- The Supply-Chain Project, funded through NRF until 2008, aims to strengthen local supply-chains so as to retain higher levels of business expenditure within the District.
- In addition, the Enterprise Agency is developing work to improve business capacity to tender for Local Authority contracts. This involves setting-up appropriate contracting systems and training local businesses in order that they can capitalise on these new procedures.
- The LEGI resources will support the rolling-out of the Derwentside Engineering Forum, discussed overleaf, and develop this approach for other sectors.

We will monitor the progress of these initiatives, and if appropriate seek to develop them further, for example through extending the contracting project to the County Council or NHS, or by establishing collaborative networks for specific sectors- the retail, construction, tourism and local foods sectors will be priorities. Where appropriate, we should ensure that our businesses are signposted to cluster organisations, institutions and networks at a regional level, in order that they can capitalise on knowledge sharing initiatives.

#### **Action: Supporting Social Enterprise**

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and social enterprises play an important and significant role in our communities and in our economy. We will continue to support voluntary and community sector activity through the work of 2d, the VCS support organisation for Wear Valley and Teesdale. The Enterprise Agency is currently undertaking work to map the competencies and capacity of the social enterprise sector across the District. We will act on the findings of this work to ensure we provide high quality support to social enterprises in the future. We will also explore the potential for developing a social enterprise network and for provided dedicated social enterprise support through the LEGI Programme.

- 3.14. Actions for supporting the development of the tourism sector specifically are described in the following section on rural economy.

#### **Enabling Objective A2: Promoting our City-Region Connections**

##### **We have strong ties to Durham City and the Tees Valley City Region...**

- 3.15. Wear Valley is located between the north east's two city-regions- Tees Valley to the south and Tyne and Wear to the north. The District also has strong links with Durham City.
- 3.16. In terms of commuting, figures from the 2001 census reveal that:
- In total, just under 11,000 Wear Valley residents work outside the District, (representing 43% of the District's total resident working population- TRWP).

- There are also strong links with Sedgefield District, with around 3,100 commuting from Wear Valley (13% of the District's TRWP)<sup>6</sup>.
  - Around 2,400 Wear Valley residents work in Durham City (representing around 10% of Wear Valley's TRWP);
  - Around 1,400 Wear Valley residents work in Darlington (6% of the TRWP);
- 3.17. There are also significant, but less substantial, flows in the other direction. 665 Durham residents work in Wear Valley, and around 2,500 Sedgefield residents work in the District (although there are no significant in-flows from Darlington). In total, just over 6,000 Wear Valley workers commute into the District on a daily basis from elsewhere. There is thus a net daily outflow of 4,500 workers.
- 3.18. Durham provides extensive retail, call centre and public sector jobs, while Darlington's labour market is focussed more around manufacturing and engineering industry, at least for those commuting from Wear Valley. There are also a number of Wear Valley residents who are enrolled at Darlington College. Sedgefield District provides a significant amount of employment for Wear Valley residents, particularly in the manufacturing and engineering sectors. Netpark at Sedgefield is likely to play an increasingly important role as a location for employment for Wear Valley residents.
- 3.19. Transport links from Bishop Auckland to Darlington are good. There are 4 buses per hour, and a direct train link once every 90 minutes approximately. The current Bishop Auckland to Darlington rail line is constrained by having to cross the East Coast Mainline (ECML). However, plans to develop a Tees Valley metro service utilising the existing track will allow the Darlington-Bishop Auckland route to sever its ties to the ECML. This will allow a more regular, "clock-facing" service to be delivered.

**Action: Promoting the Darlington- Bishop Auckland Growth Corridor**

City-regions are viewed as the major drivers of economic growth, both from the point of view of national strategy such as the Northern Way, and through the North East's Regional Economic Strategy. We need to ensure that we capitalise on our links to the Tees Valley city-region and the growth opportunities that it offers- and specifically, using the corridor to improve access to employment.

We will promote the concept of a Darlington- Bishop Auckland Growth Corridor to capitalise on our links to the Tees Valley City Region and

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<sup>6</sup> Research by the University of Durham for NERIP (January 2005) indicates that male workers in Sedgefield's manual industries account for a large part of this figure. In total, 31% of Wear Valley's out-commuting workers are travelling to undertake industrial jobs.

Netpark/ Newton Aycliffe. The Growth Corridor would follow the route of the A68/ A6072, anchored at one end by Faverdale East Business Park in Darlington and at the other by South Church Enterprise Park and the Bracks Farm office development site in Bishop Auckland. The corridor would also include Netpark in Sedgefield.

We will establish a Growth Corridor Steering Group. As a minimum this would consist of Wear Valley, Sedgefield and Darlington Councils, the County Council, and relevant private sector representation (for example, the Tees Valley Engineering Forum). The Steering Group will have responsibility for:

- Promoting the need for highways improvements on the A68/ A6072;
- Promoting the need for improved public transport links between the key settlements and business sites in the Growth Corridor;
- Identifying niche business cluster opportunities to build on the inherent strengths of the Corridor, (e.g. engineering);
- Joint marketing and promotion of the corridor as a location for business;
- Creating a joint strategy for employment sites and premises to improve overall supply and marketing;
- Establishing a directory of businesses within the Corridor in order to instigate collaboration;
- Encouraging collaboration between Darlington and Bishop Auckland Colleges and employers. This collaboration needs to work both ways—the Colleges reflecting the training and skills needs of employers, and employers being responsive to the need for industry placements for students.

Growth corridors have been successful elsewhere. For example, the Birmingham-Worcestershire Central Technology Belt (CTB) was established in response to the Rover Task Force Report to build on the area's inherent technology expertise. The CTB is now run as a non-profit making company represented by a board of regional partners. It aims to provide the right conditions for business growth in terms of infrastructure, proximity to knowledge bases, support services and access to funding.

### **Enabling Objective A3: Providing a Modern and Efficient Business Infrastructure**

**Our employment sites and premises are being taken-up and there are some pressing shortages...**

- 3.20. Reliable data on past rates of employment land uptake is not available, although in 2005, 5ha of land was taken-up. The Regional Spatial Strategy states that we should allocate up to 105ha of employment land for the period 2004-2021, implying take-up of around 6-7ha per annum. Within in the District currently, we have some 223ha allocated for business use, of which 129ha is developed. Of the allocated but un-developed land, only around 22ha is available for development immediately, 40ha is available in the medium term once various issues with access, ownership and physical constraints are addressed, but 32ha is faced with substantial constraints and there are significant questions as to the viability of these

sites coming forward, even in the long-term. The majority of recent demand has been experienced in the Bishop Auckland sub-area.

### **We are building our sites and premises portfolio...**

3.21. We have a number of high-quality locations for business within the District, and a number of good opportunities:

- South Church Enterprise Park, a 29 ha Prestige site near Bishop Auckland is home to several of our key businesses, including Mechetronics and Donkin Roofing. South Church has witnessed rapid take-up over recent years, and the remaining plots (totalling no more than 7ha) are likely to be occupied within the next 4-5 years. A key challenge is to identify a replacement site for South Church in the Bishop Auckland area- particularly in terms of industrial premises (Brack's Farm will meet the need for further office development). There are allocated employment sites at Coundon, Fylands and Fieldon Bridge (both south of Bishop Auckland), West Auckland and St Helens, but substantial planning and land ownership issues are present on several of these sites.
- At Innovation House (South Church), opened in 2003, we have made provision for 16 incubator units totalling over 10,000 sq ft. This has been extremely successful, achieving 100% occupation within 12 months. Consequently, we are completing an extension of Innovation House, providing a further 26 units totalling 15,000 sq ft. We anticipate this will be taken-up over the next 2 years. Enterprise House, opened in 2000, provides a range of (slightly larger) office accommodation, suitable for businesses moving on from Innovation House.
- Brack's Farm is a 9.4ha prestige employment site in Bishop Auckland (1km from the town centre), allocated for B1 only (although an area at the front of the site is allocated for a hotel development) and will be our major office location. The site is suitable for office development to meet local demand, start-up businesses, and to address the need for move-on accommodation from Innovation House and Enterprise House. The site has been acquired by Easter, who have a 10-year development deal with the church who are site owners. A joint venture between Easter and Priority Sites will commence in 2007 and see construction of 10 office units of between 1,500- 2800 sq ft. These units are expected to be complete by the end of 2007. Easter also have planning permission to build speculative units of 6,000 sq ft, up to a total development of 30,000 sq ft. Eventually, the site is thought suitable for office developments of 15-20,000 sq ft, dependent on building up a profile for the site. Bracks Farm will significantly improve the district's ability to attract footloose investment that would otherwise go to other parts of the County.
- We have commenced development of 14 medium-sized offices (750-2,500 sq ft) at the prestige site at Low Willington, aimed

specifically at attracting businesses either serving or relocating from Durham City, demonstrating how we are linking to the wider sub-regional economy.

- In the rural area we have made provision for small start-up businesses within the Durham Dales Centre at Stanhope. The Eastgate development (see box 4.1) will provide for a wide range of quality office and workspace units.

### **But some shortages remain...**

3.22. Nonetheless, there remain a number of challenges. A recent report into the District's current portfolio of employment sites and premises describes these in detail. They include:

- A shortage of readily available sites for office and industrial use, particularly in the Bishop Auckland sub-area, with evidence of only a few years supply at the current time unless proactive intervention is taken on those sites that face planning, access or physical constraints;
- Evidence of market failure, with only limited provision of premises for lease rather than sale;
- Shortages of managed workspace in both the office and industrial markets, particularly in terms of a shortage of move-on accommodation.

### **Action: Identifying a new portfolio of sites and premises**

We have commissioned an employment land review to compare the current supply of employment sites and premises against likely future demand. This report identifies a number of key recommendations which we will now implement as part of the Local Development Framework:

- The Council should adopt the principle of a pipeline approach to the provision of employment land and premises. This requires the Council to use its planning powers and land ownership to maintain a balance between supply and demand, sufficient to stimulate developer interest without swamping the market.
- In order to meet the shortfall of premises, the District and County Councils should consider the scope for pooling some of their land holdings at South Church and Low Willington, and enter into a joint venture with a developer to build follow-on workspace units (of 1000-5000 sq ft).
- The Council should explore the scope for expanding the capacity at South Church, explore the nature of constraints on existing sites in the Bishop Auckland sub-area and bring these forward
- The Council should seek to allocate a new prestige employment site for B1/B2 use in the Bishop Auckland area.

Further specific recommendations on retention or non-retention of particular sites are included in the employment land report.

### **Better Broadband Connectivity...**

- 3.23. We have recently commissioned government agency ADIT to investigate the provision of broadband throughout the District. This work found that, although most business and household customers are well-served, there are clusters of business and household customers on the edge (or just outside) of the delivery boundary of particular exchanges. The ADIT report identifies the Frosterley and Bishop Auckland exchanges as being the highest priorities for attention.

#### **Action: Mapping broadband provision and addressing gaps in provision**

With the West Durham Rural Pathfinder, we have commissioned ADIT to map broadband availability and provision across the District. We will act on the findings of this by meeting with telecommunications providers to consider how the identified gaps can be addressed. A future priority may be to explore the possibility of establishing wireless broadband in our key public buildings or towns<sup>7</sup>.

### **Our public transport infrastructure is good but could be improved...**

- 3.24. Maintaining good public transport links within the District, particularly in terms of connecting remoter communities with employment opportunities, is vital both in tackling worklessness and supporting our businesses to grow.
- 3.25. During weekdays, we have hourly services from Stanhope to Bishop Auckland, half-hourly services from Crook and Willington to Bishop Auckland, and half-hourly services from Crook and Willington to Durham.
- 3.26. Outside the District, links are fairly regular but not fast. There is an hourly Bishop Auckland- Darlington bus service. A train service runs roughly every 90 minutes and takes 25 minutes. There are 4 buses per hour between Bishop Auckland and Durham, and 2 per hour between Crook and Durham. Improving the links to Darlington must be a priority.
- 3.27. The issue of multi-operators and consequent difficulties in ticketing has reduced considerably since April 2006 when Arriva took over services

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<sup>7</sup> With a wireless network, anyone with a wi-fi enabled device such as a laptop computer, mobile phone or other handheld piece of equipment is able to connect to the internet if they are close enough to an access point. The wireless area covered can be as small as a coffee shop or home, or, with enough overlapping access points, could cover a much wider area including an entire city. Some small US cities have begun establishing wireless networks across their entire municipalities, and some London Boroughs are investigating a similar approach. Wi-fi is the more common term for what is referred to in the industry as a wireless local area network.



operated by Go North East (there are now just two services within the Dale that are not operated by Arriva- Weardale to Bishop Auckland, and Oakenshaw to Bishop Auckland). This does mean that Arriva is now in a monopoly position, and we must remain of the potential issues that this may raise.

3.28. However, we need to remain fully aware of the evolving needs of different communities as they grow, and any weaknesses in the current network. Some current weaknesses are:

- The link to Netpark, while hourly from Bishop Auckland, takes 55 minutes. Anyone wishing to work in Netpark who lived elsewhere in the District would need to make at least one change.
- Links to Darlington from Bishop Auckland are not regular or fast enough to allow us to capitalise on city-regional growth.
- Links to some of the smaller former coalfield communities such as Billy Row, Sunnyside and Tow Law are infrequent, leading to isolation related deprivation among some communities.
- In the rural area west of Stanhope, services necessarily become less frequent, reflecting demand. The extent to which this impacts on rural deprivation will need to be continually monitored.
- Some changes to the current network will take place following the review in November 2006. The frequency of services from Bishop Auckland to Tow Law will reduce from half-hourly to hourly.

3.29. The critical challenge in the future will be to maintain the public transport network as jobs become increasingly dispersed, both spatially and in terms of working hours. This will stretch the ability of our public transport network to maintain links between increasingly dispersed residential and employment locations. The moves within Tees Valley to promote a Tees Valley Passenger Transport Agency will provide an opportunity to further strengthen our connections (both road and rail) to Darlington. The frequency and speed of road and rail connections within the Darlington-Newton Aycliffe- Bishop Auckland corridor are a priority for action.

3.30. Our internal road networks are generally good. Work has just started on the new West Auckland bypass. There are no other major road schemes currently in the pipeline.

#### **Action: Maintaining the Quality of our Public Transport Links**

We will continue to monitor the extent to which our public transport links provide adequate connectivity between our settlements, particularly in terms of linking residential areas to employment centres. Where gaps in provision emerge, we will work with transport providers to find solutions. We will also need to continue our support for novel and innovative ways to support people to access work and training.

### **Enabling Objective A4: Increasing Aspirations and Entrepreneurship**

#### **Aspirations are low, and rates of entrepreneurship are below average...**

- 3.31. The District suffers from low aspirations and low rates of entrepreneurship. Research undertaken as part of the successful LEGI bid suggests that only 17% of County Durham SMEs have ambitions to grow their business.
- 3.32. In 2004, there were 28 business start-ups per 10,000 adult population in the District. Although this compares favourably with many of our County Durham neighbours, it is significantly below the England average of 38 start-ups per 10,000 adult population.
- 3.33. Our business stock reached 1,500 in 2004, having grown by 7% since 2000. The trend over the past 4 years is for the District to witness about 140 VAT registrations per year, but also 115 de-registrations, leading to an average net growth in the District's business stock of just 25 businesses. This growth rate is similar to that observed across County Durham, although in Teesdale, the business stock has declined. This serves to remind that continued growth in the business stock is not a given, and further work to strengthen markets is required.

#### **Homeworking and self-employment provide growth opportunities...**

- 3.34. Rates of self-employment in the District are equivalent to national averages. However, this is due to the fact that the agriculture sector accounts for a significant proportion of our self-employed. The reality is that self-employment rates are lower in Wear Valley than we would expect. This is partly due to low levels of entrepreneurship. It is also due in part to a lack of awareness of the opportunities and demands of setting up as self employed.
- 3.35. Recent research for One North East indicates that around 2,400 people, representing almost 10% of the workforce, work from home in Wear Valley (compared to 17% in Teesdale)<sup>8</sup>. The report indicates that levels of homeworking are likely to increase in the future. Moreover, the report recommends that Wear Valley/ Teesdale should be one of two pilot locations for promoting rural homeworking by supporting local networks and hubs. Stanhope is one potential location for a hub, and the hubs could include: meeting rooms for members; broadband access; social contact areas; drop-off and pick-up points for deliveries; a venue for training providers to run outreach courses; crèche facilities; access to admin support on a pay as you go basis.
- 3.36. Homeworking can provide significant local benefits, particularly in more remote rural areas. These include: providing employment opportunities for

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<sup>8</sup> Home-based working in the rural North East. One North East, March 2006.

less mobile people in remote areas (for example, those with child-minding or caring responsibilities, those without access to transport such as young people), reduced congestion, increased viability of local services, and opportunities for diversification of agricultural businesses. Availability of broadband is critical for successful homeworking.

**In-migrants have an important role to play in driving our rural economy...**

- 3.37. Recent research for One North East indicates that between a half and a third of business in rural areas are set-up by in-migrants<sup>9</sup>. These in-migrants are largely attracted to rural areas because of quality of life. The majority of in-migrants to rural north east areas have relocated from elsewhere in the region. Nonetheless, the north east under-performs the rest of the country in terms of both rates of rural in-migration and rates of rural entrepreneurship.

**The County Durham Enterprise Strategy provides a framework for addressing these issues...**

- 3.38. The recently published County Durham Enterprise Strategy sets out a framework for promoting entrepreneurship across the County. This sets out the aims, objectives and actions required for the County to achieve the ambition of a “diverse, vibrant economy experiencing year on year net growth in new businesses, and annual VAT registrations at least equalling national averages”. The objectives of the Strategy are set-out in Box 3.1 below. We will promote enterprise in Wear Valley by taking the County Durham Enterprise Strategy forward, using LEGI resources to deliver activity.

**Box 3.1: The County Durham Enterprise Strategy**

The Enterprise Strategy identifies priority sectors as: High Growth Start-up, Tourism and Leisure, Knowledge-Based Industries, Retail, Community and Voluntary sector.

The Strategy identifies 3 core aims:

- **Core Aim 1:** Enterprise Culture: to inspire a culture of ambition and accomplishment through experimentation.
- **Core Aim 2:** Widespread Participation in Enterprise
- **Core Aim 3:** Enterprising Solutions: To provide enthusiastic and insightful help in transforming people’s good ideas and energy into productive emergent businesses.

In order to implement these Core Aims, the Strategy identifies 10 possible actions:

- **Action 1:** Advocacy across County Durham- knowledge sharing and capacity building.
- **Action 2:** Examine the suitability of an Enterprising Public Sector Model- improving entrepreneurialism within the public sector.

<sup>9</sup> Creating the right conditions for attracting entrepreneurs to the rural north east. One North East, August 2006.

- **Action 3:** Recruit local entrepreneur models, reimbursing them for their contribution.
  - **Action 4:** Identify and promote role model places and communities through an "Enterprising County Durham" competition.
  - **Action 5:** Development and Implement a coordinated marketing campaign which promotes self-employment as a viable opportunity.
  - **Action 6:** Understand and overcome barriers for harder to reach groups.
  - **Action 7:** First steps to self-employment through learning events.
  - **Action 8:** Establish a network of business start-up mentors.
  - **Action 9:** Provide access to a customised programme of support.
  - **Action 10:** Extend and encourage the use of on-going support networks.
- An Action Plan is being developed for April 2007.

### The Local Enterprise Growth Initiative...

- 3.39. The District is one of four eligible in County Durham for the government's Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) Funds following our recent successful £10m bid. This provides us with a fantastic opportunity to tackle the issues associated with low aspirations and low entrepreneurship. The LEGI programme is outlined in the Box below We are currently in the process of formalising delivery plans for each of the workstreams.

#### Box 3.2: Local Enterprise Growth Initiative

LEGI is a national initiative, aimed at improving entrepreneurship in deprived communities. As a result of our successful bid, £10m has been allocated for expenditure on relevant activities over the next three years. Subject to how we deliver these funds, and the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review, further funding may be available for an extended period.

Our successful bid was based around 3 Themes and 9 inter-linked programmes:

#### **Theme 1: Increasing total entrepreneurial activity in deprived areas. This theme contains 3 programmes:**

- *Start-up network*- a comprehensive package of advice, grants, and loans for residents of the most deprived communities who are considering starting up a business or entering self-employment.
- *Enhancing enterprise education*; and
- *Improving access to workspace/ incubator accommodation*- including a small scale capital programme.

#### **Theme 2: Supporting sustainable growth and reducing the failure rate of locally-owned businesses in deprived areas.** This theme has 5 programmes:

- *Developing local clusters*- including rolling out the Derwentside Engineering Forum, and establishing clusters in sectors including retail, tourism and local foods;
- *The 50 Fastest*- supporting the 50 fastest growing business in deprived areas, and encouraging these businesses to act as mentors to support the LEGI Programme;

- *Enterprising Centres*- providing tailored business support in key centres (including Bishop Auckland), and supporting town centre employers to create opportunities for local residents;

- *Worklessness and Skills*- developing a brokerage programme to match employer needs to the economically inactive;

- *Improving access to opportunity*- ensuring residents can access employment opportunities

**Theme 3: Attracting appropriate inward investment and franchising into deprived areas**- focussing on particularly on supporting residents to capitalise on franchising opportunities.

- 3.40. We will promote entrepreneurship in the District by pursuing the following actions:

**Action: Increasing Entrepreneurship by Delivering on LEGI**

In order to increase the rate of business start-up in the District we will:

- Ensure that Wear Valley start-up businesses benefit from a comprehensive and tailored package of advice, grants, loans and aftercare support through local delivery of the regional business support programme;
- Improve access to our existing incubator and managed workspace units by offering more flexible lease terms to tenants;
- Establish a package of start-up financial support, through LEGI, to offer grants and loans of £500- £3,000 tied to business planning, marketing and other advice, including aftercare support;
- Use LEGI to extend the New Entrepreneurship Scholarship and Emerge programmes across the District.
- Encourage our fastest growing companies to act as mentors to other businesses, and to the community more widely, using LEGI resources ("the fifty fastest") as a spring-board for this;

We will support opportunities for self-employment and homeworking by:

- Acting on the findings of the ADIT research to ensure that all our communities are broadband enabled;
- Establish a series of pilot "homeworking hubs" and networks in rural areas- linked to the existing incubator network- where home-based workers can come together to learn, collaborate and combine their spending power.
- In order to foster homeworking networks, we will develop an online directory of homeworkers in the District. We will liaise with One North East to see how they are proposing to take forward proposals for a regional directory of home-based workers.
- Encouraging developers to make provision for live/ work units by drawing up supplementary planning documents on home-based working and live/work housing;
- Working with major employers to encourage them to allow home-working;

- Liaising with One North East to establish how they are taking forward their dialogue with call centre providers, and establish how this work could link to the rural hubs.
- Ensuring that suitable premises are available in suitable locations for homeworkers when the time comes for them to expand.
- Following from the recommendations of the recent One North East study, we will work with CDDC and the Area Tourism Partnership (ATP) to develop a targeted marketing campaign to showcase the advantages of locating in Wear Valley, and Weardale in particular;

### **Enabling Objective A5: Capturing a Greater Share of Inward Investment**

- 3.41. Rates of inward investment (businesses re-locating to Wear Valley from elsewhere) are low. In 2005 CDDC received 263 enquiries from businesses interested in “factory” type premises, of which just 34 (13%) expressed an interest in Wear Valley as a location. In the same year, CDDC received 173 enquiries from businesses interested in office type premises, of which only 7 (4%) expressed an interest in Wear Valley as a location. Moreover, the majority (three-quarters) of “inward” investment enquiries to the Wear Valley are from businesses already based in Wear Valley, and 91% of enquiries are from businesses located from within County Durham as a whole.
- 3.42. We can support an increase in inward investment by ensuring that the District is equipped with a suitable business infrastructure, and by being more pro-active in terms of marketing.

### **Action: Marketing the District**

In order to raise levels of inward investment coming into the District we will:

- Ensure that a proportion of the Council’s capital receipts from business land sales and from Local Authority Business Growth Initiative (LABGI) funds are ear-marked specifically for further District-specific marketing work.
- Continue to work with inward investment agencies at regional (One North East) and County (County Durham Development Company) level to gain a better understanding of the type of enquiries that are being received, and the type of services that inward investing businesses require. We will use this information to continually review and improve our offer.
- We will also work to ensure that these agencies understand the offer we can make to potential inward investors.
- As well as raising our profile with inward investment agencies, we will continue to market ourselves to potential inward investors. We will update the marketing material we have recently produced to give interested parties a holistic picture of Wear Valley and the business, education and leisure environment we offer. We will work with CDDC to adopt a targeted approach by marketing to businesses in our priority sectors- high value manufacturing, the new energy economy and

business services- and where we believe those businesses could be attracted to locate in the District, i.e. we will focus our marketing efforts on a number of our priority growth sectors.

## 4. RURAL ECONOMY AND TOURISM

- 4.1. Much of Wear Valley is rural in character. It is to the west of the former coalfield communities that the rural nature of the District is most pronounced- settlements are small and dispersed, access and local service provision are key issues, and land-based industries have traditionally been the driving force of the economy. It is this part of the District- known as Weardale- to which this section of the Strategy relates.
- 4.2. Weardale refers to the upper valley of the River Wear, including the settlements of Wolsingham, Stanhope, Eastgate, Westgate and St. Johns Chapel.
- 4.3. Weardale's economy was seriously affected by a series of events in the first years of the millennium. First in 2001 was Foot and Mouth disease which rocked the farming community- traditionally Weardale's key economic driver but which had already been in decline for several years. In 2002 the Eastgate cement works closed, with the loss of almost 150 jobs, and shortly afterwards came the closure of the Wolsingham Steelworks, affecting 90 jobs. In addition, the area has suffered from similar trends as those observed in many rural areas, particularly declining population, an ageing and less economically active population, and a lack of entrepreneurial culture.
- 4.4. In response to these events, the Weardale Task Force was established. This set-out a series of objectives for the area to become a "sustainable rural community". The Task Force report identifies the key challenge for Weardale as being to diversify the economy.
- 4.5. The Task Force set out a series of objectives, building on the strengths of the dale- its intrinsically beautiful and diverse landscape and attractive built environment, its local distinctiveness, its strength of community and its potential for new and traditional business development. In order to implement these objectives, the Task Force identified 7 Flagship Projects. These are:
- The redevelopment of the Eastgate cement works;
  - The establishment of the Weardale Railway "heritage line";
  - The development of a high-spec mixed-use business park at Wolsingham;
  - The development of a tourist attraction at Harperley;
  - A rural bureau for a new and co-ordinated business support system;
  - Implementation of the Stanhope Market Town Initiative; and
  - A new broadband ICT network for the Dale.
- 4.6. Progress is being made on many of these priority projects. The Weardale Railway opened in summer 2006, as did the Harperley PoW Camp tourist attraction. Work has been produced to map the availability of broadband in the District (see previous section), and the Stanhope Market Town



Initiative is underway<sup>10</sup>. Development of the business park at Wolsingham has been delayed due to planning issues, although a number of small, modern business units have been developed at the Durham Dales centre in Stanhope. Eastgate is one of the most exciting development projects in the District, and masterplanning is underway (see box 4.1).

- 4.7. It is significant that the key feature of the Task Force report is the emphasis on economic diversification. This overlaps with one of the key Strategic Objectives of the preceding section, to diversify the economy of Wear Valley as a whole. A number of the objectives and actions in this respect- promoting higher-value activity through provision of appropriate sites and premises, providing targeted business support, and adopting an active marketing strategy for example- are as applicable to the rural area as they are to the District, albeit on a different scale. However, one opportunity that is particularly strong in the rural area is tourism.

### **Transformational Objective B1: Making Eastgate Happen**

#### **Eastgate is the key opportunity for our rural area...**

- 4.8. Eastgate (see box 4.1) is an exceptional opportunity to act as a catalyst to diversify Weardale's economy. It has the potential to contribute to a step-change in the District's fortunes at a number of levels. It will provide modern, efficient and well-serviced business accommodation to attract entrepreneurs into the rural part of the District. It will significantly add to the District's visitor offer, and it will provide a more diversified housing offer in Wear Dale.

#### **Box 4.1: Eastgate**

Eastgate is a small village in rural Weardale, in the west of the District. For many years Eastgate was dominated by the Lafarge Cement Works. When the cement works closed in 2001, some 140 jobs were lost, significant in such a rural community.

The idea that the site of the cement works could provide an opportunity to develop a project of transformational significance for Weardale was first mooted in 2002 by the Weardale Task Force. Strong support emerged among local residents to create a renewable energy model village on the site, using energy generated on-site, that would provide homes and local jobs at the same time as creating a tourist attraction of regional or possibly greater significance.

These preliminary ideas for a renewable energy village were boosted significantly by trials which revealed that hot water, reaching temperatures of 46°C, could be found within rock structures 1000m below the surface. The presence of these hot springs creates the opportunity for a spa and other tourism attractions. Perhaps more significantly, it also raises the possibility that, by drilling deeper below the surface, the spring water will attain such a temperature that geothermal heat generation is possible.

<sup>10</sup> The Interim Evaluation of the Stanhope MTI notes that the programme was having a number of positive impacts, including the Mine Hot Project to improve the visitor infrastructure in Weardale.

A masterplan for the Eastgate site is now being finalised, in close collaboration with the community. It is currently envisaged that Eastgate will involve:

- At the core, a "model village" utilising only renewable energy generated on-site (including a combination of geothermal, biomass, wind, hydroelectric and solar energy). The village will contain:

- Homes for 100 families, and premises for SMEs;

- A focal point for the hot springs;

- A "boutique" spa hotel;

- A renewable energy visitor centre;

- A station, with regular train services operating to Bishop Auckland via Stanhope, Wolsingham and Frosterley.

- On the slopes above the village will be a funicular railway taking visitors to the hilltops. A dry toboggan run down will add further to the tourism offer;

- On the hill-tops, a viewing platform will provide views not only of the village, but of the quarries. Some of these quarries will still be active, but others will be transformed to nature reserve, visible from a wood-burning locomotive which will undertake short excursions around the quarry tops.

The masterplan for Eastgate is currently being finalised. Planning applications will be made shortly afterwards, with a planning decision expected in 2008 if it is called-in- if it is not called in, the planning decision could happen significantly sooner. Lafarge are committed to handing over the site free of charge to some form of Special Purpose Vehicle, and a Memorandum of Understanding is being prepared in this respect.

Strong support for the proposals exists from all sectors, including the local community. Most notably, strong support exists from One North East, who have identified Eastgate as a priority project, and allocated £5m to help fund the planning and feasibility processes and some infrastructure work.

Eastgate is a key opportunity, not just for Weardale but for the whole District. We must realise its potential.

- 4.9. Further work is ongoing to refine these proposals. By pursuing the renewable energy theme, the Eastgate development has the potential to act as a catalyst for developing a renewable energy cluster in the District. Eastgate will be the first village in the UK completely powered by renewable energy will ensure that the project generates widespread interest from businesses and the public. By establishing a tourist attraction of regional significance in the Dale, Eastgate can act as the catalyst for a real transformation of Wear Valley's tourist offer and associated ancillary service industries. Furthermore, by providing a range of modern and affordable homes and high-spec sites for businesses (who will be attracted by the niche appeal of Eastgate in terms of the promotion of renewable energy), Eastgate will attract in-migrants wishing to establish high-value businesses.

- 4.10. The GREAT Institute in Easington- a partnership between Easington District Council and the University of Newcastle- is being set-up to promote and harness the economic, social and environmental benefits of geothermal energy. While the GREAT Institute’s research team will be based in Easington, a major field station will be established at Eastgate to explore the potential for electricity generation. Eastgate would thus act as a *proof of concept* research base- explorations at Eastgate would generate findings which would have widespread applicability to other parts of the country where there is potential to generate electricity from geothermal energy.
- 4.11. In order to ensure that Eastgate lives up to its “green” credentials, we must ensure that highways infrastructure can cope with the increased visitor numbers to the Dale, and crucially, that the proposed rail link from Eastgate to Bishop Auckland and beyond is delivered.

#### **Action: Accelerating Progress on Eastgate**

It is clear that Eastgate represents a “once in a lifetime” opportunity for regenerating the District. We will accelerate progress on Eastgate by:

- Producing a clear business plan which clarifies the implementation programme, capital and revenue funding requirements and finalises the operating arrangements for the Single Purpose Vehicle.
- Securing the involvement of the University of Newcastle, plus other research partners at Eastgate to develop geothermal and other micro-generation technologies and clarify how this fits with the University of Newcastle’s GREAT proposals and wider Science City strategy. We will also involve the University of Northumbria, given their expertise in the renewables sector.
- Proactively market the site to boutique/spa hotel operators; this is a key anchor tenant and we must recognise that early progress is required to sustain credibility.
- Exploring how WVDC can promote Wear Valley as a sustainable location through planning policies, procurement, and other activity.

#### **Enabling Objective B2: Promoting the Visitor Economy**

##### **Our natural and heritage assets offer real tourism potential...**

- 4.12. Eastgate has the potential to put Weardale on the map. For many visitors, Wear Valley’s chief attraction is Weardale’s rural scenery. Weardale falls within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The second largest such area in the country, it is rich in wildlife, biodiversity and rare habitats. It contains 40% of the UK’s upland hay meadows and 30% of England’s upland heathland.
- 4.13. The hillsides around Killhope are one of England’s last refuges for the red squirrel; birdwatchers in Weardale can hope to see a number of rare species, including black grouse, lapwings and skylarks. The district also offers many opportunities for walking and cycling, criss-crossed by paths and tracks and with the national Coast to Coast (C2C) cycle route passing through on its route from Whitehaven in Cumbria to Sunderland.

- 4.14. Alongside its rural beauty, Weardale also has a diverse mix of visitor attractions, including:
- Harperley POW Camp, one of the best surviving examples of a second world war prisoner of war camp;
  - Weardale Railway, an early branch of the famous Stockton & Darlington Railway, which reopened in summer 2006 to take passengers between Wolsingham and Stanhope. The railway will be managed by a board of eight directors, including representatives from the County and District Councils, the Weardale Railway Trust, and Ealing Community Transport, which has a 75% share in the new company.
  - The Killhope Lead Mining Museum, located at the top of the Dale, received 23,000 visitors in 2005.
  - Nature reserves and open spaces including Low Barns Nature Reserve.
- 4.15. The Tourist Information Centre in Stanhope (Durham Dales Centre) received 115,000 visitors in 2005.

**...But do not currently enjoy a high profile...**

- 4.16. Despite its considerable natural assets, opportunities for outdoor activities such as walking and cycling, and its abundant wildlife and biodiversity, Weardale does not enjoy a high profile as a visitor destination. Limited knowledge of its natural assets can be attributed in part to the strength of competing destinations. Weardale – and the North Pennines AONB within which much of the dale sits – lies within 50 miles of four national parks: the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales, the North Yorks Moors and Northumberland- all of which have greater brand awareness.
- 4.17. Weardale's attractions are not major tourist draws in either a national or regional context. None featured in the top-10 most visited paid for or free attractions in the North East in 2005. Wear Valley received fewer visitors in 2004 by days spent (2.2m) than any other district in the county apart from Teesdale (which received 1.7m tourist days). The majority of visitors are day-visitors, with only 9 per cent of visitors to the District staying overnight (compared to 8% overall in the County). The District also appeals to an older and more local clientele than many areas.
- 4.18. Tourists spent some £39m in Wear Valley in 2004, amounting to total revenue of £17.46 per tourist per day. This is equivalent to the County average, but significantly below the Teesdale figure of £28 per day.

**...and provision of tourist services is consequently low...**

- 4.19. At present, Weardale's ancillary tourist services operate at a similar level to its visitor attractions. Because demand is limited, they are not fully geared up to cope with greater tourist numbers or of high enough quality to encourage more demand. Weardale's food and drink offer is limited,

lacking the numbers and general quality found in more prominent tourist areas. The dale also lacks picnic sites, campsites and areas to park touring caravans, despite a number of static caravan sites. In visitor accommodation, Weardale lacks a hotel large enough to accommodate coach parties, which are unwilling to split tour groups between hotels. Within the summer months, there are 2,209 bedspaces in Wear Valley (compared to 1,302 in Derwentside, 5,327 in Teesdale and 14,384 in total in the County)<sup>11</sup>.

- 4.20. The Eastgate development (see box 4.1) offers an exciting opportunity to put Wear Valley on the tourist map. Once opened, it has the potential to be the central feature of Wear Valley's tourist offer and a nationally important 'destination' attraction. Eastgate can act as a catalyst for wider tourism development in Wear Valley, generating significant extra demand at nearby tourist attractions and in ancillary tourist services. Among existing attractions, Weardale Railway and Killhope Lead Mining Museum are best placed to gain from Eastgate, but we must ensure that all of Weardale benefits.

### **We are marketing of the Durham Dales brand...**

- 4.21. We are already making a concerted effort to raise Weardale's visitor profile through the Durham Dales marketing campaign. Running since March 2006, the campaign covers Wear Valley and the neighbouring districts of Derwentside and Teesdale. It recognises the need to promote tourism in rural Durham as a whole and to link these three areas to a better known 'brand', Durham. Initial responses to the campaign have been positive, with 47% of readers of the Durham Dales Visitor Guide reporting that they had been attracted to the guide by its brand name.
- 4.22. Currently, the campaign features Wear Valley more prominently than either Derwentside or Teesdale, although a number of key attractions in Teesdale- such as Raby Castle and the Bowes Museum- are now coming on board.

### **Action: Developing the momentum for the Durham Dales brand**

We will continue the positive momentum behind the Durham Dales marketing brand by:

- Encouraging tourism businesses to engage with the Durham Dales brand by promoting and rolling-out the activity of the Weardale Visitor network.
- Working closely with the Area Tourism Partnership as it develops, over the near to medium term, a marketing strategy for the County, to ensure that the Durham Dales brand is a cornerstone element of this.
- Working with the Area Tourism Partnership, neighbouring local authorities in Durham and across the border in Cumbria, Durham County Council and the AONB partnership to ensure that our marketing strategy is presented consistently and clearly at all levels.

<sup>11</sup> Only 649 of Wear Valley's bedspaces are serviced (i.e. hotels or B&B's, compared to 600 in Derwentside and 1,565 in Teesdale).

**Action: Developing Visitor Services**

We recognise that Wear Valley's ancillary services need to improve, both to cater for and to stimulate, increased visitor demand. Better food and drink provision, in pubs and hotels, restaurants, cafés and tea-shops will generate higher revenues from tourism and support new jobs and economic growth, as will greater numbers of bedspaces- the District needs at least one medium-sized hotel that is able to accommodate coach parties.

In order to support the development of visitor services in Weardale, we will:

- Continue to work with the Weardale Visitor Network to encourage visitor attractions and facilities to cross-promote one another and ensure all the district's businesses appreciate the economic benefits of a strong tourist sector.
- Continue our work to promote the opportunities for farm diversification.
- Consider the scope to establish a single investment package for smaller scale interventions to improve the tourism offer. This investment package could be used to fund interventions such as new picnic sites and tables, information boards and view-points at roadside pull-ins. There is also scope to make provision for small-scale improvements to walking routes, cycle paths etc.

## 5. EMPLOYABILITY, SKILLS AND LEARNING

- 5.1. This Section addresses the inter-linked issues of employability (worklessness), skills levels, educational attainment, and aspiration. Improving rates of employability will provide a lift for residents who are currently inactive. Addressing skills issues among the adult population, and the quality of our secondary and further education provision, will form key elements in our drive to address employability.

### **Transformational Objective C1: Improving Secondary Education**

#### **Secondary school attainment is below average...**

- 5.2. Educational attainment in the District is not as high as we would expect. Fewer of our pupils achieve 5 or more GCSEs than the average for either County Durham or the North East. In 2005, 47.5% of Wear Valley pupils achieved 5 GCSEs at grades A\*-C, compared to 51% for Durham, 53.5% for the North East, and 56% for England. This underperformance limits the attractiveness of Wear Valley to potential in-migrants. More importantly, it indicates that our children are unlikely to be fulfilling their potential.
- 5.3. At Key Stage 2 (age 11), the District underperforms County and regional standards for English and maths. For English, 74% of Wear Valley pupils reached the required standard in 2006, compared to 79% in County Durham, 78% in the north east and 79% nationally. For maths, 76% of Wear Valley pupils achieved the required standard, equal to the national average but below the figures for County Durham (79%) and the north east (77%).
- 5.4. In recent years, our school results have been improving, but there is still much to do. Improving the performance of our schools is essential for the future well-being and prosperity of our population, and also to ensure that we continue to attract in-migrants who want to set-up and grow businesses in the District.
- 5.5. There are 5 secondary schools in the District:
- Bishop Barrington in Bishop Auckland- 730 pupils, of which 136 aged 15, 50% achieving Level 2 (5 or more GCSEs at grades A-C) in 2005, up from 44% in 2004. In 2006 there were 147 applications for 158 places.
  - King James I Community Arts College in Bishop Auckland- 716 pupils, of which 151 aged 15, 55% achieving L2 in 2005, up from 32% in 2004. In 2006 there were 105 applications for 161 places.
  - Parkside Comprehensive in Crook- 856 pupils, of which 178 aged 15, 40% achieving L2 (no change on previous year). In 2006 there were 145 applications for 180 places.
  - St Johns Comprehensive and 6<sup>th</sup>-Form College in Bishop Auckland and- 1299 pupils, of which 216 aged 15, 55% achieving L2 in 2005, down from 67% in 2004. In 2006 there were 242 applications for 209 places.

- Wolsingham School and Community College in Wolsingham- 831 pupils, of which 157 aged 15, 43% achieving L2 in 2005, up from 37% in 2004. In 2006 there were 130 applications for 150 places.

5.6. Currently therefore, most schools have some capacity, but this will increasingly be constrained by our future population growth.

**Action: Modernising delivery of secondary education**

In order to support schools in delivering a modern curriculum to meet the needs of our employers, we will:

- Support schools in introducing new vocational diplomas
- Support schools to build links with FE providers to improve access to vocational courses
- Work with schools to raise aspirations and participation at Key Stage 2.

**But we are Building Schools for the Future...**

5.7. A number of our secondary schools have begun to demonstrate real progress in improving results over recent years. The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme will provide an opportunity to build on this progress. The BSF Programme is a Government Initiative to transform secondary education through renewing or refurbishing schools over the next 10-15 years. 50% of the nation's secondary schools will be rebuilt, 35% refurbished and the remaining 15% improved.

5.8. West Durham's schools will be prioritised during waves 7-9, post 2012. The BSF Programme will thus provide an ideal opportunity to consider how new and refurbished schools can better serve areas of housing growth in the District, and how the District's education offer can provide a greater range of choice and quality to pupils.

**Action: Capitalising on the Building Schools for the Future Programme**

Working with Durham County Council, we will use the BSF Programme as an opportunity to review secondary school provision in the District, ensuring on the one hand that areas of housing growth are adequately served (addressing issues of population growth), and on the other that our schools have the modern premises needed to deliver a high-quality offer.

**Improving engagement and educational quality**

5.9. Although the BSF Programme will substantially improve the quality of our schools' physical infrastructure, we must recognise that a capital programme may not in itself have a transformational impact on the quality of education in the District. The quality of teaching, and the engagement and aspirations of young people are equally (if not more)



important. The role that parents play in ensuring the engagement of the children in learning is crucial.

### **Action: Improving educational quality and engagement**

Recognising that low aspirations are a key barrier to improved educational attainment, we will explicitly encourage initiatives that support those who live and work in the District to become involved in educational provision. In particular, we will encourage our schools to engage parents directly through open days and after school clubs. We will also consider how we can better tap into the regional Aspire programme and other raising aspirations programmes as a source of funding.

Leadership is critical- all high performing schools have high quality leaders. We will work closely with the County Council to recruit high quality head teachers to work in our schools when vacancies arise, and ensure that appropriate resources are earmarked for this. We will also work with the County Council to consider how we might develop a marketing strategy to recruit high quality teachers, and offer appropriately attractive packages.

We will promote enterprise in education by:

- Encouraging schools to participate in the Northern Way Education Programme.
- Using LEGI resources to support the implementation of proposals put forward under the County Durham Enterprise Strategy, including: supporting schools to develop new curriculum learning materials; extending the network of Enterprise Advisors to help secondary schools collaborate more effectively; and developing new programmes to raise awareness of the knowledge economy in deprived areas with NetPark, Durham University and others.

### **Enabling Objective C2: Improving Post-16 Education**

5.10. There are 3 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges in the District in addition to Bishop Auckland College:

- Bishop Auckland College has 961 students aged 16-18;
- King James I Community Arts College, with 92 students aged 16-18;
- St. Johns RCVA Technology School, with 235 students aged 16-18;
- Wolsingham School and Community College, with 107 students aged 16-18.

5.11. Bishop Auckland College's offer is focussed principally on vocational learning routes. It has a wide catchment in this respect, and offers a range of vocational provision designed to meet the needs of local employers. The College in particular focuses on childcare and health as

priorities, and Foundation Degrees are offered in several areas, including engineering.

- 5.12. Bishop Auckland College is being re-built, and is due to open in September 2007. The re-building provides a fantastic opportunity to inspire Wear Valley people, young and old, to become engaged in some form of further education. It will enable the college to increase the quality of service it offers and provide inspiration to the whole community.
- 5.13. The non-vocational offer (particularly A' Levels) provided in the District is more limited, partly because of the absence of any economies of scale that our existing providers have individually. As a result, many of our residents who wish to follow a non-vocational route travel outside the District (principally to Darlington College) to study. The extent to which this position continues once subsidised travel ends remains to be seen. It may be that the cessation of subsidised travel can provide further impetus to widen the offer within the District. However, we also need to recognise that the fact that many students arrive at the College with only Foundation Level (Level 1) skills does impact on the nature of the offer, and addressing this requires long-term action to improve education at pre-16.

#### **Action: Enhancing post-16 Provision**

We will consider how we can bring together Bishop Auckland College and some or all of Wear Valley's 6<sup>th</sup> Form provision to enhance both the vocational and non-vocational offer and increase demand for a much wider range of courses. We will work with the LSC, LEA and other partners to consider how a more diverse offer can be made by bringing together provision across existing providers, creating a campus style environment within Bishop Auckland, and encouraging greater collaboration between the college and employers. The Building Schools for the Future Programme provides an opportunity for us to achieve this vision, but we must set this in motion as early as possible through initial discussions and consensus building.

We need to work with the College in order to ensure that it cements its position as one of the leading Colleges in the North East. Building on its current development, Bishop Auckland College will drive post-16 and adult learning in the District. In particular:

- We must build on the work of the College's Services Design Group to widen the range of vocational courses and Foundation Degrees delivered at the College. Where possible we will assist the College by using our contacts to broker support and further engagement from the private sector, ensuring that provision meets their needs.
- We will adopt a strategic influencing role to encourage partners to understand the barriers that exist to developing robust post-16 education. For example, students who have both parents claiming benefits may find that some benefits are cut if their child begins an apprenticeship. We also need to fully understand the implications of the cessation of subsidised travel for students, and explore whether

this is creating a mismatch between the courses that people want to undertake and access to those courses.

- We will support expansion in its drive to expand. We need to work with the college and key partners to argue against funding cuts, and explore alternative funding sources.

### Enabling Objective C3: Improving access to the labour market

#### Rates of worklessness are high...

- 5.14. The District is characterised by fairly high levels of economic inactivity, low aspirations and a culture of dependency. This is particularly the case in and around the smaller settlements in the east of the District, such as Coundon, Willington, Crook and Tow Law, as well as parts of Bishop Auckland. A number of high profile factory closures, and declines in traditional mining and manufacturing industries are a major cause of this.
- 5.15. Across the District as a whole, 3% of the population claim Job Seekers Allowance- higher than any other District in County Durham. The District's unemployment rate is 5.1%, below the County Durham average of 7.1% and the North East average of 6.2%<sup>12</sup>.
- 5.16. Despite a fall in the proportion of residents claiming Incapacity Benefit since 2001, IB rates are still higher than national and regional averages- around 4,500 of our 36,600 working age residents were claiming Incapacity Benefit in early 2006.
- 5.17. Moreover, there are significant discrepancies between different parts of the District- in terms of the employment rate, for example, the difference between the lowest performing neighbourhoods and the Wear Valley average rate is 28%.

#### But significant work is underway to address this...

- 5.18. Substantial activity is already underway or in the pipeline to tackle employability. The Action Team for Jobs (a national initiative which ran in Wear Valley from 2004-6) explored a range of activity including: job grants given to long-term unemployed who started in employment; job brokerage services such as Shaw Trust; a mobile unit to raise employment

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<sup>12</sup> The "unemployment rate" (the proportion of the economically active population who are unemployed) is measured by the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS is a sample survey of people living in private households, students' halls of residence and NHS accommodation. The survey asks a series of questions about respondents' personal circumstances and their activity in the labour market. The **claimant count**, is based on the administrative records of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and National Insurance (NI) credits.

There is a large degree of overlap between the claimant count and unemployment although the latter figures are generally higher. People who are not claimants can appear among the unemployed if they are not entitled to unemployment related benefits. For example:

- people whose partner is working;
- young people under 18 who are looking for work but do not take up the offer of a Youth Training place;
- students looking for part-time work or vacation work; or
- people who have left their job voluntarily.

awareness at 23 outreach sites; and the innovative GP project, which provided job advice to Incapacity Benefit Claimants.

5.19. What became clear is that the Action Team work is only just scratching the surface of a deeply ingrained problem. A number of initiatives are now being rolled out:

- Through Pathways to Work- a Government programme to support new and repeat Incapacity Benefit claimants back into work- we will be offering a return to work bonus of £40/ week for those that have been on IB for 13 weeks or more.
- The GP partnership, instigated by Action Team, is also being rolled-out through Pathways.
- 80% of our Neighbourhood Renewal Funds (which total £2.6m each year until 2008) have been ear-marked for employability activity. NRF-funded activity until 2008 includes: the Action Team Outreach Bus; training initiatives and client support in terms of CV assistance; supporting local employers to take on more staff; a Bizz Fizz Programme which supports entrepreneurship in deprived communities; and some funding for infrastructure improvements, including new build and improvement of business units.
- An Intermediate Labour Market Programme is being run by Groundwork.
- The Wheels to Work Programme, supported by the County Council, provides a motorbike hire facility for young adults in rural areas who need to access work or college, and has increased young peoples' mobility in a flexible way not possible by public transport alone.
- Further opportunities to roll-out these and other programmes will emerge through the successful LEGI bid.

5.20. At the regional level, One North East is currently producing a Regional Employability Framework and Action Plan. This is due to be published in April 2007. A priority for us will be to ensure that strong and clear links are made between our local needs and the strategic priorities identified.

#### **Action: Create a Local Employment Partnership**

Despite the extent of current activity to address employability, there are a number of challenges. Neighbourhood Renewal Funding will cease in 2008, and it is not yet clear what funds will be available from other sources. We need a mechanism for mapping current activity and evaluating the impacts of this in a holistic way. We need to make better use of our existing resources and explore how JC+, the LSC, voluntary and community sector and other partners can work together more effectively- these partners often work with the same clients but in silos.

We will create a Local Employment Partnership, based along the lines of those proposed for the Government's City Strategy Initiative. The Employment Partnership will bring together all key partners- LSC, JC+, Council, Connexions the College, Schools, and training providers, employers, and the voluntary and community sector. The Employment Partnership will aim to reduce worklessness by improving the way that support for jobless people is coordinated and delivered on the ground. The Partnership will coordinate our existing activity, identify which elements are working well and where there are gaps, and target funding opportunities for future activity.

**Action: Developing the role of the public sector in tackling employability**

The Council, and other key public sector partners, have a key role to play in addressing employability by explicitly targeting particular posts at those out of work. The role of the public sector as an employer of particular target groups is gaining popularity across the country<sup>13</sup>, and we have an opportunity to be at the forefront of this movement.

We will develop a programme to target particular jobs within the Council at those who are long-term unemployed or returning to the labour market. We will work closely with JC+ to communicate which vacancies the Council has that would be suitable for the target groups, and JC+ will act as broker to feed appropriate clients to the Council to become employees. We will use our strategic influencing role to encourage other public sector partners (such as the County Council and the College) to join the programme, and explore the opportunity to establish a recruitment agency for public sector posts. We will also explore scope for an ILM Programme focused on those with long-term support needs.

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<sup>13</sup> For example, Lancashire County Council has been able to save several hundred thousand pounds in fees to temping agencies by targeting temporary jobs at residents who are not currently in the labour market.

## 6. PROMOTING POPULATION GROWTH

- 6.1. A critical challenge for the District is to reverse the trend of population decline that has been observed over recent years. In particular, we need to encourage more young people, and those with higher-level skills, to remain within, or locate in, Wear Valley.
- 6.2. Our overall objective is to build on the recent modest population increase to achieve sustainable growth to 67,000 by 2021, with a balanced programme of housing and employment growth combining with this.
- 6.3. Increasing our population, particularly the proportion of young and more highly-skilled, will bring a number of benefits:
  - It will contribute towards greater vibrancy in our settlements, and improve the viability of key services.
  - It will create multiplier impacts- a higher demand for services which are provided in the local area. For every 1,000 new residents, 100-150 jobs are created in retail and other service sector occupations. Research for a recent One North East study reports also that, in rural areas, between 1.9- 2.4 gross full-time jobs are created for every self-employed in-migrant to an area.
  - By increasing the labour pool, economic activity in the District will increase. This increased labour market pool will contribute to tackling the skills shortages that exist in the District. Indeed, it is likely that, in the near term, a number of the skills gaps that exist cannot be filled by local residents. Addressing skills gaps will in turn help to attract more businesses to locate in Wear Valley, creating a self-re-enforcing effect.

### Objective D1: Increase the Population Base

#### The District's population is increasing again...

- 6.4. The population of the District declined from 64,000 in the early 1980s to 61,000 in 2002. Since 2002, the population has increased slightly to 62,100 in 2005. ONS 2004 based projections anticipate that a demographic renaissance will take place in the County over the period 2004-2021 with population growth of 2.9%<sup>14</sup>. This would imply population growth to 63,800 by 2021.

#### Young people are under-represented...

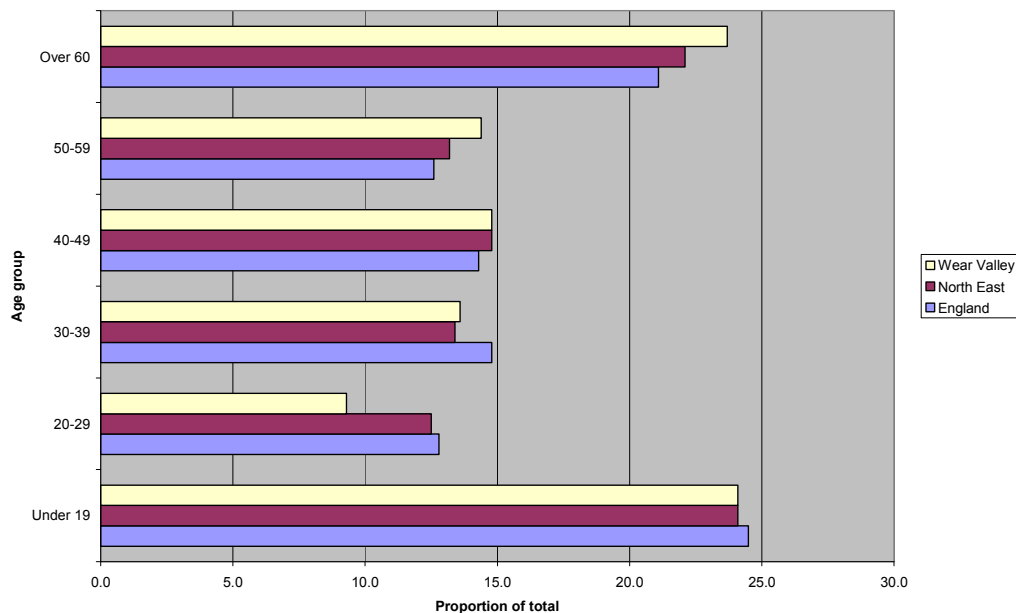
- 6.5. The population decline is due largely to higher rates of out-migration. Figures from the 2001 census suggest that while 463 households moved into Wear Valley from elsewhere in the previous year, 513 households moved out of Wear Valley. Households where the household reference

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<sup>14</sup> Importantly, the housing targets provided in the Panel Report to the Regional Spatial Strategy are predicated on an assumption that County Durham population growth will be just 0.1% over the RSS period.

person (HRP) was aged under 35 years accounted for 37% of in-migrants but 40% of out-migrants, implying that more people of working age are moving out of the District.

- 6.6. According to census figures, although the District has an average proportion of its population in the 0-19 age group, it has a much lower proportion of its population in the 20-29 year age group (see figure below) compared to regional and national averages. In contrast, the District has a greater proportion of its population over 50 than the regional and national profile, implying that labour market/ skills issues may become worse in the future.



### Housing choice is limited...

- 6.7. Housing in Wear Valley is characterised by a significantly higher proportion of terraced housing (49% of total stock) than either in the North East (32%) or England (26%). Some 45% of housing stock in Wear Valley is either detached or semi-detached, against 54% in both the North East and England overall. Flats and apartments account for less than 6% of total housing stock in the district, compared to 14% in the North East and nearly 20% across England.
- 6.8. In terms of tenure, home ownership averages at 62%. This masks significant variation however- ownership stands at 87.5% in Cockton Hill but only 29.5% in Dene Valley. Woodhouse Close, Coundon, Escomb and Tow Law have below average home ownership.

### Housing affordability is becoming an issue...

- 6.9. House prices in Wear Valley remain below the average for County Durham, the North East and England. Between 2001 and 2005, however, this gap narrowed slightly. During this period, house prices in Wear Valley

increased by 111% (from £43,000 to £90,000) - greater than the 98% increase observed in Durham County (from £48,000 to £95,000), the North East (97%- from £55,000 to £108,000), and England (74%- from £92,000 to £160,000). Research published by the Halifax in November 2006 indicates that Stanhope had a higher rate of house price increase over the previous 5 years than any other market town in England.

- 6.10. The ratio of house prices to earnings has increased faster in Wear Valley than in County Durham. In 2005, average house prices in Wear Valley, were 5.5 times higher than wages, while across County Durham, the house price ratio remains just below 5.
- 6.11. Affordability of housing is likely to become a particular issue in the more rural west of the district as demand increases in these areas. Indeed, across England, house prices are on average 6.7 times average annual earnings in rural areas, compared to 5.6 times higher in urban areas.

**The scope for increasing housing supply is limited...**

- 6.12. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the region provides a target for the average number of annual housing completions over the period to 2021. In County Durham, the annual targets for each district are as follows:

	<b>2004-11</b>	<b>2011-16</b>	<b>2016-21</b>	<b>2004-21 annual average</b>
Chester-le-Street	120	100	90	105
Derwentside	280	245	205	250
Durham	200	170	150	175
Easington	200	170	150	175
Sedgefield	260	235	200	235
Teesdale	70	70	70	70
<b>Wear Valley</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>165</b>
<i>County Durham</i>	<i>1,390</i>	<i>1,100</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>1,175</i>

*Source: Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East, 2005*

- 6.13. An average 165 housing completions a year between 2004 and 2021 in Wear Valley would amount to an additional 2,805 properties in the district by 2021.
- 6.14. The RSS completions figures are predicated on an assumption that population in County Durham will decline by some 3,200 between 2006-2016, but do not accommodate the latest ONS growth projections which see a population increase of nearly 3%. The County Durham local authorities argue that 23,000 dwellings are needed County, rather than the 19,000 forecast in the RSS.
- 6.15. The Wear Valley LDF Monitoring Report 2004/5 indicates that completions were averaging 289 per year in Wear Valley between 2001/2 and 2004/5, and are forecast to continue at this level for the foreseeable future (a



number of developments are underway throughout the Bishop Auckland and Crook sub-areas). The District's Urban Capacity Study, undertaken in September 2004 identified a constrained capacity- i.e. on sites that could be developed without major difficulty- of 4515 units (and an unconstrained capacity of 7845 units). 60% of this capacity is in the Bishop Auckland sub-area; a third is available in the Crook sub-area; and 8% is in the rural sub-area.

- 6.16. The implication of this is that we have the potential to build at a much greater rate than proposed by the RSS, and as the planning system moves away from a "predict and provide" approach to a more market-based understanding we will wish to accelerate our housing growth to complement our focus on economic growth.

**Skills shortages are more pronounced in Wear Valley than elsewhere in the region and County...**

- 6.17. According to the 2003 LSC National Employers Skill Survey, County Durham has a slightly higher number of vacancies as a proportion of employment (3.4%) than the national average (3.1%), while the skills gap as a proportion of employment (11%) is in line with the national average (10.9%).
- 6.18. Census statistics from 2001 suggest that Wear Valley's population is less highly skilled than either the North East region or England as a whole. Some 39.8% of people aged 16-74 in Wear Valley have no qualifications, above the regional average of 34.7% and significantly higher than the level across England of 28.9%. The District also has notably lower than average numbers of people with level 3 (2 or more A levels or NVQ3) or level 4 (degree or higher) qualifications, at 5.4% and 13%, compared to English averages of 8.3% and 19.9% respectively.
- 6.19. The Wear Valley Skills Gap Study (2005) found evidence of particular shortages in adult basic skills and various specialist skills.

**Actions**

- 6.20. Tackling our declining population will require a step-change in the quality of Wear Valley's housing offer, in order to attract more families and young and talented people. The three aspects of the residential offer are:
- Housing choice;
  - Housing quality; and
  - Value for money.
- 6.21. As described above, we currently perform poorly in terms of the housing choice and quality required to attract families and high-income groups. We need to address this through a step-change in our residential offer. The need to improve housing range and housing supply has also been identified as a priority within the emerging County Durham Economic Strategy, as well as within English Partnerships Coalfield Settlement Study. We will ensure that the recent trend away from net out-migration

to net in-migration is sustained. We will do this by undertaking actions on both the supply-side and demand-side of the housing market.

- 6.22. Currently, the market focus for housing growth is centred on the Bishop Auckland sub-area, and here the key challenge over the medium term will be to find sufficient sites for new housing developments to sustain current levels of growth, without compromising requirements for employment land and greenspace. With strong demand, there is scope to make more stringent arrangements with developers regarding the quality and eco-standard of new homes.
- 6.23. There is evidence of increasing demand within the Crook and Willington sub-area. Demand in Crook/ Willington will continue to grow in the future as the Bishop Auckland market matures, and as improvements are made to connectivity to Durham city. Stock improvements and rationalisations in the satellite villages of Coundon (in the Bishop Auckland sub-area) and Tow Law (both funded through the Coalfields programme, see boxes 7.2 and 7.3) will stimulate further market interest in these areas in the long-run. In the near term, the challenge in the sub-area will be to ensure that new housing does not create areas of low-demand which are then subject of spiralling decline.
- 6.24. Within the rural area, increasing demand combined with the restrictive nature of the planning system will mean that affordability may become more of an issue. The need to bring forward suitable brownfield sites for housing (e.g. Wolsingham Steelworks and Eastgate) is recognised.

#### **Action: Accelerating House Completions**

On the supply-side, we will work with the private sector to bring forward brownfield housing sites identified in the Urban Capacity Study, especially those within the Bishop Auckland sub-area. We will accelerate house-building completions to 300 per year. The drive to promote housing growth in this area is commensurate with the recommendations of the Coalfield Communities Partnership Study, and also fits with the aspirations of the Bishop Auckland Masterplan in terms of increasing the residential base of the town centre. It will also increase housing choice by accelerating supply.

#### **Action: Talent Retention**

On the demand-side, we will consider, with regional agencies, at how talent recruitment and retention schemes, such as Talent Scotland, have operated elsewhere in the country, and how a similar initiative could encourage the district's promising young people to stay and others to move in. A similar initiative in Wear Valley, or the wider North East, might feature a promotional website, answer questions about life in the North East/Wear Valley and link potential residents with job vacancies in and around Wear Valley. We will work with the University of Durham to explore the possibility of establishing a post-graduate residence within the

District. These actions need to be linked to jobs so are medium/ long-term aspirations.

### **Enabling Objective D2: Re-vitalise our housing market**

- 6.25. Our housing market is increasingly buoyant, particularly in parts of Bishop Auckland and rural Wear Valley. Some of the district's communities show evidence of housing market failure- reflected by low demand, empty homes, and associated anti-social behaviour. A key priority for the district must be to help turn round these areas, partly through stock improvement so meet the Decent Homes standard, and in some cases through more comprehensive restructuring of local housing markets.

#### **The Coalfield settlements and housing market failure...**

- 6.26. The Jacobs Babbie Coalfield Settlements study<sup>15</sup> found some evidence of housing market failure in the district, and suggested that there is a need to broaden the choice of housing type and tenure. The Coalfield Settlement study identifies the following as priorities for intervention:
- Bishop Auckland- there is significant evidence to support the need for housing renewal within some parts of Bishop Auckland. The areas with the most severe problems are Woodhouse Close, St Helens Auckland and, although to a lesser extent, Henknowle. These areas already contain areas of abandoned properties and are identified as the most deprived wards. The Jacobs Babbie study argues that there is significant potential to restructure these areas to diversify existing choice and to improve the physical environment.
  - Coundon/ Dene Valley- Coundon has a poor range of housing choice which is dominated by terraced properties. Although the general quality of housing is reasonable and there is no evidence of abandonment, housing allocations have not been taken up and few completions have taken place since 1991. Coundon is identified as a focus for further qualitative intervention and functional improvement to support the role of Bishop Auckland as a main town. Localised qualitative intervention and restructuring is appropriate in the Dene Valley settlements. The Dene Valley settlements provide limited service provision and are isolated in terms of public transport access. There is evidence of qualitative intervention to the existing housing stock but the area has limited housing choice. Housing allocations have not been taken up.
  - Tow Law- is identified as focus for strategic opportunities. The Jacobs Babbie report highlights that Tow Law is "potentially physically isolated" from new opportunities and may benefit from qualitative intervention and limited functional improvement to its housing stock.

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<sup>15</sup> Coalfield Settlement Study, Phase 2 Report. Jacobs Babbie, June 2005.

- Crook and Willington- both towns would benefit from further qualitative interventions and additions to housing stock. Crook is identified as a relatively lower priority as it has a fairly vibrant centre and has benefited from MTI.
  - West Auckland/ St Helens Auckland- there is an opportunity to consider West Auckland and St Helens Auckland as a single area. It may be appropriate to develop local facilities which serve both communities. Both communities should be regarded as neighbourhoods/settlements which provide housing opportunities to support the role of Bishop Auckland as a major centre.
- 6.27. Working with English Partnerships/ Communities England, we are taking forward the priorities identified. We have developed a masterplan for Bishop Auckland and Area Development Frameworks for Coundon and Tow Law. These are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

### **Achieving the Decent Homes Standard...**

- 6.28. In addition to tackling housing market failure generally, we are committed to improving the quality of the Council's existing housing stock to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.
- 6.29. The Wear Valley Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)- Dale and Valley Homes- achieved a 2-star rating from the Audit Commission in January 2007. As a result, Dale and Valley Homes will now benefit from an additional £26m towards meeting the Decent Homes standard by 2010. This success will support us in the aim to make the District's housing more desirable and contribute to accelerating population growth.
- 6.30. We will ensure that the stock improvements to achieve the Decent Homes Standard are focussed on the areas that can contribute most directly to increasing economic growth and vibrancy in the district. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to recognise that Decent Homes improvements may be insufficient to transform the attractiveness of a neighbourhood, and in this case we will consider the full range of housing renewal options, including stock replacement, where this represents best value.

### **Action: Re-vitalising our housing markets**

In order to revitalise the district's housing market, we will:

- Focus our Decent Homes investments in locations where improvements can achieve a significant extension of housing lifecycle and serve as a catalyst for regeneration.
- Promote housing market renewal in three areas identified as having the most pressing need: priority wards in Bishop Auckland, Coundon, and Tow Law. We will also seek further qualitative improvements to the housing stock in Crook, Willington and the West Auckland/ St Helen Auckland area as part of medium/ long-term plans.

## 7. VIBRANT PLACES

- 7.1. Vibrant places are vital to the District's well-being. Vibrant places act as a focal point for a variety of community activities and contribute to the sustainability of towns and villages. The vibrancy of places can have either self-re-enforcing positive effects, or lead to cycles of decline. When places are vibrant, this vibrancy acts as a catalyst to retain greater proportions of visitor expenditure and attract further business start-up and in-migration. When places are not vibrant however, spirals of decline can witness a sometimes rapid deterioration in the range of services available, and consequently, a decline in the physical and social fabric of those places.

### **Transformational Objective E1: Cement Bishop Auckland's position as a major District Centre**

#### **Bishop Auckland is a key service centre for the County...**

- 7.2. Bishop Auckland is a key retail and service centre, not just for the District, but for the County as a whole. Bishop Auckland is identified in both the Regional Spatial Strategy and the emerging County Durham County Economic Strategy as one of the County's top 3 district centres. The town has a population of some 16,000, although its catchment area covers a population of some 150,000 according to the Bishop Auckland Urban Renaissance Study.
- 7.3. The town centre is home to some 300 businesses, including a number of multiple national retailer, such as Marks and Spencer, Boots and Argos. Three high schools, and the FE College are based at Bishop Auckland, and there is an associated level of vibrancy to the town.
- 7.4. Bishop Auckland benefits from strong transport links- there are bus connections to most other settlements in Wear Valley, as well as Durham and Newcastle. The train station provides regular services to Darlington.
- 7.5. Housing provision in the town is generally good, although there are pockets of low demand and deprivation (notably around Woodhouse Close, St Helens Auckland and Henknowle). Private sector interest in the town has been strong with a number of new housing developments taking place. Perhaps most noteworthy of these is the current re-development of the former Deggart's warehouse, overlooking the marketplace, to create apartments.

#### **...although there are some notable gaps in provision...**

- 7.6. The town does have some weaknesses. These include a lack of major employment provision, lower levels of "boutique" style shops that are found in other market towns and can act as a draw to visitors, a relatively high proportion of "value" shops, poor physical appearance of some parts of the town, absence of a cinema, and lower footfall at the north end of the town, around the market place. The Wear Valley Retail Study (published September 2004) identified that the town has a somewhat higher proportion of vacant premises (16%) than the national average

(11%), although the amount of vacant floorspace is not high. Recent research by Experian for County Durham indicates that Bishop Auckland's share of County Durham's total vacant floorspace has fallen from 24% in 2004 to 17% in 2006.

- 7.7. The Wear Valley Retail Study also finds that there is capacity for some additional convenience goods expenditure of around £20m by 2016, equating to between 2,500-4,000 sq m floorspace, (or one small to medium sized foodstore). For comparison goods, residual capacity is estimated at £37m by 2016, equating to- fairly significant- additional capacity of between 6,000- 12,500 sq m.

### **Opportunities...**

- 7.8. A number of current developments in the town provide an opportunity to instigate improvements in the town centre. These include:
- the Brack's Farm prestige employment site on the eastern side of the town centre, and the proposed private sector office developments there which will create further demand for local services, particularly if good quality pedestrian links can be diminished with the town centre;
  - the planned 36,000 sq ft mixed retail/ residential development at North Bondgate.
  - the prospect of further retail development at the Newgate Centre; and
- 7.9. These developments, and others, such as the current Wetherspoons investment at the Market Place, on-going residential development at the Market Place, and interest in creating a 17-bed hotel also at the Market Place- show that the private sector is willing to make substantial investments in and around Bishop Auckland.
- 7.10. Bishop Auckland also has scope to build on its tourist offer. The town acts as the gateway to the Dales, and as such a Tourist Information Centre is located in the centre. However, Bishop Auckland's existing attractions are underutilised. Auckland Castle, historic residence of the Bishop's of Durham, is only open to the public two afternoons a week. Nearby Escomb Saxon Church can only be accessed by collecting the key from a nearby house, while Binchester Fort, an important military staging post on the route from York to Hadrian's Wall, is also underutilised. Better promotion of and signage to these facilities, coupled with physical infrastructural improvements to the centre, and development of additional features would add further to the vibrancy of the town.
- 7.11. We are currently developing a major funding bid to improve the 68ha Auckland Park. Funding of £4.9m is being sought to develop a visitor/ education/ interpretation centre; improve accessibility into and around the Park; and restore and improve the Park's environmental and built heritage. A key aim for the Auckland Park improvements will be to link the underutilised Park asset more closely to the town, and to increase footfall

around the adjoining marketplace area. An application is being made to the Heritage Lottery Fund to cover 75% of the £4.9m required- if successful, this will allow us to draw down the remaining 25% from Single Programme in time for a start on site around 2009/10.

- 7.12. A Masterplan for Bishop Auckland has recently been produced. This sets out a number of priorities for the town, many of which we are already pursuing. The findings of the Masterplan are discussed in Box 7.1 below.

**Box 7.1: The Bishop Auckland Masterplan**

The Study notes that Bishop Auckland currently underperforms in terms of comparison goods retailers and amount of vacant premises. The study identifies particular priorities for Bishop Auckland as:

- A need for a stronger level of activity in the marketplace to draw people to the northern end of the town;
- A need to kick-start the regeneration of Fore Bondgate and environs, through introduction of public art features, creation of greenspace and tree planting, and other improvements to the built infrastructure;
- A need to improve the current floorspace, much of which is dated or sub-optimal (and often too small) for modern retailing requirements;
- The potential to improve the residential offer in the town centre, particularly through promoting residential uses over shop premises and by putting "fronts on the backs" of existing town centre developments;
- A need to improve the physical fabric of the town in a number of areas;
- The potential to improve on the town's visitor and tourism offer through: improvements to the historic quarter (Bishop Auckland Castle, Market Place and Fore Bondgate); capitalising on railway heritage; the potential for a monument to Stan Laurel; improving arrival points and creating a sense of place; and sign-posting and promoting local tourist attractions, namely Binchester Roman Fort and Escomb Church.

Following from this contextual analysis, a number of strategic concepts for an Investment Programme are proposed:

- Drawing people through the town;
- Linking areas of activity;
- Promotion and exploitation of visitor and tourist attractions;
- Promotion and exploitation of leisure role;
- Consolidation of town centre functions.

The focus of the Masterplan is on:

- The identification of key public spaces and buildings, and proposals for their significant improvement; and
- The identification and promotion of critical development opportunities in the northern part of the town (particularly Market Place, Fore and North Bondgate).

Specific proposals relate to 6 zones:

- Newgate Centre/ Bus Station;
- Market Place and Bishop's Park;
- North Bondgate;
- Fore Bondgate;
- Kingsway;
- Tourism and Identity.

- 7.13. The other towns in the Bishop Auckland sub-area- notably West Auckland and St Helen Auckland, play a very much supporting role to Bishop itself, both in terms of provision of labour and employment sites. We are continuing to pursue improvements to these areas where possible. The West Auckland bypass is under construction and will reduce traffic levels in both West Auckland and St Helen Auckland (as well as improving access to employment sites). West Auckland has also recently benefited from Town Heritage Improvements (improvements to public realm and environmental and built heritage) as part of the town's position in the South West Durham Heritage Corridor.

### **Actions**

- 7.14. We will promote Bishop Auckland as the key driver or engine of growth for the District to increase employment opportunities and the vibrancy of the centre. This will mean that we prioritise some activities and investment in Bishop Auckland.
- 7.15. This is consistent with planning policy, particularly the RSS which recognises Bishop Auckland's strategic importance and role as a focus for new opportunities. This vision was also supported by the Coalfields Settlements Study, which argued that "future strategy should concentrate on reinforcing [Bishop Auckland's] role as a principal service and functional centre for the Wear Valley", complemented by sustainable growth at Coundon.
- 7.16. To promote the vibrancy and vitality of the centre, we need to make a number of improvements to the physical appearance and infrastructure of the town. We will pursue the recommendations set out in the Masterplan, and a bid for £2.7m to One North East has recently been made in this respect. This funding (matched by £1m from WVDC and substantial private sector resources) will fund qualitative improvements to the fabric of the town, and are considered as enabling investments for further private sector investment. In addition:

#### **Action: Implement the recommendations of the Masterplan**

We must continue to implement the recommendations of the Bishop Auckland masterplan. In particular:

**Action:** We will enhance the role of the town as a visitor gateway to the District, by enhancing our existing visitor attractions, improving signage and gateways to the town, and by pursuing the opportunities around the marketplace and Fore Bondgate.

**Action:** Residential opportunities in the town centre should be promoted, as identified in the Masterplan. These include: the promotion of "Living Over the Shop" opportunities on Newgate Street; the opportunity to create courtyard developments to the east and west of Newgate Street; and the opportunity for further residential development around the marketplace, complementing the current scheme underway at the former Doggerts premises.



**Action:** We will promote the development of the visitor economy in the town, by establishing better promotion of nearby visitor attractions, and by investigating the potential of new visitor attractions linked to Stan Laurel and rail heritage, and linking this to the cultural quarter.

**Action: Attracting national multiples**

We need to ensure that the town centre is able to attract more national multiples capable of retaining greater levels of local retail expenditure. We will identify and actively market appropriate sites and premises within the town, making new sites available where possible.

**Action: Supporting our independent retailers**

We will ensure that Bishop Auckland maintains a sense of distinctiveness, witnessed by the presence of independent stores. Strengthening the role of the town centre manager, we will support our existing independents to be able to compete, by making provision for suitable business support services. In particular, take-up of internet is low among high-street independents, and several of our stores are now facing stiff competition from the internet. We will support all businesses in the use of IT processes. We will explore how we can implement the findings of the Regional Retail Distinctiveness study in Bishop Auckland.

**Action: Establishing a cultural quarter**

We will attract a greater number of "boutique" independents operating in fashion, arts, and food and drink by establishing a cultural quarter around the historic Fore Bondgate. We will develop a grants scheme for businesses to make physical improvements to the appearance of shop-fronts and explore other opportunities to provide business support for businesses in this sector, including the provision of wireless network facilities..

**Action: Linking Bracks Farm to the town centre**

We must promote a more diversified range of employment opportunities in the town centre. In particular, we must increase the scope of the town to provide office-based employment. The development of the 9.4ha Bracks Farm provides opportunities in this respect, although we must ensure that pedestrian links between Bracks Farm and the town centre are safe, attractive and conducive to supporting a regular flow of pedestrians in either direction. We should also promote further quality office development in the town centre itself where possible.

**Action: Expand the programme of events**

We will develop the current programme of events at the marketplace, with the aim to increase pedestrian flow in the northern end of the town.

## Enabling Objective E2: Support the Sustainability of the former Coalfield Communities

### Our Coalfield communities face considerable challenges...

- 7.17. The challenges faced by the former coalfield communities are similar to other former coalfield communities elsewhere in County Durham—population decline and changing age profiles, poor economic performance, low educational attainment, poor health and low housing demand.
- 7.18. Crook is the District’s second town with a population of just over 8,000. Crook is a market town providing a range of housing opportunities, and with a strong public administration role. Despite being the location for the Council’s offices, Crook town centre provides a mainly local retail function which supports the settlement and the immediately surrounding communities. It is not a major economic driver for the District. The town generally has a good range of service provision (including major food store, bank and estate agents, and a leisure centre), but does not have a secondary school. In many respects, Crook has closer ties to Durham and the north than it does to Bishop Auckland.
- 7.19. Crook has benefited from market town status since 2001 which has funded improved shop frontages as part of a Town Centre Uplift scheme, redevelopment of the market place and development of a trader’s forum—although the MTI in Crook will cease in 2007. The evaluation of the Market Town Initiative (MTI) notes that, although not a “classic” market town, and although characterised by relatively high levels of deprivation, recent population decline and low rates of employment in managerial or professional occupations, Crook plays a valuable role in providing local jobs and services.
- 7.20. The MTI has given the town some impetus however, and its role as a key local service centre is growing. New housing developments are underway and in the pipeline, and the Beechburn Industrial estate on the edge of the town is one of the District’s most important industrial sites, with scope for further expansion. The St Catherine’s Community Centre, funded through the MTI, is now well-used, and a County-wide arts organisation, based in Wear Valley, has secured an ERDF Grant to foster further development of the cultural and creative sector in the town through provision of a dedicated resource centre.
- 7.21. Future efforts must focus on supporting continued improvements to the physical environment and social fabric of the town. Further support should be given to improving public spaces and accessibility the business forum, community centre, and efforts to build a creative cluster. Improved transport links to both Durham and Bishop Auckland should also be supported. As the visitor economy grows in Weardale, opportunities may arise to capture passing visitor trade in Crook, and these opportunities should be captured through appropriate signage and parking provision. The overall aim will be to build Crook’s position as a key district centre serving the needs of local communities, improving the town’s self sufficiency, vibrancy, and prospects for sustainable growth.

- 7.22. Another key settlement in the former coalfield area is Willington (population 4,534). Willington also serves as a local service centre to surrounding communities, and has particularly strong links with Durham city. Willington is the location for one of our prestige employment sites, with office development in the pipeline. As with Crook, there is a need to support improvements to the physical infrastructure in the town, and to improve connectivity to Durham. The vision is for Willington to further strengthen its relationship with Durham both in terms of housing and business growth.
- 7.23. Other towns in the District's former coalfield, including Tow Law (1,958) tend to be smaller centres serving local populations. The Wear Valley Retail Study (2004) highlights that the viability and vitality of all these centres is declining, with high levels of leakage of retail trade, so increasing the population of these towns is important if they are to survive. Each settlement needs to "find its own level"- but we will commit to helping them to do that. Tow Law in particular has potential to build on its location on the A68 and available business sites and premises in the town.
- 7.24. For the surrounding coalfield towns, the scope for comprehensive functional improvement in the housing market is limited given the towns' limited population bases. Here, the challenge is instead to maintain these towns' ability to provide a range of services to underpin the sustainability and viability of the communities. All of these communities would benefit from qualitative physical improvement and local based intervention but are not necessarily sustainable locations to focus strategic change or major housing growth.
- 7.25. We have recently completed Area Development Frameworks (ADFs) for Coundon<sup>16</sup> and Tow Law. These ADFs were commissioned to take forward the findings of the Coalfield Settlement Study and will underpin future bids for funds from the English Partnerships Coalfield Programme. The key findings of these studies are outlined in boxes 7.2 and 7.3 below.

**Box 7.2: The Tow Law ADF**

The Tow Law ADF identifies the housing market interventions required to make Tow Law a "focus for strategic change". The Tow Law ADF identifies the following key issues facing the town:

- An under-performing housing market and lack of housing choice, mix and quality- exacerbated by the fact that there are no major housing allocations;
- A narrow economic base, highly dependent on manufacturing;
- Physical separation from the Bishop Auckland growth area;
- Lack of features to attract visitors to remain in the town;
- A lack of a retail core and anchor supermarket.

Six themes for Settlement Change are proposed:

**Theme 1: Existing Housing and Neighbourhood- "Traditional Terraced Housing"**- improving the condition of the existing terraced housing stock through

<sup>16</sup> Coundon is a former Coalfield town but is located in the Bishop Auckland sub-area

landscaping, remodelling and public realm improvements to create attractive living environments and more sustainable neighbourhoods;

**Theme 2: Existing Housing and Neighbourhood, "Radburn Style Housing Estates"**- improving some of the fringe housing estates;

**Theme 3: High Street and Services, Public Realm and Connectivity**- improving the internal connectivity and permeability of the town to create focal points, and strengthening the towns connection to the wider area through promoting links to the surrounding countryside;

**Theme 4: Recreational and Leisure Opportunities**- further development of green space and leisure and cultural opportunities in the town;

**Theme 5: Industrial improvements and Employment Opportunity Sites**- enhancing the attractiveness of the existing industrial estate and exploring opportunities for the provision of new business;

**Theme 6: Housing Opportunity Sites**- promoting small-scale infill housing development to create a more compact development.

### Box 7.3 The Coundon and Leeholme ADF

The ADF for Coundon and Leeholme identifies the Vision for these settlements as "Rationalisation of the existing housing stock and provision for future housing growth through strengthening the settlement core and enhancements to existing public and private sector stock". The ADF envisages:

- **Improvements to the housing offer** through rationalisation of some of the low demand terraced property, and creation of new housing- particular 3 and 4 bed homes with private amenity space to attract families;
- **Enhancements to the retail and service centre** of Coundon, building on the recent attraction of the Sainsbury's store;
- **Improving the local environment**, including improvements to older terraced stock, strengthening the existing historic layout and creating a more permeable block structure, and improved amenity spaces;
- **Strengthened economic development prospects** by addressing key barriers to unlocking the allocated industrial site, thereby promoting Coundon's role within the Bishop Auckland economic development corridor.

### Action: Enabling the coalfield communities to become vibrant and self-sustaining...

We will:

- Take forward the findings of the Coalfield Settlement Study by making applications for funding on the back of the Area Development Frameworks for Coundon and Tow Law;
- We will build on the momentum generated by the Market Town Initiative in Crook, and aim to support Crook's growing role as a vibrant district centre and employment location. We will aim to bring back into usage various empty business and retail premises. We will support improvements to the physical infrastructure of the town, and offer further support to the Business Forum, Community Centre. We will support a growing creative and cultural sector in the town by supporting a dedicated resource centre.
- We will promote Willington's role as a location for spill-out growth from Durham by promoting housing sites and the prestige employment site in the town, and by enhancing transport connectivity to the city.
- Within smaller towns and villages, we will maintain and enhance the provision of essential community facilities and services (such as

lifelong learning centres), support where possible qualitative improvements and local-based intervention in the housing markets, and make small-scale improvements to physical infrastructure in towns where appropriate.

- Where possible, the Council will use its land ownerships to help facilitate new housing.

### **Action: Enhancing Crook and Willington connectivity to Durham City**

Crook and Willington tend to have closer ties to Durham and Newcastle than Bishop Auckland, which has closer links with Darlington. Research by the University of Durham for NERIP in 2005 revealed that, between 1991 and 2001, out-commuting from Wear Valley to Durham City increased faster than the rate of out-commuting to any other district. During the day there are 2 bus services per hour from Crook to Durham via Willington, and one per hour in the evening.

We will ensure that public transport links from Crook and Willington to Durham are maintained, and where possible, enhanced (the limited stopping fast service currently only runs on Wednesday and Saturday).

The A610 from Crook to Durham is slow, and was highlighted by businesses during consultation as a limiting further business development. We will explore opportunities to improve the A610 to enhance traffic capacity on the route and reduce journey times from Crook and Willington to Durham.

### **Enabling Objective E3: Support the Sustainability of our Rural Communities**

- 7.26. The rural west of the District includes the Weardale settlements (Eastgate, Westgate, Frosterley, St. Johns Chapel, etc.), the market town of Stanhope in Weardale, and Wolsingham. Stanhope is the principal centre for the rural area. The civil parish of Stanhope, (which also includes, Eastgate, Westgate, St. Johns Chapel, Cornriggs, Cowshill and Frosterley) has a population of some 4,500.
- 7.27. These communities are relatively remote and isolated. Although deprivation here is not as pronounced as in other parts of the District, those without access to private transport are at risk of severe isolation if public transport or essential local service provision declines.
- 7.28. Stanhope has, along with Crook, benefited from the Market Towns Initiative since 2001. The market town health-check undertaken in 2001 estimated Stanhope's population at 1,650, but the town acts the key service centre for the surrounding populations, covering a further 1,720 people.

- 7.29. Stanhope is known as the “Gateway to the Dales” but is not currently geared-up to cater for large numbers of tourists. The evaluation of the Market Town Initiative in 2005 highlighted the need for Stanhope to capitalise further on its Gateway and tourism role, and in particular how the town might benefit from the Eastgate development.
- 7.30. In the longer term, Stanhope is anticipated to play an increasingly important role as a location for footloose, knowledge-based businesses working from small offices or from home. Provision for small office units has been made within the Dales Centre, which also houses a small cluster of creative and craft businesses. The challenge is to further support the role of the town as a location for tourism, creative and craft businesses.
- 7.31. Wolsingham is the second largest town in the rural sub-area. It has a more traditional manufacturing base, and is likely to continue to act as a focus for new housing and business growth in the future, with a major brownfield site available on the site of the former steel works. Efforts for Wolsingham should focus on bringing forward this site to enable the sustainable growth of the rural area.
- 7.32. The former cement works in the village of Eastgate is the location for the development of a renewable energy village, which will act as the major economic driver in rural area. The Eastgate development is discussed further under Objective B1.
- 7.33. The other settlements in Weardale are small and serve very local needs, supporting the agricultural community in particular. The key challenges are to ensure that our communities have access to the full range of community, health and education services, and employment opportunities. We also need to maintain transport links between settlements, and to achieve an appropriate balance between the need for development and the protection of the environment.
- 7.34. Weardale’s connectivity to both the Tees Valley city-region and particularly to Durham could be improved. There are hourly services from Stanhope to Bishop Auckland via Crook, and occasional limited-stop services from Stanhope to Newcastle. This link to the cities works in both directions- for Weardale residents and businesses the cities are a source of jobs and business opportunities; for residents of the urban areas, the rural area provides recreation and tourism opportunities. The challenge now is to build on and strengthen these links, partly through encouraging the role of tourism in the rural area, and partly through encouraging the development of other business activity in Weardale.
- 7.35. A major initiative in the rural area is the West Durham Rural Pathfinder (WDRP). Following the Haskins Review, WDRP is one of eight Rural Pathfinders nationally, with the aim to explore the process of modernisation of rural service delivery. The Pathfinder aims to achieve:
- Joined-up service delivery
  - Flexible funding
  - A local voice

- 7.36. The overall aim is to achieve a vibrant, sustainable community.
- 7.37. The Pathfinder in West Durham is focussing its efforts on exploring 4 key areas:
- The opportunities that will be created for local businesses by the proposed Eastgate development;
  - Transport needs of young people;
  - Establishing Community Hubs or Neighbourhood Working Centres;
  - Developing a SW Durham Heritage Corridor.
- 7.38. We must support the Pathfinder to ensure that the lessons from these case studies are clear, tangible, and well communicated.
- 7.39. Moving forward, we must ensure that the modernising rural delivery agenda continues to get a sufficiently high profile and that we are appropriately influencing both policy and delivery audiences as part of our place-shaping role.

**Action: support and maintain the sustainability of our rural communities**

We will support the sustainable economic development of the rural area of the District by:

- Bringing forward and promoting the Eastgate development- see Objective B1, as the key driver of economic growth in the Dale;
- Promoting Stanhope's role as a Gateway to Weardale by promoting opportunities for tourism in the rural area- see Objective B2;
- Supporting the work of the Market Town Initiative in Stanhope;
- Bringing forward key sites in Wolsingham to enable the town to perform its role as a focus for future housing and business growth;
- Maintaining public transport infrastructure between all rural settlements, and continue our innovative programmes for improving accessibility to employment centres, such as the Weardale Wheels to Work Programme;
- Supporting the findings of the West Durham Rural Pathfinder and ensuring that we act on recommendations emerging from this to give our communities a stronger voice;
- Supporting and developing the on-going outreach activity, including the Business Link mobile unit and the Action Team bus;
- Ensuring adequate provision of affordable housing for families in our rural areas;
- Raising awareness of the opportunities for farm diversification and the scope of Natural England grant schemes;

## 8. ANNEX A: ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan provides more detail on the steps required to make progress on each Objective over the next 1-5 years. For each Action identified in the report, the Action Plan identifies key tasks, a broad timescale for undertaking each task, the partners involved in delivering the tasks, information on indicative levels of funding required, potential funding sources, broad levels of outputs and outcomes, and the strategic fit of proposals with the Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan, the draft County Durham Economic Strategy, and the Northern Way.

The Action Plan makes a clear distinction between those tasks which will be led by Wear Valley District Council (highlighted in light blue), and those tasks which will need to be led/ delivered by other partners, but where the District Council will need to exercise its strategic influencing role to support and encourage partners to take the necessary lead.

Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
Transformational Objective A1: Identifying and supporting key growth sectors									
Retaining and supporting our existing manufacturing base	Roll-out of Derwentside Engineering Forum to Wear Valley	Forum events involving WV businesses by end 2007.	Derwentside Engineering Forum	WVDC, LEGI Team, Business Link	£10,000	LEGI	25 WV Businesses attending Forum event	Greater collaboration between businesses, leading to improved business growth and retention within the District	Under the RES "Business" Theme, a range of specific actions are identified to boost productivity of businesses, including streamlining support for manufacturing and promoting collaborative opportunities (C2.4).
	Supporting the 50-Fastest	Fastest companies identified by end 2007. Diagnostics by mid-2008. Mentors in place by end 2008.	LEGI Team	Enterprise Agency, ONE, WVDC, Business Link	£420,000 (over 3 years, and across LEGI area, as identified in LEGI bid)	LEGI	50 businesses receiving diagnostic support 25 businesses receiving mentoring	Improved business competitiveness	
Using Netpark as a catalyst for growth	Joint marketing and branding strategy and business support	Joint marketing and branding strategy in place	CDDC	Netpark, University of Durham,	£30,000	CDDC, Local Authorities	Joint marketing strategy	Greater fluidity in occupiers of incubation	The aim of creating a "virtual Netpark" is a specific action identified



**WEAR VALLEY ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
	package across incubators and better quality business support	by 07/08 financial year		Local Authorities, Business Link				premises	in the RES Action Plan (C.3) The County Economic Strategy also stresses the need to re-brand NETPark as one of 6 step-change objectives.
Capitalising on the Eastgate opportunity	Communicating our objectives to partners and the private sector	Intentions published in Council documentation and press by end 2007	WVDC	County Council, private sector	n/a		Strapline published on all Council documentation	Reputation as a District at the forefront of sustainable development and renewable energy technologies	Eastgate has been identified as a priority project for ONE in the RES, and energy is one of nine key sectors identified by the RDA, with a specific aim to harness the region's excellence in renewable energy technologies (C.3)
	Ensuring new developments meet energy efficiency standards	Ongoing- all new developments to meet appropriate BREEAM ratings by 2009	WVDC	Public and private sectors	n/a		First carbon neutral building complete in 2009	Buy-in of all partners to the carbon neutral vision	The RES Action Plan makes specific reference to harnessing the expertise of the region's new and renewable energy sector. (C2.4)
	Ensuring the Council follows best practice in procurement and development	Corporate Sustainability Strategy in place by 2008/9.	WVDC		n/a		Corporate Sustainability Strategy in place		
	Promote Eastgate to renewable energy businesses in the NE	Marketing materials and launch event following resolution of planning/feasibility stages	WVDC	ONE, Renew Tees Valley	£5,000	WVDC	Marketing materials to 50 businesses	Wide interest in Eastgate among potential supplier businesses	
	Establish biomass contracts	Contracts in place in time to supply biomass plant	Eastgate management board	Forestry Commission, farmer groups	n/a			Biomass contracts established with local landowners	
Providing advice,	Providing advice,	Ongoing	Enterprise	Business	Continuation	Existing	Continuation	Increased rates	The RES will see the

**WEAR VALLEY ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
support and guidance	support and guidance, and influencing the regionalisation of Business Link services		Agency	Link, ONE, CDDC, WVDC	of current funding levels	County Durham Business Support members, and LEGI	of current assist outputs	of business growth and inward investment	implementation of the North East Business Start-up programme, and will also develop and support a range of innovative business support and start-up programmes (C2.1).
Strengthen collaboration and networking	Continuing existing programmes, monitoring their effectiveness and considering how they can be rolled-out to other sectors	Evaluate the success of current programmes and develop a forward strategy, 08/09.	Enterprise Agency	Private sector, NRF and LEGI Steering groups, WVDC	Continuation of current funding levels	NRF, LEGI, ONE	Continuation of current assist outputs	Increased rates of business growth and inward investment	The RES aims to "build an enterprise surge", in part through encouraging an entrepreneurs network (C1.2).
Supporting social enterprise	Providing support to the VCS and social enterprise sectors	Develop a forward plan to respond to the current SE mapping work being undertaken by the Enterprise Agency, 07/08.	Enterprise Agency and 2d	WVDC	£20,000	LEGI, Enterprise Agency, NRF	10 VCS/ SE organisations assisted	Improved service offer from SE/ VCS organisations	
<b>Transformational Objective A2: Promoting our city-region connections</b>									
Promoting the Darlington-Bishop Auckland growth corridor	Establish a growth corridor steering group	Steering group established by end of 07/08 financial year	CDEP	Tees Valley JSU, WVDC, Sedgfield Borough Council, Darlington Council, ONE, private sector	£138,000 (as proposed in CDEP pro-forma input to RES Action Plan)	ONE, Councils, private sector	32ha brownfield land remediated 30 businesses created 500 jobs created	Greater strategic planning within growth corridor leading to improved business attraction	The concept of a Darlington-Bishop Auckland growth corridor is supported by the RES Action Plan (E1.1).
Enhancing Crook and Willington connectivity to Durham	Enhance road and public transport links between Crook/ Willington and Durham	Identification of potential capacity improvements on A610 by 09/10	Durham County Council	WVDC	£20,000	DCC	1 feasibility/ options paper for improving road capacity	Identification of priorities to support funding bids	The RES aims to increase intra-regional connectivity for economic growth- Transit 15 Quality Bus Corridors in Durham are proposed post 2009 (E3.2).

**WEAR VALLEY ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
<b>Enabling Objective A3: Providing a modern and efficient business infrastructure</b>									
Identifying a new portfolio of sites and premises	Act on the findings of ELR to identify new employment site, unlock existing sites, and provide further workspace premises for lease. Undertake a feasibility study to look at constraints on existing sites.	New site allocated in new LDF. Developer agreement entered by 09/10. Feasibility study commissioned 07/08.	WVDC	DCC	n/a	n/a	15ha of new employment land allocated 15 new business units built	Increased rates of business start-up and retention within the District	The RES Action Plan identifies the need to overcome market failure in the business property market, and supports a strategic approach to business incubator and workspace investment (E2.1, 2.2).
Addressing gaps in broadband provision	Act on the findings of the ADIT research	Understanding the actions required to address gaps identified by ADIT by end 2007	WDRP	ADIT, private sector providers, WVDC and Teesdale DC	£5,000	WDRP	Engagement of private sector partner to address gaps in provision	Elimination of broadband "cold-spots"	A key objective of the RES is to "widen and deepen ICT infrastructure and take-up in regional businesses" (C2.6)
Maintaining the quality of public transport links	Monitoring public transport connectivity, and linking to the Tees Valley proposals for a Passenger Transport Executive	Ongoing	DCC	WVDC, transport providers, Tees Valley Partnership	n/a	n/a	n/a	Improved connectivity between settlements-improved access to jobs.	
<b>Enabling Objective A4: Increasing aspirations and entrepreneurship</b>									
Increasing rates of business start-up	Establish a package of start-up support	In place by 07/08	LEGI Team	Enterprise Agency, Business Link	£1.8m (over 3 years, for whole West Durham area, as identified in LEGI bid)	LEGI	Tbc- LEGI Programme	Increase rate of business start-up per working age pop.	The RES Action Plan proposes a number of innovative business support programmes, including using the New Entrepreneur Scholarships model, low interest loans, and "enterprise apprenticeships" (C1.1, C1.2)  Building a more
	Extend the New Entrepreneurship Scholarship Emerge programmes	In place by 07/08	LEGI Team	Enterprise Agency, Business Link	£1m (over 3 years, for whole West Durham area, as identified in LEGI bid)	LEGI	Tbc- LEGI Programme	Increased rate of business start-up and retention	

**WEAR VALLEY ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
	Offer flexible lease terms within incubators	Explore the possibility of more flexible lease terms in time for the opening of Innovation House 2.	WVDC	Enterprise Agency	n/a	n/a	n/a	Improved fluidity of occupation	entrepreneurial north is one of 10 key investment priorities for the Northern Way.
Promoting enterprise education in	Encourage schools to participate in the Northern Way Education programme	Encourage schools to participate in the NWEF by end 07/08	Schools	Northern Way	n/a	Northern Way	4 schools participating in Northern Way Education Programme	Improved awareness of enterprise issues in schools	The RES aims to raise the aspirations and attainment of young people, by ensuring that learning programmes include enterprise and core skills of team working and communication (D1.2).
	Other education priorities through the LEGI programme	Implement the recommendations of the County Durham Action Plan for education in schools by 08/09	Schools	DCC, LEGI Team	n/a	LEGI, DCC Enterprise in Schools Programme	1 new Enterprise Advisor post at County level All schools including enterprise education in their curriculum	Improved awareness of enterprise issues in schools Links between schools and Netpark and University of Durham	
Improving entrepreneurship in hard-to-reach communities	Encourage our fastest growing companies to act as mentors	Fastest companies identified by end 2007. Diagnostics by mid-2008. Mentors in place by end 2008.	LEGI Team	Enterprise Agency, ONE, WVDC	£420,000 (over 3 years, and across LEGI area, as identified in LEGI bid)	LEGI	50 businesses receiving diagnostic support 25 businesses receiving mentoring	Improved business competitiveness	The RES stresses the importance of meeting the skills and learning needs of all sections of society (D2.2)
Supporting the self-employed and homeworkers	Establish homeworking hubs in rural areas	Encourage partners to undertake detailed feasibility study	WDRP	ONE, DCC, WVDC, Teesdale DC	£30,000 for feasibility study	WDRP, ONE	1 feasibility study commissioned	n/a	The RES promotes self-employment as a key plank in the aim to create a New Enterprise Surge. ONE will also

WEAR VALLEY ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
		in 08/09							
	Directory of homeworkers	Develop a database of WV homeworkers, as part of feasibility study	Enterprise Agency	ONE	n/a	n/a	Online directory of homeworkers	Improved collaboration and knowledge-sharing	develop a Strategy for Investment in Rural Economic Centres (E1.2, C1.2)
	Encouraging development of live/work units	Developing SPG on home working and live/work units, to coincide with LDF	WVDC		n/a	n/a	SPG	Provision for live/work units in new developments	
	Promote the District as a location for a rural call centre	Liaising with ONE to see how they are taking forward the results of their research into rural entrepreneurship, by end 2007	WVDC	DCC, Enterprise Agency, ONE	n/a	n/a	n/a	An agreed way forward with ONE on how to promote rural call centres	
Enabling Objective A5: Capturing a greater share of inward investment									
Marketing the District	Ear-mark business land sale funds and LABGI funds for marketing work	Ensure that LABGI funds for 07/08 will be available for marketing in 08/09	WVDC		n/a	n/a	n/a	Funds secured for District-specific marketing	The RES Action Plan highlights the need to Use Image to Meet the Needs of the North East (E4.2, C2.8))
	Continue to work with inward investment agencies to promote the District	Ongoing	WVDC	DCC, ONE	n/a	n/a	n/a	Greater direction of regional and county enquiries directed to WV.	
	Marketing to potential inward investors	Produce marketing material (08/09) and market to targeted businesses (09/10)	WVDC	DCC, Enterprise Agency, ONE	£30,000	WVDC, Enterprise Agency	Marketing material to 50 businesses	Increased levels of inward investment to the District	
Transformational Objective B1: Making Eastgate happen									

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Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
Accelerating progress on Eastgate	Produce a Business Plan	Business Plan produced by end 07/08	ONE	WVDC, Weardale Task Force, DCC	£50,000	ONE	Business Plan produced	Clear way forward for Eastgate	Eastgate is specifically mentioned in the RES Action Plan as one of four Regional Energy Centres, designed to showcase sustainable approaches to the use of energy by businesses, public organisations and domestic users (C3.1)
	Secure the engagement of research partners	Involve Newcastle University and University of Northumbria in the development of the Business Plan	ONE	University of Newcastle, University of Northumbria	n/a	n/a	n/a	Engagement of research partners	
	Proactively market the site to boutique/spa hotel operators	Identify and market to potential operators during 07/08	Eastgate Management Board	ONE, WVDC	n/a	n/a	n/a	Hotel operator engaged by 2008	
Enabling Objective B2: Promoting the visitor economy									
Developing the momentum for the Durham Dales brand	Promoting and rolling out the Weardale Visitor Network	Ongoing	WVDC	ATP, DCC, Stanhope MTI	£10,000	ATP, MTI	n/a	Continued success of, and engagement with, the Visitor Network	The RES Action Plan highlights the need to invest to strengthen the existing tourism product, and to maximise the impact of natural and cultural assets (E4.1) The County Economic Strategy identifies tourism, heritage and culture as a key "economic accelerator".
	Influence the development of the marketing strategy for the County	Ongoing 07/08	WVDC	ATP	n/a	n/a	n/a	Durham Dales as a key element of the County marketing strategy	
	Ensuring consistency of marketing strategy at all levels	Ongoing liaison	ATP	Relevant local authorities in Cumbria and Durham, ONE, and the AONB	n/a	n/a	n/a	Consistency in marketing strategy	
Developing visitor services	Encouraging participation in the Weardale visitor	Ongoing	WVDC	ATP, DCC,	£10,000	ATP, MTI		Continued success of, and engagement	See above

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Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
	network							with, the Visitor Network	
	Promote opportunities for farm diversification	Ongoing	DEFRA		n/a	n/a	n/a	Increased viability of farm-based businesses	
	Establish a single investment package for smaller scale tourism interventions	Establish package in 08/09 for 3-year delivery period	WVDC	ATP, Visitor Network, Stanhope MTI	£100,000	ONE, ATP, Stanhope MTI, WVDC	5 projects benefiting	Improved tourism offer	
Transformational Objective C1: Improving secondary education									
Capitalising on the BSF Programme	Review secondary school provision	Undertake a detailed review of provision in 10/11	DCC	WVDC, LSC	n/a	DCC	n/a	Agreed way forward for the BSF Programme	The RES Action Plan states that ONE will engage with the BSF Programme to maximise the role that schools have in addressing the economic needs of the region (D1.3).
Improving educational quality and achievement	Encouraging involvement in secondary school provision	Encourage schools to develop a programme for parent engagement in 08/09	WVDC	DCC, Schools	n/a	DCC	All schools identifying a programme for parent engagement	Increased aspirations and attainment	The RES Action Plan aims to raise aspirations and attainment of young people by developing a broader curriculum offer and combining academic and vocational learning.
	Recruiting high quality head teachers	Ongoing	DCC	WVDC	£100,000	DCC	n/a	First-class school leadership	
	Promote enterprise in education	See Objective A4							
Transformational Objective C2: Improving post-16 education									
Bringing together post-16 education	Creating a more joined-up and diverse offer	Encouraging debate between partners from 09/10 onwards, to inform BSF Programme	DCC	Schools, College, LSC	n/a	n/a	n/a	Agreed way forward for restructuring of post-16 provision	
Cementing Bishop Auckland	Widening the range of vocational courses	Ongoing from 07/08	BA College	WVDC, LSC, DCC	n/a	n/a	n/a	Strong private sector	The RES Action Plan highlights the need to

**WEAR VALLEY ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
College's position	and engaging the private sector							involvement and engagement on the Services Design Group	address increased demand for higher level skills to meet the needs of strategically important sectors, and the need to engage employers (D1.1). Meeting employer skills needs is one of 10 Key Investment Priorities for te Northern Way.
	Understanding and tackling the barriers to post-16 education	Encourage partners to undertake an in-depth review of local barriers to education and training in 08/09	LSC	DCC	£30,000	LSC	Study exploring barriers and identifying recommendations for how these can be addressed	Action Plan for improving access to education	The RES Action Plan highlights the need to develop an understanding of the NEET group.
<b>Enabling Objective C3: Tackling Employability</b>									
Create a local employment partnership	Create a local employment partnership to coordinate support for workless people	Employment partnership in place for start of 08/09 year	WVDC	LSC, JC+, LSP, NRF Team, LEGI Team, Connexions, training providers	n/a	n/a	n/a	Improved coordination and delivery of employability activity	The RES Action Plan aims to increase economic inclusion and improve access to employment by implementing the Regional Employability Framework (D2.1). The RES also aims to raise economic participation in deprived communities and will support improved sub-regional delivery through a City Strategy approach (D2.2). The RES Action Plan also notes the importance of public sector employment in tackling unemployment. The County Economic
Developing the role of the public sector in tackling employability	Developing a programme to target particular jobs at the long-term unemployed and workless	Action Plan and agreement with JC+ and Council HR Dept in place ready for first targeted recruits in 08/09.	WVDC	JC+	None (targeted recruiting of existing posts)	n/a	10 LT unemployed into FT employment	Demonstration to other partners on role of public sector in tackling LT unemployment	



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Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
									Strategy stresses the need to tackle the ingrained culture of worklessness in many communities. Bringing more people into employment is one of 10 key investment priorities for the Northern Way (C1)
Transformational Objective D1: Increase the population base									
Accelerating house completions	Accelerating house completions and bringing forward brownfield sites	Continue to bring forward and market allocated housing sites	WVDC		n/a	n/a	290 house completions per year	Sustainable population growth	The RES Action Plan aims to attract and retain skilled people to the region (D3.1) and adopt a regional talent attraction and retention strategy (D3.2). Achieving a step-change in the quality of the residential offer is one of 6 "radical change" actions that the County Durham Economic Strategy identifies as being of key importance in the County. The County Economic Strategy also aims to increase the number of graduates in the workforce.
Talent retention	Consider how a talent retention scheme might operate across the District	Undertake feasibility scheme in 2010/11	WVDC	ONE	£30,000	ONE	Feasibility project	Actions identified to attract and retain more graduates to the District	
Enabling Objective D2: Re-vitalising our housing market									
Focus Decent Homes investment	Achieve the Decent Homes standard by 2010, focussing on areas that can best act as a catalyst for regeneration.	2010	Dale and Valley Homes	Decent Homes	£26m	Decent Homes	Decent Homes Standards achieved		National policy objective relating to meeting the Decent Homes standard.
Housing market	Focus housing	2007-2010	WVDC	Communitie	n/a	Communiti		Vibrant housing	National objective to

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Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
renewal in priority areas	market renewal efforts on priority areas in Bishop Auckland, Tow Law and Coundon.			s England. ONE		es England. ONE		markets, no areas of low demand	tackle areas of low demand housing through the HMR process and the Sustainable Communities agenda.
Transformational Objective E1 Cement Bishop Auckland's position as a major District centre									
Attracting national multiples	Identify and market appropriate sites and premises	Engage with target multiples (in BA Masterplan) and seek to identify appropriate sites during 07/08.	WVDC		n/a	n/a	3 new national multiples by 2009.	Greater expenditure and visitor retention within the town centre	The RES Action Plan aims to "support the economic hearts of the region", with specific emphasis on developing strong internal connectivity between urban cores and surrounding labour markets and market towns (E3.2). The RES also notes the importance of cultural and leisure facilities in the delivery and improvement of sustainable communities (E1.3). The County Economic Strategy stresses the role that the economic contribution of towns can make to accelerating economic performance.
Support our independent retailers	Providing appropriate business support	Develop a programme of retail specific business support, and market to town centre businesses	Enterprise Agency	WVDC	£20,000	Enterprise Agency	20 businesses assisted	Increased viability of independents.	
Establishing a cultural quarter	Establish a cultural quarter and associated grant aid and business support in Fore Bondgate	Develop publicity to highlight the cultural quarter, and encourage retailers to develop an events programme and joint marketing, combined with smallscale physical improvements, in 08/09	WVDC		£50,000	WVDC	5 new business attracted	Increased footfall and increased business turnover	
Linking Bracks Farm to the town centre	Establishing pedestrian and cycle links between Bracks and the town centre	Develop a sustainable transport plan in 08/09	WVDC	Private sector developers	£10,000 for plan, use of S106 to fund pedestrian and cycle	Private sector (S106)	n/a	Improved links from Bracks Farm to the town centre	

**WEAR VALLEY ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
Implement the recommendations of the masterplan	Enhancing existing attractions and improving gateways and signage	Identify priority interventions in 07/08, develop signage in 08/09, improve attractions in 09/10	WVDC	ATP	£100,000	WVDC	n/a	Increased visitor numbers in city centre	
	Promoting residential opportunities in the town centre	Identify and market appropriate sites and premises during 07/08	WVDC	Private developers	n/a	n/a		Increased developer interest in Bishop Auckland	
Expand the programme of events	Develop and enhance the events programme in the town	Ongoing	WVDC	Private sector	£10,000	WVDC, private sector	n/a	Increased footfall and visitor numbers in town centre	The RES Action Plan intends to coordinate investment in high-quality festivals and events.
<b>Enabling Objective E2: Support the sustainability of the former coalfield communities</b>									
Enabling the coalfield communities to become vibrant and self-sustaining	Take forward the Area Development Frameworks for Coundon and Tow Law	Make funding applications in 07/08	WVDC	English Partnerships	n/a	EP Coalfields Programme	2 successful funding applications	Programme of funding improvements in place for Coundon and Tow Law	The RES Action Plan highlights the need to develop and implement a strategic approach to market towns and rural service centres (E1.2). Particular emphasis will be on those investments which maximise the contribution from all partners, and which impact on regional economic performance.
	Support Crook's role as a vibrant district centre, by making improvements to physical infrastructure and supporting community and cultural resources, through the MTI	07/08- identify funding priorities 08/11- on-going revenue support to community centre and cultural cluster 08/09- physical improvements to physical fabric of town	WVDC	Crook MTI, private sector	£500,000	WVDC, Crook MTI, NRF.	5 community organisations assisted	Improved vibrancy in the town	
	Promoting Willington's role and enhancing transport connectivity to the	Promoting Willington's employment and housing sites on	WVDC		n/a	n/a	Engagement of private sector interest at	Increased developer interest in Willington	

**WEAR VALLEY ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

Action	Task	Timescale	Lead partner	Other partners	Indicative funding	Funding sources	Indicative outputs	Indicative Outcomes	Strategic Fit
	city	on-going basis					Low Willington employment site		
Enabling Objective E3: Support the sustainability of our rural communities									
Support the sustainability of our rural communities	Promote Stanhope's role as a Gateway to Weardale through the MTI	07/08- identify priorities for signage and small-scale visitor improvements (e.g. parking, walks, picknicking) 08/09- implement activity to address priorities	Stanhope MTI	Weardale Task Force, WVDC	£100,000	Stanhope MTI	n/a	Improved visitor facilities in Stanhope	See above.
	Bring forward key sites in Wolsingham	Working with private sector partners to bring forward and market the steelworks site and adjacent employment land- 07/08	WVDC	Private sector	n/a	Private developer	Site brought forward for housing and employment use	Increased housing and business opportunities in Wolsingham	
	Support the findings of the WDRP evaluation	tbc							
	Supporting and developing outreach activity	Ongoing support	WVDC	DCC, College, JC+	n/a	DCC, JC+, NRF, LEGI	n/a	Increased engagement in employment, training and education	