

Public Document Pack

14 March 2008

Dear Councillor

A meeting of the Council will be held in the **Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Thursday, 27th March, 2008 at 6.00 pm**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roy Templeman', written over a light grey rectangular background.

R TEMPLEMAN

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Apologies for Absence
2. To Confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 28 February 2008 (Pages 1 - 14)
3. Public Speaking
4. To receive declarations of interest from Members
5. Report from the Leader of the Council
6. Reports from Portfolio Holders
 - a) Resources and Value for Money
 - b) Regeneration and Strategic Planning
 - c) Community engagement and Partnerships
 - d) Neighbourhood Services
 - e) Health and Well-Being

7. Questions to Leader and Executive Members
8. Annual Audit and Inspection Letter (Pages 15 - 38)
9. Transition Plan (Pages 39 - 106)
10. Data Quality (Pages 107 - 172)
11. Correspondence
12. Conferences
13. Common Seal

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER-LE-STREET

Report of the meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Thursday, 28 February 2008 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor A Humes (Chairman)

Councillors

A Turner	C J Jukes
S Barr	W Laverick
J W Barrett	M D May
L E W Brown	P B Nathan
R Court	J M Proud
G K Davidson	D L Robson
L Ebbatson	M Sekowski
P Ellis	J Shiell
M Gollan	T J Smith
R Harrison	D Thompson
S A Henig	F Wilkinson
A K Holden	A Willis

Officers: R Templeman (Chief Executive), I Forster (Director of Corporate Services), T Galloway (Director of Development Services), J Henderson (Acting Head of Resources Directorate), I Herberson (Head of Corporate Finance), J Elder (Risk and Financial Services Manager), S High (Leisure Services Manager), C Potter (Head of Legal and Democratic Services) and C Turnbull (Democratic Services Officer)

140. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors G Armstrong and PH May.

141. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 31 JANUARY 2008

The minutes of the proceedings at the meeting of the District Council held on 31 January 2008 copies of which had previously been circulated, were submitted.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.”

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

142. PUBLIC SPEAKING

No requests had been received from members of the public to speak at the meeting in accordance with the Council's agreed policy.

143. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Councillors C Jukes and SA Henig declared personal and prejudicial interests in item no. 12 on the agenda in relation to fees for Selby Cottage Nursery.

144. REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader, Councillor L Ebbatson, advised that the key decisions taken by the Executive on 4 February 2008 had been circulated to Members.

Dreamspace

The Leader referred to the tragic circumstances surrounding the Dreamspace event on 23 July 2006 and the subsequent Police and Health and Safety investigation that had been conducted over the previous 18 months. She said that as always, our thoughts and sympathies are extended to the bereaved families and those who suffered injury in the incident. Members would be aware that the Council had cooperated fully with both the Police and Health and Safety Executive during the course of their investigations. She advised that the purpose of this update was to advise of the point that the investigations had reached and the action being proposed.

The Leader advised that on 13 February, the Police announced the results of their investigations and action they intended to take. The Chief Executive had emailed Members with the information and advised her, as Leader, of the events as soon as it was available. Maurice Agis the artist responsible for the Dreamspace creation was charged with gross negligence manslaughter and a further offence under the Health and Safety at Work Act. The promotion Company Brouhaha, working for Mr Agis was also to be charged with offences under section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act relating to their duty to protect their employees. The Police had also brought a charge against the Council, as owners of the Riverside Park, under section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act on the grounds that the Council did not properly assess the risks before permitting the exhibit to be exhibited at Riverside Park. The Leader advised that Section 3 was a broad responsibility defined under the Act and related to the need to ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable, the public are not exposed to risk. A further charge had been brought against the Director of Development Services alleging that risks were not properly assessed.

The Leader reported that a preliminary Magistrates hearing was held on the 26 February for consideration of referral of proceedings to a Crown Court. The manslaughter charges against Mr Agis were referred to Crown Court and a further Magistrates hearing was scheduled for 22 April to further consider the Health and Safety offences and possible referral to Crown Court at that time.

She stated it would be inappropriate to discuss any of the details of the Council case, as the matters would subsequently be considered by a Court. The Council had throughout the process been supported by specialist legal advice that extended to the engagement of Queens Counsel. The Council's Insurers were covering the costs of that advice.

The Leader stated that Officers within Leisure Services and the Director of Development Services had had access to welfare support throughout the process and the Chief Executive would be ensuring that additional management support was provided within the Development Services Directorate.

Cestria Housing Association

The Leader reported that Cestria Housing Association was a legal entity following the successful negotiations completed on 4 February 2008 and the Council looked forward to seeing Cestria operating as a major partner in the District.

Budget

The Leader said that the main focus of the meeting was the budget which would be the last budget set by the Council and she thanked everyone involved in drawing it up. She advised the proposals contained within the budget took into account the views of residents, Councillors, Council staff and local businesses. The underlying principles were

1. To maintain excellent service delivery and
2. To lay a firm foundation over the following 12 months for the people of Chester-le-Street and their representatives in the new authority via a single corporate priority and the four elements within it, namely, Partnerships for the Future; Town Centre Investment; Strengthening Partnerships and Neighbourhoods.

Local Government Review

With regard to Local Government Review, the Leader advised the Implementation Orders had been issued.

ShiNE Awards

The Leader advised that a film crew had been in and out of the Civic Centre during the month in the run up to the ShiNE Awards the following week. She explained that the ShiNE Awards were the first of their kind in the region and were in recognition of the achievements of local government. The Council was been short-listed in the Improvement Category.

It's a Knock Out

In conclusion, the Leader reminded Members of the open invitation to join in 'It's a Knock Out', a fun-day arranged by the Council with and for people with disabilities, that would be held on Saturday 5 April 2008.

145. REPORTS FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

a. Resources and Value for Money

Councillor SA Henig advised that later in the meeting the Council would be asked to approve the recommendations of the Executive on the final budget to be set by the Council. He confirmed that the recommendations made by the Executive took full account of the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. He thanked everyone involved in the process, not just on this occasion but previously as well. He paid credit to the Members and Officers for achieving the budget proposals in the light of a low national settlement.

Councillor Henig paid special thanks to Linda Chambers for her service with the Council.

b. Regeneration and Strategic Planning

Councillor C Jukes advised that the last issue of Members Update featured an article on his portfolio and he had nothing further to report.

c. Community Engagement and Partnerships

Councillor S Barr reminder Members of the Member Discussion Group to be held on 5 March 2008 and urged their attendance. He advised that the questionnaire on 360% appraisals, previously circulated to Members, was incorrect and that a revised questionnaire would be issued.

d. Neighbourhood Services

There was no report from Councillor SCL Westrip.

e. Health and Well-Being

There was no report from Councillor M Potts.

146. QUESTIONS TO LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Councillor P Nathan asked the following question:

'I have noted increasing amounts of rubbish being dropped in the town centre of late and residents have complained to me about this. This litter appears to come in particular from fast food shops.

Could the portfolio holder tell us what steps are being taken to deal with littering in the Town Centre? How many people have been talked to, given warnings or fined in instances relating to littering?’

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, the Leader advised that the Front Street was cleansed in accordance with the statutory requirements of DEFRA and the Environmental Protection Act 1989 (EPA) for Zone 1 areas. Zone 1 areas were classified as town centres, shopping centres and shopping street areas. The requirement was that these areas are cleansed on a daily basis.

She advised that Front Street was cleansed by the area based cleansing operative once a day every day on a seven day basis. The area based cleansing operative also monitored the Front Street and surrounding area throughout the day each day (excluding Sunday) and responded to incidences of additional litter as and when they occurred.

The Environmental Services Manager and the Environmental Services Performance Officer had advised that the quantity of litter collected was increasing and with the assistance of the area based cleansing operative they were collecting data and evidence specifically on locations and times of littering incidents on the Front Street. Armed with the information they gather they will visit those retail premises shown to be the offending to remind the proprietors of their duty of care to keep the area surrounding their premises clean and tidy and seek their cooperation in ensuring that the Front Street is maintained to a Grade A standard.

The Leader further advised that the Environmental Services Manager and the Town Centre Manager were also working together to adopt a partnership approach with the business community through the Business Forum to explore ways of addressing the issue of increasing litter on Front Street and other Zone 1 areas throughout the district.

Between January and February of 2008 the Enforcement Team had issued a total of fifteen on the spot £50 littering fines. The Enforcement Team also carried out increased patrols in the Front Street area and was regularly liaising with staff at Park View School regarding pupils littering.

In conclusion, the Leader stated that the problem was being tackled from 2 angles cleansing – at source with local businesses and with the offenders.

147. TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2008

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the report of the meeting of the Audit Committee held 17 January 2008, copies of which had previously been circulated, be accepted.”

148. NEW LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Consideration was given to a report from the Risk and Financial Services Manager seeking approval to a New Local Code of Corporate Governance that had been developed in response to the new Cipfa/Solace governance framework.

The Risk and Financial Services Manager introduced and spoke to the report.

Councillor R Harrison proposed, seconded by Councillor AK Holden, that the recommendations in the report be approved.

The Council RESOLVED:

“1. That the New Local Code of Corporate Governance, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and adopted.

2. That the process of producing the Annual Governance Statement through the Corporate Governance Steering Group, be approved.”

149. CORPORATE STATEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Consideration was given to a report from the Health and Safety Manager seeking approval to a revised Statement of General Policy Health and Safety at Work that reflected the changes made to the corporate structure, including the Housing Stock Transfer and formation of Cestria Community Housing.

The Director of Corporate Services introduced the report.

Councillor L Armstrong proposed, seconded by Councillor S Barr, that the recommendation in the report be approved.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the Statement of General Policy Health and Safety at Work, detailed in the appendix to the report, be approved and adopted with immediate effect.”

150. SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

A report from the Head of Corporate Finance advising that Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a duty on the Council to consider all of its budgets, policies and plans from the standpoint of their potential contribution to the reduction of crime and disorder, was submitted.

Councillor L Ebbatson proposed, seconded by Councillor SA Henig, that the contents of the report be noted.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the contents of the report be noted.”

151. 2008/9 GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Corporate Finance that summarised the 2008/2009 General Fund Budget proposals and Council Tax recommendations made by the Executive.

Councillor SA Henig introduced the report advising that the budget recommendations had been made following consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and non-domestic ratepayers. He gave details of the Executive’s recommendations regarding proposed priority areas.

Councillor P Nathan referred to the proposed priority of ‘Investment in the Town Centre’ and stated that Members need to know how the suggested allocated funding was to be spent.

The Leader advised the Executive had identified priority areas for the following twelve months, making best use of resources to leave the Council best placed. She confirmed that Members will have the opportunity to be involved in the decision making process.

The Chief Executive commented that the Town Centre Manager was working closely with businesses. Action Plans would be prepared to support the priority areas utilising the Action Learning Set process.

The Leader confirmed that Executive Members would be involved with the Action Learning Sets and that there was a need to examine how Scrutiny could be re-aligned to be engaged in delivery. The Annual Council Meeting would formally review the process.

Councillor SA Henig proposed, seconded by Councillor GK Davidson, that the recommendations in the report be approved.

The Council RESOLVED:

“1. That a net General Fund Revenue Budget of £8.247 million for 2008/2009 be approved and the redirection of resources outlined in the report be agreed.

2. That a Band D Council Tax for 2008/2009 of £181.17 be approved.”

Councillor P Nathan voted against the recommendations.

152. GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/9

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Corporate Finance that summarised the 2008/2009 General Fund Capital Programme proposals and detailed the recommendations of the Executive.

Councillor SA Henig introduced the report and advised that bids would not be pursued until finance was available.

Councillor AK Holden proposed, seconded by Councillor L Ebbatson, that the recommendation in the report be approved.

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the recommendations of the Executive as detailed in Section 6.2 of the report be approved.”

Councillor P Nathan voted against the recommendation.

153. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Corporate Services seeking approval to a proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2008/2009.

Councillor SA Henig proposed, seconded by Councillor GK Davidson, that the recommendations in the report be approved.

The Council RESOLVED:

“1. That the Treasury Management Strategy detailed in the report be approved.

2. That the Treasury Management Practice – Credit and Counterparty Risk Management provisions contained in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

3. That the schedule of counter parties detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.”

Councillor T Smith left the meeting at 6.57pm

154. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Corporate Finance detailing the prudential indicators for 2008/2009 and the expected outturn for 2007/2008.

Councillor SA Henig proposed, seconded by Councillor AK Holden, that the recommendations in the report be approved.

The Council RESOLVED:

- “1. That the prudential indicators and limits as detailed in the report be approved.
2. That for capital expenditure incurred before 1 April 2008 or which in the future will be Supported capital expenditure, the MRP policy will be:
 - **Based on CFR** – MRP will be based on the non-housing CFR.”

155. 2008/9 COUNCIL TAX SETTING

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Corporate Finance on the 2008/2009 Council Tax.

Councillor SA Henig advised that the proposed increase in Council Tax was the lowest for a number of years despite the Council receiving the lowest amount per capita in Government grant.

The Leader advised that the increase proposed was 2.9% for the Council, 3.6% with Parish Council precepts included. The Council Tax proposed would be the second lowest in the County and the increase in money terms was lower than in the previous year.

Councillor L Ebbatson proposed, seconded by Councillor L Armstrong, that the formal resolution as circulated, be approved.

The Council RESOLVED:

- “1. That the General Fund Revenue budget for 2008/2009 as submitted to this Council Meeting be approved.
2. That it be noted that at its meeting on 29 November 2007 the Council calculated the following amounts for the year 2008/2009 in accordance with Regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-
 - a) 17,086.65 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities’ (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year.

- b) Part of the Council’s area:-

Parish of Bournmoor	680.42
Parish of Edmondsley	176.59
Parish of Great Lumley	1,212.73
Parish of Kimblesworth and Plawsworth	502.08
Parish of Little Lumley	521.97

Parish of North Lodge	897.20
Parish of Ouston	910.77
Parish of Pelton	1,828.63
Parish of Sacriston	1,417.50
Parish of Urpeth	1,109.74
Parish of Waldrige	1,473.53

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

3. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2008/2009 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-
 - a) £31,287,330 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (e) of the Act.
 - b) £22,825,347 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act.
 - c) £8,461,983 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
 - d) £5,151,467 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant, additional grant or relevant special grant increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its collection fund to its general fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and increased by the amount of any sum which the Council estimates will be transferred from its collection fund to its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) Directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 February 1994.
 - e) £193.75 being the amount at 3(c) above less the amount at 3(d) above, all divided by the amount at 2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
 - f) £215,000 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.

g) £181.17 being the amount at 3(e) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(f) above by the amount at 2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.

h) Part of the Council's area:-	£
Parish of Bournmoor	200.28
Parish of Edmondsley	198.16
Parish of Great Lumley	196.84
Parish of Kimblesworth and Plawsworth	206.07
Parish of Little Lumley	195.54
Parish of North Lodge	201.23
Parish of Ouston	192.15
Parish of Pelton	205.23
Parish of Sacriston	209.39
Parish of Urpeth	201.90
Parish of Waldridge	198.14

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3(g) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

i) Valuation Bands

PARISHES	Council Tax bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Bournmoor	133.52	155.77	178.03	200.28	244.78	289.29	333.80	400.56
Edmondsley	132.11	154.12	176.14	198.16	242.20	286.23	330.27	396.32
Great Lumley	131.23	153.10	174.97	196.84	240.58	284.32	328.07	393.68
Kimblesworth	137.38	160.28	183.17	206.07	251.86	297.66	343.45	412.14
Little Lumley	130.36	152.09	173.81	195.54	238.99	282.45	325.90	391.08
North Lodge	134.15	156.51	178.87	201.23	245.95	290.67	335.38	402.46
Ouston	128.10	149.45	170.80	192.15	234.85	277.55	320.25	384.30
Pelton	136.82	159.62	182.43	205.23	250.84	296.44	342.05	410.46
Sacriston	139.59	162.86	186.12	209.39	255.92	302.45	348.98	418.78
Urpeth	134.60	157.03	179.47	201.90	246.77	291.63	336.50	403.80
Waldridge	132.09	154.11	176.12	198.14	242.17	286.20	330.23	396.28
Chester-le-Street	120.78	140.91	161.04	181.17	221.43	261.69	301.95	362.34

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3(g) and 3(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

4. That it be noted that for the year 2008/2009 the Durham County Council, Durham Police Authority and the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority for County Durham and Darlington have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

<u>Precepting Authority</u>	Valuation Bands							
	<u>Band A</u>	<u>Band B</u>	<u>Band C</u>	<u>Band D</u>	<u>Band E</u>	<u>Band F</u>	<u>Band G</u>	<u>Band H</u>
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Durham County Council	682.92	796.74	910.56	1,024.38	1,252.02	1,479.66	1,707.30	2,048.76
Durham Police Authority	94.98	110.81	126.64	142.47	174.13	205.79	237.45	284.94
Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority	55.08	64.26	73.44	82.62	100.98	119.34	137.70	165.24

5. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3(i) and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts at the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2008/2009 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

<u>Part of the Council's area</u>	<u>Band A</u>	<u>Band B</u>	<u>Band C</u>	<u>Band D</u>	<u>Band E</u>	<u>Band F</u>	<u>Band G</u>	<u>Band H</u>
Bournmoor	966.50	1,127.58	1,288.67	1,449.75	1,771.92	2,094.08	2,416.25	2,899.50
Edmondsley	965.09	1,125.93	1,286.78	1,447.63	1,769.33	2,091.02	2,412.72	2,895.26
Great Lumley	964.21	1,124.91	1,285.61	1,446.31	1,767.71	2,089.11	2,410.52	2,892.62
Kimbleworth	970.36	1,132.09	1,293.81	1,455.54	1,778.99	2,102.45	2,425.90	2,911.08
Little Lumley	963.34	1,123.90	1,284.45	1,445.01	1,766.12	2,087.24	2,408.35	2,890.02
North Lodge	967.13	1,128.32	1,289.51	1,450.70	1,773.08	2,095.46	2,417.83	2,901.40
Ouston	961.08	1,121.26	1,281.44	1,441.62	1,761.98	2,082.34	2,402.70	2,883.24
Pelton	969.80	1,131.43	1,293.07	1,454.70	1,777.97	2,101.23	2,424.50	2,909.40
Sacrison	972.57	1,134.67	1,296.76	1,458.86	1,783.05	2,107.24	2,431.43	2,917.72
Urpeth	967.58	1,128.84	1,290.11	1,451.37	1,773.90	2,096.42	2,418.95	2,902.74
Waldridge	965.07	1,125.92	1,286.76	1,447.61	1,769.30	2,090.99	2,412.68	2,895.22
Ch-le-St	953.76	1,112.72	1,271.68	1,430.64	1,748.56	2,066.48	2,384.40	2,861.28

6. That the Head of Corporate Finance be authorised to serve notices, enter into agreements, give receipts, make adjustments, institute proceedings and take any action available to the Council to collect or enforce the collection of the Non-Domestic Rate and the Council Tax from those persons liable.”

Councillor P Nathan voted against the recommendation.

156. CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items of correspondence.

157. CONFERENCES

There were no invitations to attend conferences.

158. COMMON SEAL

The Council RESOLVED:

“That the action of the Officer in affixing the Common Seal of the Council to the following documents be confirmed:

Pension Shortfall Guarantee Agreement in duplicate.
Chester-le-Street District Council and Cestria Community Housing Association Limited TP3 (in triplicate)
Chester-le-Street District Council and Cestria Community Housing Association – Lease of property at the Bullion Lane Depot, Bullion Lane, Chester-le-Street (in duplicate)
Chester-le-Street District Council and Cestria Community Housing Association Limited – Development Agreement for refurbishment of Council Housing Stock (in duplicate)
Chester-le-Street District Council and Cestria Community Housing Association Limited – Annex 2 The Plans (in triplicate)
Chester-le-Street District Council and Cestria Community Housing Limited TP3 (in duplicate)
Agreement of Assignment between Chester-le-Street District Council and Tunstall Telecom Limited and Cestria Community Housing Limited (in triplicate)
Chester-le-Street District Council and Prudential Trustee Company Limited Collateral Warranty (in duplicate)
Chester-le-Street District Council and Cestria Community Housing Association Limited – Transfer Agreement (in triplicate)
Section 105 Agreement in duplicate relating to land at Lingey House Farm, Sacriston
Lease in duplicate relating to Unit 15 at Stella Gill
Lease relating to Unit 20 at Stella Gill
Form DS1 relating to 40 Seventh Avenue, Chester-le-Street

Lease in triplicate relating to Unit 5/6 at Sacriston Industrial Estate
Duplicate Lease relating to Unit 20 at Stella Gill
Form DS1 in relation to 39 Medway, Great Lumley
Form DS1 in relation to 46 Northlands, Chester-le-Street”

The meeting terminated at 7.07 pm



Chester-le-Street
District Council

REPORT TO: Council

DATE OF MEETING: 27th March 2008

REPORT OF: Director of Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Annual Audit and Inspection letter

ITEM NUMBER:

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Audit Commission's recently published Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for Chester-le-Street. The letter is incorporated as Appendix 1. Representatives of the Audit Commission will be present at the council meeting to present their audit and inspection findings and answer members queries.
- 1.2 The letter provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council. It draws on the most recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), the findings and conclusions from the audit of the Council for 2006/07 and from any inspections undertaken since the last Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. It includes the councils Direction of Travel report for the previous year.
- 1.3 The letter provides some very positive messages about the council's progress over the last couple of years.
- 1.4 Members are recommended to:
- 1) Receive and welcome the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter;
 - 2) Consider the key messages set out within the letter
 - 3) Agree to building the key messages and recommendations into the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The Chief Executive, Directors, and Service Team Managers have been engaged in responding to aspects of the draft Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.

2.2 No other consultations were considered necessary at this stage including external consultations or engagement including the County Council.

3. CORPORATE PLAN AND PRIORITIES

3.1 The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter is relevant to the Corporate Plan and the seven existing priorities of the council. Indeed it addresses progress against them.

3.2 The council's choice to move towards a single priority of '**People and Place**' priority was considered as part of the budget setting process and has been fully discussed with the Council's Relationship Manager.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial implications and value for money statement

The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter assesses the council's Use of Resources, advises on the council's accounts and provides a value for money judgement. The letter shows an improvement in the Council's Use of Resources score, an unqualified opinion on the council's accounts and concludes that the council's value for money arrangements are adequate. It is considered that the council remains on course for delivering and improving value for money.

4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Implications

The subject matter of this report has relevance to Local Government Reorganisation. In particular the letter provides recommendations to what the council ought to be doing to contribute to the process. It is considered that the council has already acted to address these recommendations. Furthermore the County Council ought to be assured of the Council's commitment to improving service delivery and use of resources evidenced by the Audit Commission's conclusions

4.3 Legal

It is not felt that there are any significant legal issues arising from this report.

4.4 Personnel

The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter is relevant to all employees and Members. Its positivity is something that all associated with the organisation can be proud of.

4.5 Other Services

The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter has implications to all services delivered by the council.

4.6 Diversity

There are no specific diversity issues in respect of the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.

4.7 Risk

There are clear risks to the organisation in failing to continue to maintain and improve on its progress in its remaining year. The council remains committed to improving its services although it faces difficult capacity challenges through the transition period. The council will be undertaking a strategic risk assessment once the delivery plans in relation to '**People and Place**' have been developed. The report recommends that the learning from the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter is built into the Corporate Improvement Plan. This ought to mitigate any risks associated with failure to address advice given in the letter.

4.8 Crime and Disorder

It is not felt there are any specific implications of the report on Crime and Disorder.

4.9 Data Quality

Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation and the appendices attached are accurate, timely, consistent and comprehensive. The council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.

4.10 Other Implications

The report does not relate to a key decision. It is considered that the information will be communicated to the community and stakeholders by inclusion on the web-site. The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter has already been made available to staff and Members through the intranet in a draft form. There are considered to be no significant issues arising out of the subject matter of the report.

5. BACKGROUND, POSITION STATEMENT AND OPTION APPRAISAL

5.1 The audit commission have recently published their Annual Audit and Inspection letter. The letter is incorporated as Appendix 1. It provides an

overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council. It draws on the most recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), the findings and conclusions from the audit of the Council for 2006/07 and from any inspections undertaken since the last Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. It includes the council's Direction of Travel report for the previous year. The letter provides some very positive messages about the council's progress over the last couple of years.

5.2 The key messages arising from the Commission's inspection work are:

- The Council has continued to improve services in its priority areas and overall. The scale of the Council's improvement is now reflected in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) category which has improved from 'poor' to 'good' as a result of a CPA inspection in June 2007. The Council was the first district council to achieve such a significant improvement in its CPA category;
- Progress against the Council's priorities and contribution to wider community outcomes is good. There are many examples of where the Council has worked closely with residents and partners in delivering significant improvements;
- In common with councils across Durham, the Council has implemented good regeneration projects. However, the councils are not working together well enough to close the gap between economic prosperity in Durham and the rest of the country; and
- The Council has good arrangements for further improvement.

5.3 The key messages arising from the Commissions audit work are:

- The Commission were able to issue an unqualified opinion on the Council's accounts;
- The Council considered stakeholder views when deciding not to produce an annual report;
- The Council continues to ensure that its medium-term financial strategy, budgets and capital programme are soundly based and designed to deliver its strategic priorities;
- The Council has continued to improve arrangements for controlling spending and reported an overall underspend in 2006/07; and
- The Council has improved arrangements in internal control and continues to perform well in this area.

5.4 The Audit Commission also notes that the Government has decided to take forward the option of local government reorganisation in County Durham. They indicate that the Council will demise next year and its functions will be transferred to a new unitary council that will cover the whole of County Durham. They take the view that early indications are that the Council is making a positive contribution to making a success of the new council but this early impetus needs to be maintained over the coming months. In particular the Commission recommend that the council should:

- Prioritise making a positive contribution to transitional working designed to establish the new council;
- Set aside or secure sufficient resources to make the above contribution; and
- Ensure that attention is given to maintaining key public services in the transition period.

5.5 It is considered that the Annual Audit and Inspection report demonstrates the massive progress the council has made over the last few years. The report acknowledges that the council was the first council in the country to make such a significant improvement in its CPA and considers the council's performance improvement to be 'impressive'. The letter identifies that overall Use of Resources judgement has improved to a Level 3 and the Value for Money judgement has been maintained at a level 2

5.2 The council's Corporate Improvement plan includes an action point to build on learning from audit and inspection. It is considered that the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter ought to be used to develop the council's improvement in the last year.

5.6 It is considered that the Commission's specific advice about Local Government Reorganisation has already been taken on board by the council as follows:

- The council has made making a positive contribution to transitional working designed to establish the new council as a commitment in its Transition Plan, while setting out a clear single priority of '**People and Place**';
- Has set aside through the 2008/2009 budget process resources to make the above contribution subject to the capacity of the organisation to deliver; and
- Have set out a clear commitment in the Transition Plan to continue to deliver improving services focused on the clear single priority of '**People and Place**'.

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Receive and welcome the Annual Audit and Inspection letter;
- 4) Consider the key messages set out within the letter
- 5) Agree to building the key messages and recommendations into the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS / DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO**

7.1 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter – Audit Commission March 2007

Ian Forster
Director of Corporate Services
11th March 2008
Version 1.0

Ian Forster Tel 0191 3872130 e mail IanForster@chester-le-street.gov.uk

Annual Audit and Inspection Letter

Chester-le-Street District Council

External audit is an essential element in the process of accountability for public money and makes an important contribution to the stewardship of public resources and the corporate governance of public services.

Audit in the public sector is underpinned by three fundamental principles:

- auditors are appointed independently from the bodies being audited;
- the scope of auditors' work is extended to cover not only the audit of financial statements but also value for money and the conduct of public business; and
- auditors may report aspects of their work widely to the public and other key stakeholders.

The duties and powers of auditors appointed by the Audit Commission are set out in the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Local Government Act 1999 and the Commission's statutory Code of Audit Practice. Under the Code of Audit Practice, appointed auditors are also required to comply with the current professional standards issued by the independent Auditing Practices Board.

Appointed auditors act quite separately from the Commission and in meeting their statutory responsibilities are required to exercise their professional judgement independently of both the Commission and the audited body.

Status of our reports

This report provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council, drawing on audit, inspection and performance assessment work and is prepared by your Relationship Manager.

In this report, the Commission summarises findings and conclusions from the statutory audit, which have previously been reported to you by your appointed auditor. Appointed auditors act separately from the Commission and, in meeting their statutory responsibilities, are required to exercise their professional judgement independently of the Commission (and the audited body). The findings and conclusions therefore remain those of the appointed auditor and should be considered within the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission.

Reports prepared by appointed auditors are:

- prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission; and
- addressed to members or officers and prepared for the sole use of the audited body; no responsibility is taken by auditors to any member or officer in their individual capacity, or to any third party.

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Key messages

- 1 The key messages arising from our inspection work, described later in this Letter, are:
 - The Council has continued to improve services in its priority areas and overall. The scale of the Council's improvement is now reflected in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) category which has improved from 'poor' to 'good' as a result of a CPA inspection in June 2007. The Council was the first district council to achieve such a significant improvement in its CPA category.
 - Progress against the Council's priorities and contribution to wider community outcomes is good. There are many examples of where the Council has worked closely with residents and partners in delivering significant improvements.
 - In common with councils across Durham, the Council has implemented good regeneration projects. However, the councils are not working together well enough to close the gap between economic prosperity in Durham and the rest of the country.
 - The Council has good arrangements for further improvement.
- 2 The key messages arising from our audit work, reflected in the our judgements described later in this Letter, are:
 - we were able to issue an unqualified opinion on the Council's accounts;
 - the Council considered stakeholder views when deciding not to produce an annual report;
 - the Council continues to ensure that its medium-term financial strategy, budgets and capital programme are soundly based and designed to deliver its strategic priorities;
 - the Council has continued to improve arrangements for controlling spending and reported an overall underspend in 2006/07; and
 - the Council has improved arrangements in internal control and continues to perform well in this area.
- 3 Other key messages
 - The Government has decided to take forward the option of local government reorganisation in County Durham. The Council will demise next year and its functions will be transferred to a new unitary council that will cover the whole of County Durham. Early indications are that the Council is making a positive contribution to making a success of the new council but this early impetus needs to be maintained over the coming months.

Action needed by the Council

- 4 The Council and the new County Durham Council should work within the framework provided by the County Durham Economic Partnership to progress our recommendations in the county-wide inspection of Regeneration. In summary, these were to take steps to strengthen the coherence of regeneration activity and collaboration amongst stakeholders by:
 - starting and maintaining a public debate on the future of Durham's economy;
 - aligning regeneration strategies and strengthen collaboration amongst partners to match the pace of external change, without regard to local government boundaries;
 - considering with partners how the importance of skills and aspirations can be embedded in the culture of County Durham;
 - ensuring that housing strategies align with economic strategies and opportunities and with transport strategy;
 - strengthening leadership on regeneration activity;
 - providing independent capacity to develop and deliver strategy; and
 - reviewing how resources are used to lever in private funding in order to maximise their impact.
- 5 The CPA inspection recommended that the Council should progress its Local Development Framework and develop a leisure strategy. It should be mindful of the need to progress these issues in the context of the creation of a single unitary council for Durham.
- 6 Actions for the Council arising from our audit work are:
 - to ensure that it reviews its fixed assets for ownership and obtains title deeds where necessary;
 - to ensure that the accounts submitted for audit contain only a small number of non-trivial errors;
 - to develop the work started under the new Asset Management Plan and ensure all backlog maintenance is identified and reported to members with regular progress reports;
 - to co-ordinate the reporting of financial information and key financial indicators to members in order that challenging targets are set for income collection, levels of budget variances etc; and
 - to build on the work already done to expand the processes in place for the review of partnerships to include smaller level partnerships, and to continue to keep under review the arrangements of significant partnerships.
- 7 In order to provide a smooth transition to the new unitary council for County Durham the Council should:
 - prioritise making a positive contribution to transitional working designed to establish the new council;

6 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter | Key messages

- set aside or secure sufficient resources to make the above contribution; and
- ensure that attention is given to maintaining key public services in the period up to demise.

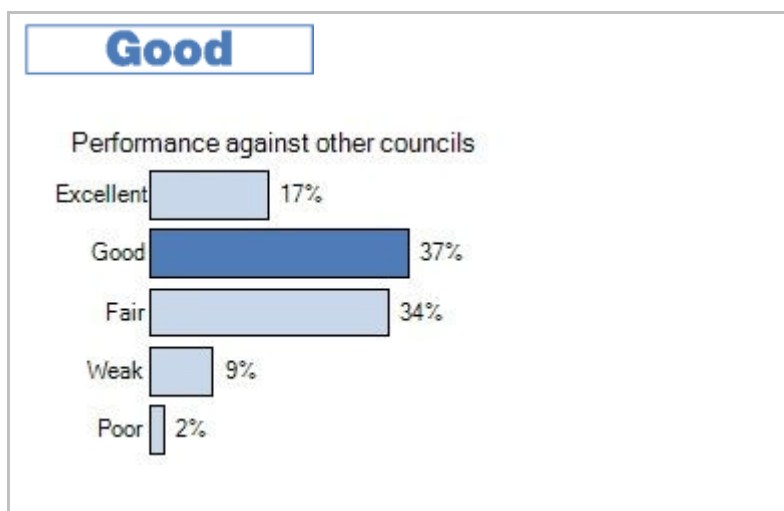
Purpose, responsibilities and scope

- 8 This report provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council. It draws on the most recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), the findings and conclusions from the audit of the Council for 2006/07 and from any inspections undertaken since the last Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.
- 9 We have addressed this letter to members as it is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for the conduct of its business and that it safeguards and properly accounts for public money. We have made recommendations to assist the Council in meeting its responsibilities.
- 10 This letter also communicates the significant issues to key external stakeholders, including members of the public. We will publish this letter on the Audit Commission website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk. In addition the Council is planning to publish it on its website.
- 11 Your appointed auditor, Steve Nicklin is responsible for planning and carrying out an audit that meets the requirements of the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice (the Code). Under the Code, he reviews and reports on:
 - the Council's accounts;
 - whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (value for money conclusion); and
 - whether the Council's best value performance plan has been prepared and published in line with legislation and statutory guidance.
- 12 This letter includes the latest assessment on the Council's performance under the CPA framework, including our Direction of Travel report, and the results of any inspections carried out by the Audit Commission under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999. It summarises the key issues arising from the CPA and any such inspections. Inspection reports are issued in accordance with the Audit Commission's duty under section 13 of the 1999 Act.
- 13 We have listed the reports issued to the Council relating to 2006/07 audit and inspection work at the end of this letter.

How is Chester-le-Street Council performing?

- 14 Chester-le-Street District Council was assessed as Good in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment carried out in 2007. These assessments have been completed in all district councils and we are now updating these assessments, through an updated corporate assessment, in councils where there is evidence of change. The following chart is the latest position across all district councils.

Figure 1 Overall performance of district councils in CPA



Source: Audit Commission

The improvement since last year - our Direction of Travel report

- 15 The Council has continued to improve services in its priority areas and overall. The scale of the Council's improvement is now reflected in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) category which has improved from 'poor' to 'good' as a result of a CPA inspection in June 2007. The Council was the first district council to achieve such a significant improvement in its CPA category.
- 16 This Direction of Travel assessment has used the findings of the CPA inspection together with more recent evidence of improvement and the Council's capacity to deliver against its priorities.
- 17 The rate of service improvements in 2006/07 is impressive and was faster than that of other councils. The Council is ranked 46th out of 388 for the percentage of performance indicators improving between 2005/06 and 2007/08, as measured by the Audit Commissions basket of key performance indicators (PIs) for Direction of Travel:

- Over the last three years, 64 per cent of the Council's PIs improved, compared to an average of 55 per cent for district councils.
 - In 2006/07, 69 per cent of PIs improved, against an average for district councils of 58 per cent.
 - 48 per cent of 2006/07 performance indicators were in the best quartile, compared with an average for all district councils of 33 per cent.
- 18** Progress against the Council's priorities and contribution to wider community outcomes is good. There are many examples of where the Council has worked closely with residents and partners in delivering significant improvements. The Council achieved 75 per cent of its targets last year. Performance in the first six months of 2007/08 was on track against 65 per cent of targets and 57 per cent of performance indicators were showing continued improvement (unaudited data). However there were some service areas where performance declined in 2006/07.
- 19** There has been mixed progress in meeting the decent homes standard. By focusing on housing improvement and better tenant engagement, the Council's housing services achieved a 'one star' (fair) inspection judgement during 2007. The Council secured a positive vote, by over 60 per cent of tenants, to transfer the housing stock to Cestia Housing Association and this transfer has taken place successfully. This will achieve investment plans to meet the Government target of achievement of the Decent Homes Standard target by 2010. In 2006/07 tenant satisfaction with participation significantly improved but satisfaction overall with housing services and performance around non-urgent repairs deteriorated.
- 20** The Council contributes to wider community outcomes. It has made good progress in regenerating the district. The performance of the planning service has continued to improve. Partnership working with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Durham City Council is promoting healthy lifestyles. The 'Lifestyle Initiative' has involved over 1,000 children in a programme of healthy eating and physical activity. The Council is working with 'Smoke Free North East' and the PCT to promote smoking cessation.
- 21** The Council has made good progress on neighbourhood management. Improvements in key services such as waste, street cleaning and grounds maintenance are reflected in performance indicators and improved customer satisfaction. Performance remains mixed in some key areas, for example despite recycling rates improving performance remains below average and satisfaction with recycling facilities has significantly deteriorated. Effective partnership working, particularly with the police and local communities has led to improved quality of life in local neighbourhoods. The 'Streetsafe' initiatives undertaken in Pelton village and Sacriston have resulted in a decrease in recorded crime and incidents of anti-social behaviour. Partnership working with communities and schools to generate better environmental citizenship has resulted in the Council being acknowledged nationally as leading best practice (Golden Green Apple Award).

- 22 The Council has made mixed progress in new ways of working in leisure. Satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities has significantly improved however the Council did not progress its leisure services options appraisal work as planned in 2007.
- 23 Improvements in access to services have continued with customer satisfaction levels for the Council as a whole and in key services improving in line with the Council's customer excellence priority.
- 24 The Council continues to improve physical access. The 'one stop shop' at the Civic Centre together with a programme of customer care training for staff and improvements to the Council's website have all contributed to this. The Council is also using text messaging to remind tenants about contractors' visits and to enable the public to report incidents such as fly tipping and suspected benefit fraud.
- 25 The benefits service is improving access to services and equality of access. This includes good access to information and facilities through the Council's website and the service has encouraged people to claim through take-up campaigns in partnership with voluntary sector. A new home visiting or 'one day claim' service was introduced in February 2007 for customers who are less mobile, are housebound or have difficulties in claiming. So far 133 customers have benefited from the service and additional benefits payments of £30,000 have been paid out in to those who were unaware of their entitlement.
- 26 There is now a better relationship between costs and the range, level and quality of services provided by the Council, but overall expenditure remains higher than other district councils and the reasons for this are not well understood. Unintended high spending is being addressed more robustly and investment has resulted in improved services in some areas. The Council has more than achieved its annual Gershon efficiencies. It achieved cumulative savings of £828,000 in 2006/07 against its 2007/08 target of £813,000. The Council's approach to securing value for money is adequate.
- 27 The strength of the Council's plans for improvement was recognised by the CPA inspection, which identified key strengths including a focus on clear priorities, improved capacity, good performance management and the provision of good services that continue to improve. The Council has moved forward in addressing the areas for improvement identified by the CPA inspection in relation to developing a Local Development Framework (LDF) but has not developed its leisure strategy. The quality of strategic plans varies with good strategies in customer excellence, regeneration and housing but not in leisure and planning policy. Service and financial strategies link well enabling the Council to move resources to priority areas.

- 28 Strategic plans are well informed by established community and stakeholder engagement mechanisms. In implementing the Sustainable Community Strategy the Council actively leads and supports the Local Strategic Partnership including its seven 'Policy Groups' which bring together stakeholders from public, private, community and voluntary organisations to determine local priorities and discuss topics such as community safety, culture and health improvement. It has also established a network of community partnerships based on geographical communities to complement parish councils, tenant and residents groups.
- 29 The Council uses action and improvement plans to good effect. It is systematically focused on improving performance. The Benefits service has been transformed over the past three years. In October 2003 the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) assessed the service as 'poor' and made 228 improvement recommendations. It is now assessed as a 'good' service that has 'promising' prospects to improve further. The Council has secured the Investors in People award and its IT service has won a Charter Mark.
- 30 Good partnership working is enhancing the capacity of the Council to deliver its priorities. It is involved in the county-wide e-government partnership and has worked with parish councils to deliver better play areas and environmental improvements. It has also worked with community groups to deliver social regeneration through community projects including Grange Villa and Lilac House and attracted £22 million of private investment to develop Pelton Fell.
- 31 The Council has been able to sustain the capacity to deliver most of its plans. It does so by allocating resources to priority areas. Service managers, in conjunction with portfolio holders and staff, include resource bids and anticipated efficiency savings in service plans. This has ensured actions have been delivered in most priority areas but not all, for example the Council has not completed its leisure services options appraisal work because of capacity issues. Sickness absence remains high.
- 32 However, as local government reorganisation progresses it is resulting in key staff leaving the Council; this may impact on its ability to maintain and develop its core functions and services. At the same time the Council needs to be making a positive contribution to making a success of the new unitary council for County Durham. The Council will need to plan to ensure that essential services are maintained and that appropriate resources are identified to secure this outcome and to input into planning for the new council.

CPA inspection

- 33 As part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) framework, we assess district councils from time to time and place them in one of five categories: excellent, good, fair, weak and poor. In 2003/04 the Council was assessed as 'poor'. In the light of its significant progress since then, we carried out a second CPA inspection in February 2007. As a result, the Council's CPA category rose three levels to 'good'. It was the first district council to achieve such a significant improvement in its CPA category.

34 The assessment found that:

- The Council and its partners share an ambitious and challenging vision for the area that is clearly described in the Sustainable Community Strategy. This vision focuses on improving the quality of life for residents and visitors. Overall, the Council delivers good services that continue to improve.
- The Council had progressed by improving its understanding of the needs of local people and focussing its efforts on meeting those needs. It has clear priorities which it uses to focus on what is important to the public. This includes economic and social regeneration, good neighbourhood management, better social housing and good leisure opportunities. In each of these activities, performance and customer satisfaction had improved since 2003.
- The Council has built capacity to deliver improved services and work more effectively and efficiently. It works to secure further improvement by placing emphasis on good customer service and efficiency and through partnership working. Councillors and staff are actively involved in delivering improvement.

Service inspections

Regeneration

35 During 2007 we carried out an inspection of Regeneration, covering all eight local councils in County Durham. The report was published in August 2007. The key findings were:

- Councils are providing good regeneration services individually. However, in spite of much external funding and considerable resource contributions of their own, they are not collectively closing the gap in prosperity between Durham and the rest of the country. There is also little evidence that the gaps between the most disadvantaged and rest of region are closing.
- Strategic leadership on the economy in Durham has been weak. When councils and partners work together then making good progress and identify and develop some real opportunities, but there are not enough examples of this. Councils tend to work within their own boundaries rather than across geographical areas (this is in part driven by external funding arrangements).
- While there seems a general acceptance that part of the solution is to work at city region scale to widen and deepen markets, County Durham does not seem clear on its relationship to the two City Regions of Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley.
- Identification of local needs is weak: there is a lack of engagement with key stakeholders and little sharing of information about local needs. This includes insufficient engagement with, and understanding of, businesses and their needs eg. for skills development. Intelligence and data are not shared between councils.

The audit of the accounts and value for money

- 36 Your appointed auditor has reported separately to the Council on the issues arising from our 2006/07 audit and has issued:
- an audit report, providing an unqualified opinion on the accounts;
 - a conclusion on your VfM arrangements to say that these arrangements are adequate; and
 - a report on the Best Value Performance Plan confirming that the Plan has been audited and published in accordance with the statutory requirements.

Use of Resources

- 37 The findings of the auditor are an important component of the CPA framework described above. In particular the Use of Resources score is derived from the assessments made by the auditor in the following areas.
- Financial reporting (including the preparation of the accounts of the Council and the way these are presented to the public).
 - Financial management (including how the financial management is integrated with strategy to support council priorities).
 - Financial standing (including the strength of the Council's financial position).
 - Internal control (including how effectively the Council maintains proper stewardship and control of its finances).
 - Value for money (including an assessment of how well the Council balances the costs and quality of its services).
- 38 For the purposes of the CPA we have assessed the Council's arrangements for use of resources in these five areas as follows.

Table 1

Element	Assessment
Financial reporting	2 out of 4
Financial management	3 out of 4
Financial standing	3 out of 4
Internal control	3 out of 4
Value for money	2 out of 4
Overall assessment of the Audit Commission	3 out of 4

(Note: 1 = lowest, 4 = highest)

The key issues arising from the audit

- 39 The key issues arising from the audit, as reflected in the above judgements where appropriate, are as follows.
- The Council considered stakeholder views when deciding not to produce an annual report.
 - The Council continues to ensure that its medium-term financial strategy, budgets and capital programme are soundly based and designed to deliver its strategic priorities
 - The Council has continued to improve arrangements for controlling spending and reported an overall underspend in 2006/07.
 - The council has improved arrangements in internal control and continues to perform well in this area.
- 40 The key actions needed to further strengthen arrangements are as follows.
- The Council should ensure that it reviews its fixed assets for ownership and obtain title deeds where necessary.
 - Ensure that the accounts submitted for audit contain only a small number of non-trivial errors.
 - The authority should develop the work started with the approval of the new Asset Management Plan and ensure all backlog maintenance is identified and reported to members with regular progress reports.
 - Reporting of financial information and key financial indicators to Members should be coordinated in order that challenging targets are set for income collection, levels of budget variances etc.
 - The Council should build on the work already done to expand the processes in place to review partnerships to include smaller level partnerships, and continue to keep under review the arrangements of significant partnerships.

Local risk work

- 41 A key component of the Audit Commission's national strategy for improving the impact of local audit and performance work, and delivering strategic regulation, is to carry out integrated reviews which cut across a number of public bodies and help improve the quality of life for local people. Work has been included in audit and inspection programmes across the North East for 2006/07 on two key cross-cutting themes, health inequalities and regeneration.

Health inequalities

- 42 Partnership working is helping to improve the North East's health outcomes but more needs to be done to close the gap between the North East and the rest of England. Life expectancy is lower, rates for sickness and disability are twice the national average, and smoking mortality rates are among the highest in England. There is also a high prevalence of obesity, increasing sexual health infection rates and serious alcohol and substance misuse issues.
- 43 Tackling health inequalities is a high priority for the Government, which has been increasingly encouraging health trusts to work in partnership with local public bodies and the voluntary sector to improve health and reduce inequalities through a number of initiatives, targets and legislation. The factors causing health inequalities are complex and can best be addressed through agencies working together.
- 44 The Audit Commission, Deloitte and PricewaterhouseCoopers have reviewed how organisations across the North East are working together to address health inequalities, culminating in a workshop in October 2007 for 200 representatives from the NHS, local government and the many voluntary sector agencies involved in tackling health inequalities, where we identified seven key challenges:
- Challenge 1: Develop arrangements to evaluate projects and ensure continued funding of those that deliver tangible outcomes, and to embed this learning in project planning and performance management systems.
 - Challenge 2: Gather intelligence on where gaps in services exist and a profile of those accessing services. Target services at those areas and individuals where there is unmet need and develop strategies to target hard to reach groups.
 - Challenge 3: Ensure local area agreements contain a breadth of targets to reduce health inequalities, across all sectors and ensure health and wellbeing strategies are translated into local delivery plans that contain sufficient detail and local targets to monitor progress.
 - Challenge 4: Spread awareness of priorities and services on offer and provide networking opportunities and information sharing systems to improve the links between service planners and service providers. Cascade messages and targets to front line workers such as teachers, health professionals and social workers.
 - Challenge 5: Use the Regional Health and Wellbeing Strategy to provide direction for the North East and link national, regional and local policies. Develop networking opportunities and support to share good practice to achieve the aim of transforming the North East into the healthiest region in the country within a generation.
 - Challenge 6: Give community and voluntary sector organisations increased certainty over funding with agreed delivery targets and simplify commissioning arrangements to make it easier for them to bid for the provision of services.

- Challenge 7: systematically seek community views to influence how and where services are provided.

45 A report summarising the work to date was distributed widely to inform future development and improvement. We will be building on this work in the coming year, focussing in on specific areas, identifying good practice and helping to identify and overcome barriers to improving health outcomes in the North East.

Looking ahead

- 46 The public service inspectorates are currently developing a new performance assessment framework, the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). CAA will provide the first holistic independent assessment of the prospects for local areas and the quality of life for people living there. It will put the experience of citizens, people who use services and local tax payers at the centre of the new local assessment framework, with a particular focus on the needs of those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. It will recognise the importance of effective local partnership working, the enhanced role of Sustainable Communities Strategies and Local Area Agreements and the importance of councils in leading and shaping the communities they serve.
- 47 Even though the Council will demise from 31 March 2009 it still has a key role in establishing the foundations of the new council and enabling it to respond to the future challenges of both new local area agreements and public expectations of service improvements leading to a better quality of life that will be assessed under CAA.

Closing remarks

- 48 This letter has been discussed and agreed with senior officers. A copy of the letter will be presented at to the full Council on 27 March 2008. Copies need to be provided to all Council members.
- 49 Further detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations on the areas covered by audit and inspection work are included in the reports issued to the Council during the year.

Table 2 Reports issued

Report	Date of issue
Audit and inspection plan	March 2006
Annual Governance Report	September 2007
Opinion on financial statements	September 2007
Value for money conclusion	September 2007
Final accounts memorandum	December 2007
Comprehensive Performance Assessment (corporate assessment)	June 2007
Regeneration inspection (county-wide report)	August 2007
Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, including Direction of Travel report	March 2008

- 50 The Council has taken a positive and constructive approach to audit and inspection work, and we wish to thank the Council's staff for their support and cooperation.

Availability of this letter

- 51 This letter will be published on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk, and also on the Council's website.

Sarah Diggle

Relationship Manager

Steve Nicklin

District Auditor

March 2008



Chester-le-Street
District Council

REPORT TO: Council

DATE OF MEETING: 27th March 2008

REPORT OF: Director of Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Transition Plan

ITEM NUMBER:

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members agreement to the Transition Plan which forms Appendix 1 of the report.

1.2 The Transition Plan aims to:

- state the Council's aims, objectives and priorities during the transition period;
- build on the councils learning and continue its improvement programme;
- set out revised corporate activity and funding arrangements for transition period;
- clarify corporate transition programme management arrangements;
- identify how we will support and motivate and support staff through the process;
- set out the values and principles by which the Council will operate during transition; and
- establish terms of engagement with 'County Durham Council' Change Programme

1.3 In doing so the Transition Plan incorporates a review of the Corporate Plan 2007/2010. It also takes account of the 2008/2009 budget process and provides a summary of the budget agreed. It sets out the council's new single priority of '**People and Place**'. The Plan includes the council's Corporate Improvement Plan following its learning through comprehensive Performance Assessment last year.

1.4 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Adopt the Transition Plan as the council's strategic planning document for 2008/2009

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Executive Members, the Chief Executive, Directors, and Service Team Managers have been engaged in the development of the Transition Plan
- 2.2 No other consultations were considered necessary at this stage including external consultations or engagement. Should Members adopt the Plan then consultation with the County Council will be undertaken.

3. CORPORATE PLAN AND PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The Transition Plan, will, in effect, replace the Corporate Plan 2007/2010. The Transition Plan includes a schedule of proposals from the previous seven priorities which ought to be and can be achieved in the remaining life of the council.
- 3.2 The council's choice to move towards a single priority of '**People and Place**' priority was considered as part of the budget setting process.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial implications and value for money statement

The Transition Plan takes account of the 2008/2009 budget process. Specific resources have been made available for both the contribution to setting up the new organisation and the implementation of the '**People and Place**' priority. It is considered that the council has properly reviewed its priorities in the light of Local Government re-organisation and its abilities to deliver services during the transitional period. The view is taken that in doing so the council will achieve value for money in a year of significant challenge. In delivering '**People and Place**' resources may need redirecting during the forthcoming year.

4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Implications

The Transition Plan is the council's response to the challenges it faces in the final year of its existence. It is considered that the plan commits the council to working within its capacity to provide human and financial resources to help establish the council while delivering 'Business as usual'. It is considered that the Plan meets the guidance and recommendations provided by the Audit Commission set out in their Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. Should Members adopt the Plan then consultation with the County Council will be undertaken.

4.3 Legal

The Transition Plan will include a factual statement of legal guidance to managers and Members. This remains under preparation and will be added to the Plan when complete. It is considered that the Transition Plan provides vehicle to enable the council to work within its legal powers during the transition period.

4.4 Personnel

How the council supports its employees through the transition process is a key part of the Plan. The Transition Plan revises the Organisational Development Strategy commits the council to supporting its employees through the process and help them take advantage of opportunities that will occur in the new authority. A key part of this is the development of a One Team Personal profile for all employees. Should Members adopt the Plan then consultation will be undertaken with the trade unions. It is important to note that the Transition plan will be a living document and will be reviewed as a result of consultations undertaken and progress made.

4.5 Other Services

The Transition Plan has implications to all services delivered by the council.

4.6 Diversity

There are no specific diversity issues in respect of the Transition Plan. The Plan does not replace the Equality Plan which will continue to be implemented through the lifetime of the council.

4.7 Risk

There are clear risks to the organisation in failing to continue to maintain and improve on its progress in its remaining year. The council remains committed to improving its services although it faces difficult capacity challenges through the transition period. The council will be undertaking a strategic risk assessment once the delivery plans in relation to '**People and Place**' have been developed.

4.8 Crime and Disorder

It is not felt there are any specific implications of the report on Crime and Disorder. Actions agreed through the delivery of the '**People and Place**' priority may include proposals to positively address crime and disorder issues.

4.9 Data Quality

Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation and the appendices attached are accurate, timely, consistent and comprehensive. The council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.

4.10 Other Implications

The report does not relate to a key decision. It is considered that the information will be communicated to the community and stakeholders by inclusion on the web-site. The Transition Plan has already been made available to staff and Members through the intranet in a draft form. Should Members adopt the plan progress towards achieving the '**People and Place**' priority will be significantly promoted and communicated.

5. **BACKGROUND, POSITION STATEMENT AND OPTION APPRAISAL**

5.1 As a result of Local Government Reorganisation Chester-le-Street will cease to exist as a council from April 2009. In order to set a framework as to how the council will conduct its business during this final year a 'Transition Plan' has been produced. The Plan forms Appendix 1. The Transition Plan aims to:

- state the Council's aims, objectives and priorities during the transition period;
- build on the councils learning and continue its improvement programme;
- set out revised corporate activity and funding arrangements for transition period;
- clarify corporate transition programme management arrangements;
- identify how we will support and motivate and support staff through the process;
- set out the values and principles by which the Council will operate during transition; and
- establish terms of engagement with 'County Durham Council' Change Programme

5.2 In doing so the Transition Plan incorporates a review of the Corporate Plan 2007/2010. It also takes account of the 2008/2009 budget process and provides a summary of the budget agreed. It sets out the council's new single priority of '**People and Place**'. The Plan includes the council's Corporate Improvement Plan following its learning through Comprehensive Performance Assessment last year. '**People and Place**' will be implemented through an 'Action Learning Set' approach, an approach which has brought the council significant success as part of its improvement journey to date. The Plan includes proposals to develop delivery plans to secure sustainable change to the people and places within the district and customer focused outcomes which can be used to influence the agenda of the new unitary council.

5.3 This plan will be the overarching plan for Chester-le-Street District Council during the transition period, and as such sets out how services and projects will be facilitated, delivered and resourced. It is a rationalisation of the Council's Corporate Plan (incorporating the Best Value Performance Plan) 2007-2010, published in June 2007, and associated Medium Term Financial Plan, Organisational Development Strategy and Corporate Improvement Plan. As such, it represents the Council's contribution to the Districts Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement and the Strategic Vision for County Durham

5.4 The next year will be a difficult period. It is an uncertain period for members and staff alike. The council has already experienced a reduction in staff as people in the organisation look to secure certainty about their futures outside of the county. Staff turnover is currently high at 12%. Not only are staff moving on but there is a loss of talent to the County as a result. In operational terms it will be more difficult to deliver what we have set out to do. It is felt that the Transition Plan will guide the council through this difficult period and that there considered that the Transition Plan needs to be a living document which will allow us to adapt to change during the year. It will therefore be kept under regular review.

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Adopt the Transition Plan as the council's strategic planning document for 2008/2009

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS / DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO**

- 7.1 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter – Audit Commission March 2007
- 7.2 Corporate Plan 2007/2010 – June 2007
- 7.3 Budget reports to Council dated 28th February 2008

Ian Forster
Director of Corporate Services
11th March 2008
Version 1.0

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Chester-le-Street
District Council

People and Place

Draft Local Government Reorganisation Transition Plan



March 2008 (Final Draft)

Foreword

A new unitary council will come into being in April 2009. Chester-le-Street, as a District Council will no longer exist after next March. However the people and the places of Chester-le-Street will live on. We now need to work with the County Council, other county Districts and our partners to ensure that this new unitary council successfully continues to deliver improving services.

We want to ensure that there is as little disturbance as possible to our customers, partners and other stakeholders. We remain committed to doing this. In addition, while we have our own views about the benefits the new form of council will bring, we will do our best to help ensure that the new council will be designed to delivering improving services and that communities will be engaged in how these are run.

We know that we cannot deliver everything that we wanted to under our previous seven priorities. We have had to review our ambition. Never the less we want to do the best we can for our communities in the remaining year of the council's life and hopefully that we can ensure some sustainable difference for our communities that can be transferred into the new organisation. In order to do this we have decided to focus on one priority which we are calling '**People and Place**'.

This Transitional Plan sets out what we will be trying to do over the next year.

Linda Ebbatson, Leader of the Council

Roy Templeman, Chief Executive

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

1. In the 2006 Local Government White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, the Secretary of State for the Department Communities and Local Government (DCLG) invited all councils (except London Boroughs and Metropolitan Districts) to submit proposals to create unitary councils by April . In addition, Councils in shire areas were invited to submit proposals against the same timetable to become pathfinders for enhanced two-tier working. The White Paper envisions a new relationship between central and local government and local government and communities and accordingly set out a number of tests that proposals must meet in order to be approved.
2. In response to the White Paper, Durham County Council submitted a bid for a single unitary authority for County Durham and the Durham District Councils a longer-term 'pathfinder to unitary' bid by the 25 January 2007 deadline. DCLG shortlisted 16 unitary bids for consultation on 27 March, including Durham County Council's bid. The consultation period ended on 22 June and following consideration of responses submitted, DCLG announced on 25 July that several bids, including the County Council's, were to proceed to implementation.
3. Following the enactment of the Local Government (Public Involvement in Health) Bill on 30 October 2007 this decision was confirmed on 5 December 2007. The implementation order came into effect at the end of February 2008 with an election to the new Council in May 2008. The council has a duty to co-operate in setting up the new organisation. Our Corporate Plan makes it clear that we will work to ensure that there is little disturbance to our communities, partners and other stakeholders as possible. The council will need to engage to achieve both of these commitments. The legal framework in which we will be operating in the next year is set out in Appendix 1.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

4. The decision to implement unitary local government within County Durham necessitates a major change programme involving Durham County Council and all Durham District Councils. An emerging governance structure for the County Durham Council change programme has been provisionally endorsed by all Councils.
5. The forthcoming changes will require radical changes to existing corporate planning arrangements in order to facilitate a successful transition to the new authority.
6. This plan outlines for the benefit of members, employees and partners the Council's arrangements to develop with partners a new unitary authority for County Durham up to April 2009 and to manage effectively the transition period.
7. The council has a strong corporate plan and in December 2007 the Executive agreed revisions to proposals within that plan. It also agreed to develop a single priority around community engagement which is has subsequently been developed under the banner of '**People and Place**'. This focuses on ensuring that the work we do now ensures a demonstrable benefit to our communities which can be sustained by and supported by the new unitary council. This document sets out the Council's key priorities for service improvement, investment and savings during this period and the key capital projects to be progressed. Issues that require the consideration and approval of the Implementation Executive are highlighted.

8. It is intended that Executive, Corporate Management Team and the Local Government Review Project Team, as well as the Joint Implementation Team and Implementation Executive for the new authority, will use this plan to monitor and manage the Council's progress during transition. This plan is a 'living document and is designed to cope with change in circumstances which may arise as a result of the process of transformation to a new organisation.

OBJECTIVES

9. The objectives of this Transition Plan, are to: -
 - state the Council's aims, objectives and priorities during the transition period;
 - build on the councils learning and continue its improvement programme;
 - set out revised corporate activity and funding arrangements for transition period;
 - clarify corporate transition programme management arrangements;
 - identify how we will support and motivate and support staff through the process;
 - set out the values and principles by which the Council will operate during transition; and
 - establish terms of engagement with 'County Durham Council' Change Programme

SCOPE

10. This plan is the overarching plan for Chester-le-Street District Council during the transition period, and as such sets out how services and projects will be facilitated, delivered and resourced.
11. It also establishes terms of engagement with the 'County Durham Council Change Programme' and specifies the roles and responsibilities within this programme for relevant members and officers of the Council.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

12. The Transition Plan is a rationalisation of the Council's Corporate Plan (incorporating the Best Value Performance Plan) 2007-2010, published in June 2007, and associated Medium Term Financial Plan, Organisational Development Strategy and Corporate Improvement Plan. As such, it represents the Council's contribution to the Districts Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement and the Strategic Vision for County Durham.
13. It represents the Council's contribution to the wider change programme for the new unitary authority and will be integral to the success of this programme.

CONTEXT

Chester-le-Street District

14. Chester-le-Street District is a small District, at the heart of the Tyne & Wear City Region. Situated in the north of County Durham in the North East of England, Chester-le-Street is 68 sq km – 28 sq miles - in size, with a population of 53,200. The District lies between the cities of Newcastle (9 miles to the north), Sunderland (9 miles to the east), and Durham (7 miles to the south). At the heart of the District is the market town of Chester-le-Street, which accounts for 45% of the District's population, and is currently the focus of a major regeneration programme. The surrounding countryside is home to a number of villages – some affluent, some facing the challenges of deprivation in a rural setting.
15. The rate of economically active people is high (80%) as is the employment rate (over 75%). Both these measures outperform both the regional and national economy. In recent years local unemployment figures have fallen from 9.7% (above the national average) to 2.1%. However, set against this relatively prosperous District-wide picture, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) rankings of 2007 show that the District has pockets of deprivation – mainly in outlying villages. The District has the lowest job density (0.38) in the North East - much lower than the regional average (0.71) or the GB (0.83) figures, demonstrating that the District has less jobs within the District than there are working people who live in the District. 70% of the resident population is employed outside the district mainly in Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham City - the highest percentage of out-commuting of any authority area in County Durham. The number of VAT registrations and de-registrations show that the District has a stock of 855 businesses. The Council is still the largest single employer in the District, with a workforce of some 450 people and a gross expenditure of £38 million. Through developing our existing industrial sites (in both public and private ownership), there are good and expanding facilities, but limited opportunities for future employment sites. Beamish Museum, Durham County Cricket Club, Riverside Park and Waldridge Fell are key leisure and sporting attractions located in the district. The majority of working residents are employed in the distribution, hotels & restaurants, public administration, education & health and banking, finance & insurance sectors. Performance in education and crime reduction is also good - Chester-le-Street has higher than the Durham LEA, North East and English average levels of attaining 5 GCSE's 'A' to 'C' Grades (60.2% in 2005) and has consistently improved on these levels. Since 1999/2000, Chester-le-Street has consistently shown significantly lower rates of burglary offences, vehicle crime and robberies per 1,000 population than the North East and English average.
16. At present, Chester-le-Street is subject to a 'two-tier' local government, with [Durham County Council](#) responsible for the strategic functions and services such as education, social care and transport and Chester-le-Street District Council providing local services such as regeneration, development and building control, environmental health, licensing, benefits, street scene, housing and leisure. In addition, some functions are shared between the County and District Councils (e.g. waste management) and others are delivered across the region, with multi-agency involvement (e.g. strategic planning, economic development and tourism).
17. There are 11 Parish councils within the District.

Chester-le- Street District Council

Organisation








18. Chester-le-Street District Council is a 'Shire District' Council, commissioning, facilitating or providing over 200 services to the public. It comprises 34 councillors democratically elected by and accountable to residents of their ward. The Council has operated with a Executive/Leader model since 2000. Following the recent elections held in May 2007 the Council remains Labour-controlled. For further information on the Council's structure and governance, please see the Council's Constitution at www.chester-le-street.gov.uk.
19. The Council is a rated as 'Good' under the Audit Commission's CPA regime. It has also achieved an extremely good and positive Direction of Travel conclusion in this year's Annual Audit Letter from the Audit Commission.

Corporate Planning Process

20. The Council has a well-established corporate planning process, which is fully integrated with its performance management framework. This is set out clearly in the council's Corporate Plan for 2007/2010. It is not set in stone and between October and December last year a review of corporate priorities and corporate plan proposals was undertaken. As a result of further progress including the transfer of the council's housing service to a Registered Housing Association in February 2008 further reviews have been undertaken.

Corporate Values

21. The councils corporate values are set out in the corporate Plan 2007/2009 and are as follows:

- | | |
|---|--|
|  An authority that is customer focused, that understands the needs of communities and values resident and business engagement. |  A culture of performance management where service plans are closely aligned to the Sustainable Community Strategy and where staff development and training is prioritised. |
|  An authority that measures added value, where services are focused on outcomes and success is measured by the impact on the quality of life of local people. |  A council that is accessible to everyone, committed to equality, whilst recognising diversity. |
|  An authority that learns from experience and the experience of others, is open to external challenge and operates comfortably in a mixed economy. |  A council that is active both regionally and nationally. |
|  A council that acts as 'OneTeam' where staff and elected Members work together and have a clear understanding of their role and the contribution they make to service and corporate priorities. | |

22. Values and associated behaviours are promoted through the Council's Organisational Development Strategy, core competencies and communication strategies.

THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW COUNCIL

Employees

23. Employees must be treated fairly and well through the transitions process, therefore the Council welcomes the Government's commitment to apply TUPE-like terms to the transfer to the new Authority which will provide that staff who transfer do so on terms no less favourable than those they enjoyed immediately before the transfer. The council is committed to supporting its people through a challenging, uncertain and unsettling time. It is committed to maintaining the morale of teams and motivating individuals and teams to continue to deliver improving services. The council is fully committed to implementing the county wide Recruitment Protocol.
24. The Council is committed to playing an intrinsic role in the new unitary council workstreams with the intention of seeking to establish a common and cohesive protocol towards the management of staff pre and post transfer which will:
- not cause unnecessary redundancy or recruitment to take place;
 - seek to maximise the transfer and retention of employees;
 - ensure a process that is fair and transparent, thereby creating a climate of trust and openness;
 - ensure equality of treatment and meaningful engagement with staff and unions; and
 - develop and maintain effective channels of communication to ensure employees receive timely and consistent messages
25. The Council will advocate that the Implementation Executive and subsequently the new council Executive after May 2008, consults on all aspects of the staff transfer and the human resource implications of the new Authority with the appropriate local staff representatives including consulting with Trade Unions at the earliest possible stage on facilitation arrangements in the new Authority. The Council will also actively promote a staff communications strategy and will employ a range of communications methods to ensure all employees hear the same key messages, at the same time.
26. The Organisational Development section of this plan sets out how the Council will support employee development during the transition process including a focus on staff preparation through 'One **Team Personal Profiling**'.

Organisational design

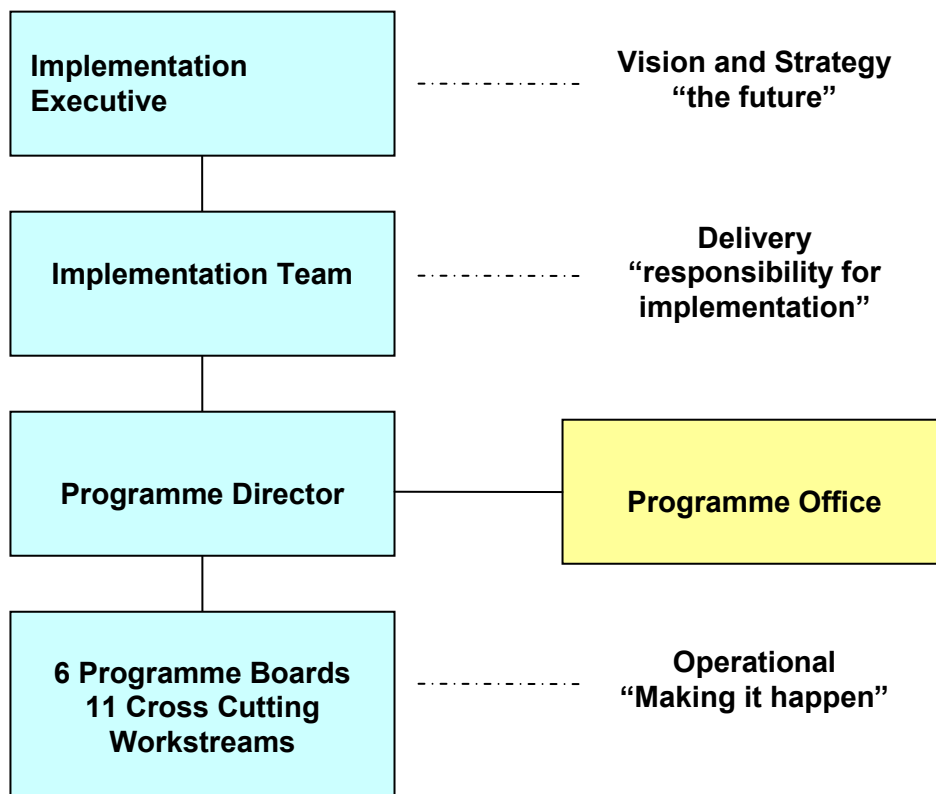
27. The introduction of a single Council for a County represents a move away from traditional forms of local government and introduces a new concept, that of 'sub-regional government'. This is a major change in the way that democratically accountable public services are organised and presents an opportunity for positive change if innovation in organisational design is embraced and service provision devolved in line with the aspirations of the Local Government and Public Involvement In Health Act 2007.
28. The District Council believes that the two-tier local government system does have some positive benefits. Care must be taken to ensure that the very positive aspects of the two tier system, such as the autonomous local decision making and locality based

perspective of district councils, are maintained and combined with the economies of scale and strategic resource allocation that can be achieved through larger structures.

29. As a broad principle, the District Council favours a system of local government, which empowers neighbourhoods and supports locality working. In particular, it would wish to see multi-disciplinary teams working within neighbourhoods, empowered community partnerships and trusts capable of commissioning services in areas of need, supported with enhanced access to services.
30. The Council welcomes the opportunity for inclusion in the change management process and will work positively during the transition phase to the best of its abilities and within the resources it has. The next year will be a difficult period. It is an uncertain period for members and staff alike. The council has already experienced a reduction in staff as people in the organisation look to secure certainty about their futures outside of the county. Staff turnover is currently high at 12%. Not only are staff moving on but there is a loss of talent to the County as a result. In operational terms it will be more difficult to deliver what we have set out to do.

THE COUNTY DURHAM COUNCIL PROGRAMME

31. A 'County Durham Council' change programme structure has been developed by the Durham County and District Councils' Senior Officer Group (SOG) and provisionally endorsed by all authorities to commence once legislative orders have been placed.
32. The vision of the programme is to create "a new unitary Council committed to developing a prosperous, safe and sustainable future for County Durham, listening to, and working with, local people, leading and shaping our communities and working in partnership to ensure quality, cost-effective services".
33. The following governance model for the programme has been agreed.



The programme will be managed through an Implementation Executive of Elected Members and a Senior Officers Group (SOG) or Joint Implementation Team (JIT) comprising the Chief Executive and Directors of the County Council, the Chief Executives of the Durham District Councils and the Programme Director.

34. The day-to-day management of the programme is the responsibility of the Programme Director, who will be supported by the Programme Manager and a small programme office.
35. The six programme Boards will be facilitated by a leader at Chief Executive level supported by key County and Council officers and a 'Business Manager' There will be members attached to each Board. The six boards cover the following areas:
 - Children and Young People's ;
 - Adults, Wellbeing and Health ;
 - Environment and Neighbourhoods (Infrastructure ;
 - Corporate Support;
 - Place Shaping; and
 - Internal Challenge
36. There are 11 cross cutting workstreams with workstream leads drawn from the County and District Councils, as appropriate. Agreed workstreams are :
 - Finance;
 - Asset and Property;
 - Procurement;
 - IT;
 - Legal Services;
 - Policy and Partnerships;
 - People/OD;
 - Communications;
 - Customer Access;
 - Equality and Cohesion; and
 - Information and Knowledge Management.

THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO THE CHANGE PROGRAMME

37. The Council has to be pragmatic in what it can commit to in view of currently diminishing human resources. What we can and will do to support the development of the new council is set out below. We want to help facilitate the development of the new authority and at the same time to deliver on existing commitments and local priorities during the transition period.
38. The Council are represented on the Implementation Executive and the Joint Implementation Team and offer the change programme as much support and cooperation as it can. It will comply with all protocols to be agreed in respect of the change programme. It will release appropriate resources to support the programme workstreams wherever and when ever it can. It will comply fully with its duty to co-operate.
39. Project and service design and investment/disinvestment decisions will be developed alongside and complement the vision and objectives of the County Durham Council change programme and the vision for the new authority.

40. The Council commits to no growth in its overall revenue budget beyond the 2008/2009 budget during the transition period; prudent use of its reserves and capital expenditure grounded in existing policy commitments. Expenditure, contracting and disposals will be in accordance with the provisions of section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the appropriate directions.
41. The Council will continue to follow as far as practicable the principles laid out in the existing Medium Term Financial Plan or in line with any revisions outlined in the financial plan element of this document. Flexible approaches to some savings will need to be adopted to deal with capacity and capability issues associated with the delivery of this plan.
42. It will be necessary to re-examine existing staffing levels and structures in relevant sections and to consider the appropriateness of existing officer delegations in order to ensure that :
 - Resources are aligned to the tasks of managing the transition and participating in the development of a new County Durham Council
 - Staffing levels and structures can be amended relatively quickly as circumstances change in the lead-up to April 2009.
43. Consideration will be given to undertaking appropriate workforce analyses when details of this Council's transition and the development of the new council become clearer and the constitutional implications of existing establishment and staffing decision-making processes need to be examined to determine if they can be made more flexible and less bureaucratic whilst maintaining the highest standards of probity.
44. In order to ensure that all affected employees are supported throughout this change process, employees' development needs are reassessed and incorporated into the Council's Training Plan. The focus of the Plan will be to assist our workforce in taking up opportunities in the new unitary council.
45. The Council has developed internal programme management arrangements to deliver this plan that are complementary to those of the County Durham Council change programme. These are set out below.

INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS

46. The Council will strive hard to ensure that service standards are maintained, that priority commitments (e.g. those outlined in the Corporate Plan and capital programmes) are honoured where practicable, and that employees are fully supported through the change process, so that the legacy of Chester-le-Street District Council is positive. The council will maintain and enhance, where possible, current arrangements for health and safety and corporate governance.
47. The Council has a number of priority objectives for its communities, which will continue to be pursued within the constraints imposed by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and those locally determined. These are outlined in subsequent sections.
48. The Council will also try hard to ensure that it plays a full part in the development of the new authority so that the needs of local communities continue to be met, the Council's

good practice and learning is fully utilised, the profile and skills of employees are raised and their interests protected. The council has established a Local Government Reorganisation Project Team (LGRPT) to support the transition through the Implementation Executive and the Joint Implementation Team. The key objectives of this team include supporting and co-ordinating the council's contribution to reorganisation, motivating with staff and ensuring a communications strategy is implemented. In relation to the latter key Team members have been assigned specific responsibility for Leisure, Environmental Services, and services operating out of the Civic Centre. Its activities are supported by an intranet site and a 'blog' site which allows the workforce to raise issues and have their questions answered.

Transition Plan

49. This plan sets out activities that will ensure that both of these responsibilities are executed effectively. The progress against the plan will be monitored through the Programme Board and reported as part of the council's quarterly Corporate Performance Report to the Executive and scrutiny.

Programme Management arrangements

50. The Transition Programme will be coordinated by the Director of Corporate Services as lead officer for the LGRPT. The LGRPT will provide programme and projects support. The LGRPT will have human resources, financial, communications and legal support. It includes union representation.
51. The Chief Executive has been appointed as a member of the Countywide Internal Challenge Programme Board.
52. The Councils Corporate Management Team will act as the Local Programme Board and has agreed leads and project officers to develop internal arrangements linked to the County Durham Council Change Programme workstreams. These are set out below.

Workstream Area	Management Team Lead	Cross County lead
Finance	Ian Herberson	No lead
Asset/Property	Leila Dawson	No lead
Procurement	TBA	No lead
IT	Graeme Clark	No lead
Legal and Democratic	Chris Potter/Colin Turnbull	No lead
Policy and Partnerships	Ian Forster	Ian Forster
People and OD	Ian Forster/Lynda Clifford	No lead
Communications	Craig Etherington/Henk Gertseema	No lead
Customers Access	Craig Etherington	Craig Etherington
Equality and Cohesion	July Underwood	Julie Underwood
Information Management	Graeme Cark	No lead

53. Leads will develop teams and internal arrangements as appropriate on a time-limited basis. Work will be co-ordinated through the LGRPT.
54. Programme updates will be a standing item on Corporate Management Team agendas. Progress will be reported to Executive and Scrutiny through the Corporate Performance Report

Rationalisation of partnerships, policy development and service improvement arrangements

55. It is clear that the implementation of the Transition Plan within the allotted timescale will be challenging. This work will involve some element of rationalisation and 'mopping up', as some initiatives, programmes and projects will no longer be relevant or deliverable within the transition period.
56. The Council's partnerships will be reviewed in line with the new corporate priority, and revised accordingly.
57. Policy development and mid to long-term service improvement initiatives in particular will be curtailed. This Transition Plan will be kept under review.
58. The council will build on what it has learned through its improvement programme. It will build on its successful Action Learning Set and Continuous Process Improvement programme to contribute to the new organisation while managing 'business as usual'. Relevant Strategic Working Groups, the purpose of which has been largely to progress the Improvement Programme, will be re-focussed, with their focus to be upon bringing forward projects through the transition programme.
59. The Corporate Support Team has been merged with Corporate Management Team to meet once a month as an extended Corporate Management Team.
60. The new focus of the council will necessitate a review of the structure of the workload of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels with a view to focussing on the council's single priority of '**People and Place.**' This issue will be the subject of engagement with members of Overview and Scrutiny Panels and via the countywide change programme.

Business as usual

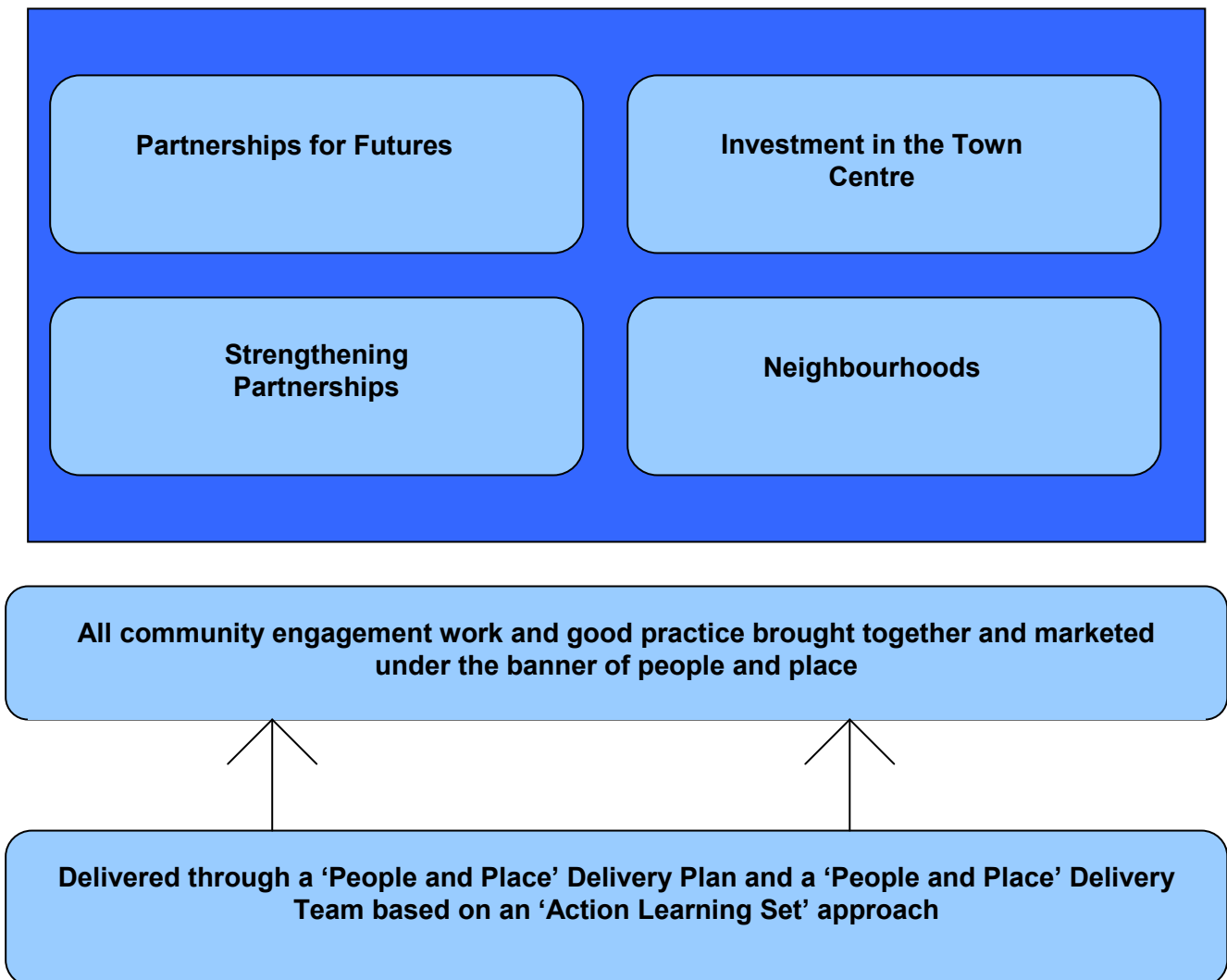
61. Outside of this transition programme, business as usual will continue. While a drop in performance due to reduced capacity cannot be ruled out, service standards must be preserved as far as practicable against a background of increased employee turnover, a commitment to not filling senior posts, a possible drop in morale and the ongoing development of new delivery arrangements. Performance will be closely monitored for early warning signs of deterioration, and exception reports presented to Corporate Management Team, Executive and Scrutiny as outlined above. The Business Continuity Plan will be reviewed to determine whether it is fit-for-purpose from a LGR perspective and revised as appropriate. The council will operate on the basis that it has a continued responsibility towards continual improvement and delivery of value for money and will progress accordingly.
62. During 2008/ 2009 the council will have to collate information against a new national indicator set. The council's key performance indicators will therefore shift from the 74 Best Value Performance Indicators to a larger set of new national indicators. Currently how and when these will be collected and reported is unknown. It is clear that the reporting of indicators will not be in the life time of this Council. They will not benefit this council yet they will be a statutory duty for the council to undertake. It is likely that a 'Place Survey' will need to be undertaken later this year from which a significant amount of indicators will be drawn. Discussions are currently underway to jointly procure this and to performance manage the new indicator set on a county basis through the Policy and Partnerships workstream led by the Director of Corporate Services.

KEY PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITY TO APRIL 2009

Corporate Priorities and Associated Activity

63. The council wants to ensure that in its last year its work delivers demonstrable change for communities which can be sustained and supported into the life of the new council. It wants to ensure that the priorities of the District are firmly on the agenda for the new unitary council.... our community voice. The council has reviewed its priorities against what it has learned and heard. The Executive have agreed that Partnership related community engagement will be the council's single priority for the coming year and proposals to support this are currently being developed. The approach was confirmed at the Council meeting on 28th February 2008 which set the council's budget for 2008/2009.
64. This priority will be promoted under the branding of **'People and Place'** and can be visually described as follows:

People and Place



65. **'People and Place'** will comprise of four key elements:

- **Partnerships for Future** – building on existing relationships between appropriate agencies to develop young people with the right skills to secure jobs that are available within the District, thus sustaining employment opportunities;
- **Investing in the Town Centre**– Building on the investment already made in Chester-le-Street Town Centre to maximise its sustainable benefit;
- **Strengthening Partnerships** - focusing partnership improvement activity (including partnerships with people) towards those which will sustain community engagement, including arts and culture, through into the new unitary arrangements; and
- **Neighbourhoods**– undertaking village planning work and local charters where there is capacity at the local level both within the council and within communities to secure sustainable change

66. To promote this, and to maximise the council's overall commitment to community engagement, activity around the above and throughout our community engagement work will be marketed under the branding of **'People and Place'**.

67. A **'People and Place'** Delivery Plan will be developed and implemented by a **'People and Place'** Delivery Team. This will engage all key personnel associated with the activity around the key strands of the four priority areas. There will be a focus on the engagement of the front line councillor in this process and will involve the redesign of the scrutiny function to deliver this. The **People and Place** Delivery Plan will be developed through an Action Learning Set Approach and each of the four Priority Action Learning Sets will produce a Delivery Plan by the end of April 2008. The overall process is set out in Appendix 2. This will be managed and co-ordinated by a small team under the guidance of the Director of Corporate Services. Appropriate resources have been made available through the 2008/2009 budget process and there will be a continued focus during the year to redirect resources to achieve the delivery plan.

68. The Council has reviewed the commitments made in the 2008/2009 Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and associated documents and has determined, in light of key objectives and resource constraints, which planned activities and projects will be progressed during the transition period. These are set out under Portfolio responsibility in Appendix 3. This plan makes clear the links between work to be undertaken during the transition period and priorities and investment decisions previously made by the Council. The councils refocused improvement plan is set out in Appendix 4.

Supporting the Development of the new Authority

69. The activity outlined in this Plan is consistent with the vision and programme management arrangements for the new authority. Investment in corporate governance and infrastructure in particular will be closely aligned to workstream development

70. Corporate health and governance issues for progression during the transition period include Organisational Development, meeting Equality legislation requirements through DIA's, the reduction of sickness absence and the implementation of the corporate governance action plan.

Capital Programme and Associated developments

71. The Council has in place a capital programme aligned with its key objectives.
72. Key priority capital-related commitments are set out in Appendix 5:

Key projects for consultation with the Transitional Authority

73. The council will consult the transitional authority on relevant key schemes not set out within the transitional or which have been developed through the 2008/2009 budget process. .

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Capacity

74. To ensure that transition projects, LGR implementation milestones and service delivery standards are met the Directorate of Corporate Services will support service departments with effective and timely guidance. Appropriate additional resources such as doing things differently, use of agency workers, interim managers, consultancy and temporary employees will be secured where possible and as and when required, and temporary additional duties and responsibilities assigned as necessary. Capacity within the organisation will be kept under review to ensure the council is able to deliver what is expected of it in terms of both **'People and Place'** and contribution to the new unitary council development.
75. It is also important that 'key worker' knowledge is retained during the transition period, therefore flexible-working policies will be promoted and encouraged.

Training and Development

Top Team Development

76. Providing positive leadership through the transition to a unitary authority is a significant and key challenge that will have a major impact on employee morale and retention. To facilitate this support will be provided for Corporate Management Team and Executive through regular informal briefings and other initiatives where appropriate

Competency Framework

77. It is likely that common standards (competencies) will be used by the new authority to enable fair and transparent recruitment and selection through skills matching. The Council has established key competency frameworks which will continue to be implemented. These will be reviewed during the transitional period where necessary.

Career Transition

78. In an effort to support employees to secure future career opportunities, the councils Training and Development Plan will be designed to assist career transition. This will be aimed at building confidence and understanding of competency based recruitment processes. This will include development of '**One Team Personal Profiles**' for all staff. These profiles will aim to provide :
- an understanding of the council's improvement journey;
 - an understanding of how individuals have contributed to our achievements;
 - how individuals have contributed to service based improvement;
 - what are individuals needs in the transitional period; and
 - How these needs might be met.
79. This will build on the outcomes from the council's Personal Development Plan Programme. Personal profiles will be used to assist individuals develop CV's and will be focussed as well on potential future interviews and assessment centres. Workforce plans will be developed accordingly and The PDP process will be used to understand individuals' ambitions

Professional Development

80. It is important that employees are able to demonstrate compliance with professional standards to ensure they are best positioned for job matching. Relevant employees will be encouraged and supported to identify training required to fill any potential gaps. This may require a re-write of appropriate job descriptions and person specifications to comply with the minimum entry-level requirements of some professions. Personal Development Planning ought to focus on opportunities the new organisation.

Talent Management

81. During the transition period the Council considers it important to address the career aspirations and talents of employees who wish to remain with the new authority but who require further training to enable them to access better opportunities. On this basis, the Human Resources Team will assist Directors and Heads of Service to identify such employees, and agree and compile appropriate development plans through the Personal Development Planning process.

Change Management Training

82. A detailed LGR focused change management programme will be delivered to all managers as implementation progresses. This will form a key part of the Training and development Plan and will be delivered in part by Aware UK.

Communications Strategy

83. The council has agreed a Communications Strategy This will need to be regularly reviewed throughout the process and delivered via the following mechanisms:
- Corporate /Director Briefings
 - Understanding Unitary (LGRPT newsletter)
 - Members Update/Team Talk (Elected member/staff newsletter)
 - LGRPT and directorate facilitators
 - Interactive Methods e.g. LGRPT Intranet site, including a 'blog' site.
 - Trade Union Consultation and Involvement Framework
 - Team Brief
 - Team Meetings
84. To ensure swift communication takes place, it may be necessary at times to deploy the above mechanisms at short notice. Internal/external communications strategies will be aligned and coordinated to ensure employees receive information from the appropriate source at an appropriate time.

BUDGET SUMMARY 2008/2009

85. The council approved the 2008/2009 budget for Chester-le-Street on 28th February 2008.

General Fund Revenue Account

86. General Fund Revenue account for 2008/2009 can be summarised as follows:

	£m	Comments
Budget Requirement	9.419	
Use of Earmarked Reserves	0.669	Includes the use of the HRA Balance in 08/09
Use of Externally Funded Earmarked Reserves	0.503	
Net Budget Requirement	8.247	
External Support	5.121	
Collection Fund Surplus	0.030	
Council Tax Demand	3.096	Equates to a band D tax of £181.17 representing an increase in 08/09 of 2.9%

87. There has been a significant redirection of resources to help fund the **'People and Place'** priority and respond to Local Government reorganisation. This totals £469k and are as follows:-
- Investment in Town Centre £50k
 - Partnerships for Futures £80K
 - Strengthening Partnerships £50k
 - Neighbourhoods £70k

A contingency, of £219K to help meet potential costs of the councils contribution to Local Government Reorganisation has been included in the General Fund Revenue Account. The

above all relates to one-off non-recurring expenditure and will not therefore cause a funding gap problem for the new authority.

88. The use of the HRA Balance in 2008/09 and over the next 5 years is being used to help in providing a cost position following Housing Transfer which has the effect of removing an obligation on the new Council in relation to the first 5 years post transfer. Pay inflation has been set at 2.5%. Gas inflation has been set at 15% and electric at 22%

Housing Revenue Account

89. This account is no longer required as the council has transferred its housing service to Cestria, A registered housing association.

Capital Programme

90. The programme will be funded from the capital receipts due as per the major disposals programme. A prudent but realistic forecast of £1.2 million is due to accrue before the end of March 2009 on top of which £0.45 million is expected from the cost neutral repayment of Cestria set-up costs (from CLS DC Year 1 share of VAT Shelter). The Capital Programme bids for 2008/2009 are set out in Appendix 5.
91. The resources available of £1.65 million are insufficient to address the capital programme proposals. The Executive have delegated authority to agree the prioritised capital programme recommendation from the Capital Working Group to be contained within available resources. However, Council notes that if expenditure proposals are to exceed capital resources available, then consideration should be given to prudential borrowing but that in this eventuality the Head of Corporate Finance will need to advise on affordability and such a proposal would need to be agreed by the Implementation Executive or the new County Council.

Externally Funded Schemes

92. The following schemes are in addition to the Council funded schemes set out in Appendix 5.

SHIP 3	DFG	75,000
SHIP 3	Group Repair Scheme	56,000
SHIP 2	Various projects	700,000
SHIP Safety Net funding	Heart of the Village Sacriston	150,000
SHIP Safety Net funding	Heart of the Village Pelton Fell	350,000
Developers Contribution	HOV Pelton Fell Community Centre	500,000
Developers Contribution	HOV Pelton Fell MUGA	238,000
Big Lottery Fund	Provision of 4/5 Play Areas	200,000
S.106 Agreement	A693 Roundabout	925,000

RISK MANAGEMENT

93. Risk management arrangements within the council have been continually developed over the last few years with an increased focus on the strategic risks facing the authority. Last years corporate plan identified 20 strategic risks
94. The decision to proceed with the move to a single unitary authority for County Durham and the development of this Transitional Plan will require a further review of the major risks facing the authority in the remaining period up to April 2009. The council will review its Strategic Risks in a joint exercise involving Members and Officers. This will be undertaken once the '**People and Place**' delivery plan has been produced. The Transition Plan will be updated with the agreed strategic risks once this exercise is complete. This Strategic Risk management exercise will take place in Mid May 2008.
95. Regular review of progress will be a key feature of the project management approach adopted and this will need to be informed by other risk issues that could affect the overall successful delivery of the expected outcomes.

ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

96. During the transition period the council will respond to the challenges of climate change where it can. It will be committed to improving its environmental footprint and that of its communities. Appendix 6 sets out some key achievements on these issues.



Appendix 1: Legal Framework Guidance

To be completed as soon as full picture is understood.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION – STATUTORY CONTROLS ON DISPOSALS, CONTRACTS & RESERVES – “WORKING TOGETHER TO CONTINUE TO DELIVER”

To ensure an orderly implementation, a new consent regime applies (as from 4 March 2008) to prevent the District Council (and all other Durham District Councils) from entering into certain contracts and restricting the Council’s ability to include an amount in its financial reserves.

Contracts affected

The types of contract affected are listed in section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, namely:-

- (1) contracts to dispose of land (freehold or leasehold interests) where what is to be received exceeds £100,000;
- (2) any capital contract (i.e. capital expenditure/finance) where what is to be paid exceeds £1,000,000 (or which includes a provision which allows the Council to vary the amount to be paid)
- (3) any non-capital contract exceeding £100,000 where it extends beyond 1 April 2009 (or any such contract which has a provision allowing for extension beyond that date).

For all practical purposes, all such contracts are caught *in terms of value* irrespective of their apparent face value because Parliament has created an artificial legal definition which adds the cumulative value of all such previous contracts of ‘the same or a similar description of matter’ entered into on and since 1 January **2007**.

Consent – General or specific consent?

In simple terms, prior consent is required to be obtained. The nature of the consent required depends upon what the District Council proposes.

To make matters easier certain transactions have been given consent already through a ‘general consent’ so specific consent does not need to be applied for if those matters come solely within the terms of the general consent).

General consents issued by the Secretary of State

Land disposal contracts - No specific 'section 24 consent' is required where the District Council is required by any enactment of Parliament to enter into a contract for land disposal (because the Secretary of State has issued a general consent)

General consents issued by the Implementation Executive for County Durham

The guidance from the Secretary of State recommends that the Implementation Executive should give general consents for routine transactions to allow these to continue unhindered.

The County Council through the Implementation Executive (at the IE's Meeting on 7 March 2008) issued the following general consents, namely:-

- (a) the disposals of land and entry into capital and revenue contracts identified in the District Councils' budgets for 2008/2009;
- (b) the completion of all disposals of land to which a District Council was contractually committed prior to 4 March 2008;
- (c) all disposals of land approved in District Council budgets prior to 2008/2009 where no contractual commitment currently exists and
- (d) all disposals of land where the value of the land concerned is less than £250,000. (For the avoidance of doubt this figure is not to be treated as cumulative with previous transactions referred to in Section 27(1) of the 2007 Act).

In addition, a general consent was given by the Implementation Executive to District Councils to enter into contracts under legislation relating to emergencies and civil contingencies and that the use of such powers be reported to the Implementation Executive or, in the case of contracts entered into after the 1 May 2008, the Executive of the newly elected Council

Specific consents

Delegated power has been given by the Implementation Executive to the County Treasurer to:-

- (i) approve (in consultation with the Corporate Services Programme Board) any other disposal of land, capital or revenue contract proposed to be carried out or entered into by a District Council and which is not covered by the general consent in paragraphs (a) – (d) above;
- (ii) approve, on referral from the appropriate District Council Section 151 officer, the entering into of any contract by a District Council which falls due for renewal before the 31 March 2009;

Application for specific consents need to be made where general consents do not cover what is proposed.

FLOWCHART

IS IT A TYPE OF DISTRICT COUNCIL CONTRACT AFFECTED BY THE SECTION 24 DIRECTION?

No	Yes
Proceed as normal (making sure any other consents are obtained, if relevant)	

WHAT TYPE OF CONTRACT IS IT?

DISPOSAL OF LAND CONTRACT	REVENUE CONTRACT	CAPITAL CONTRACT
Cumulative total since 1 January 2007 over £100,000 – all caught	Cumulative total since 1 January 2007 over £100,000 AND extends or could extend beyond 1 April 2009	Cumulative total since 1 January 2007 over £1million [Also includes any capital contract of any amount where it includes a provision to vary the consideration to be paid].

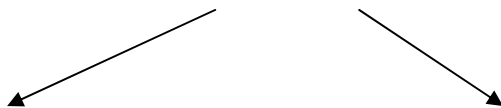
NB. To calculate whether the value threshold has been reached for a revenue contract or a capital contract, ask if the particular contract is 'the same or of a similar description of the matter' of other contracts since 1 January 2007. If so, add up the value of all such contracts to see if the threshold is exceeded. It is NOT assessed on the value of the particular proposed contract. There is an artificial definition based on cumulative value of same or similar contracts.

HAVE THERE BEEN ENOUGH PREVIOUS CONTRACTS OF THE SAME OR SIMILAR TYPE TO EXCEED THE VALUE THRESHOLD FOR THAT TYPE OF CONTRACT?

NO	YES
Proceed provided value threshold not reached AND in the case of a capital contract provided the particular capital contract does NOT have a variation consideration term	

CONSENT IS REQUIRED

WHERE CONSENT IS REQUIRED, HAS A GENERAL CONSENT ALREADY BEEN ISSUED FOR THE TYPE OF CONTRACT?



BY SECRETARY OF STATE	BY COUNTY COUNCIL
<u>Land Disposal Contracts</u> – where the District Council is required by an enactment to dispose of land	<u>Land Disposal Contracts</u> – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the disposals of land identified in the District Council’s budgets for 2008/2009; (2) the completion of all disposals of land to which a District Council was contractually committed prior to 4 March 2008; (3) all disposals of land approved in District Council budgets prior to 2008/2009 where no contractual commitment currently exists; (4) all disposals of land where the value of the land concerned is less than £250,000. (For the avoidance of doubt this figure is not to be treated as cumulative with previous transactions referred to in Section 27(1) of the 2007 Act).
	<u>Revenue Contracts</u> (1) to enter into revenue contracts identified in the District Councils’ budgets for 2008/2009
	<u>Capital Contracts</u> (1) to enter into capital contracts identified in the District Council’s budgets for 2009/2009.
	<u>Legislation relating to emergencies and civil contingencies</u> (1) to enter into contracts under legislation relating to emergencies and civil contingencies

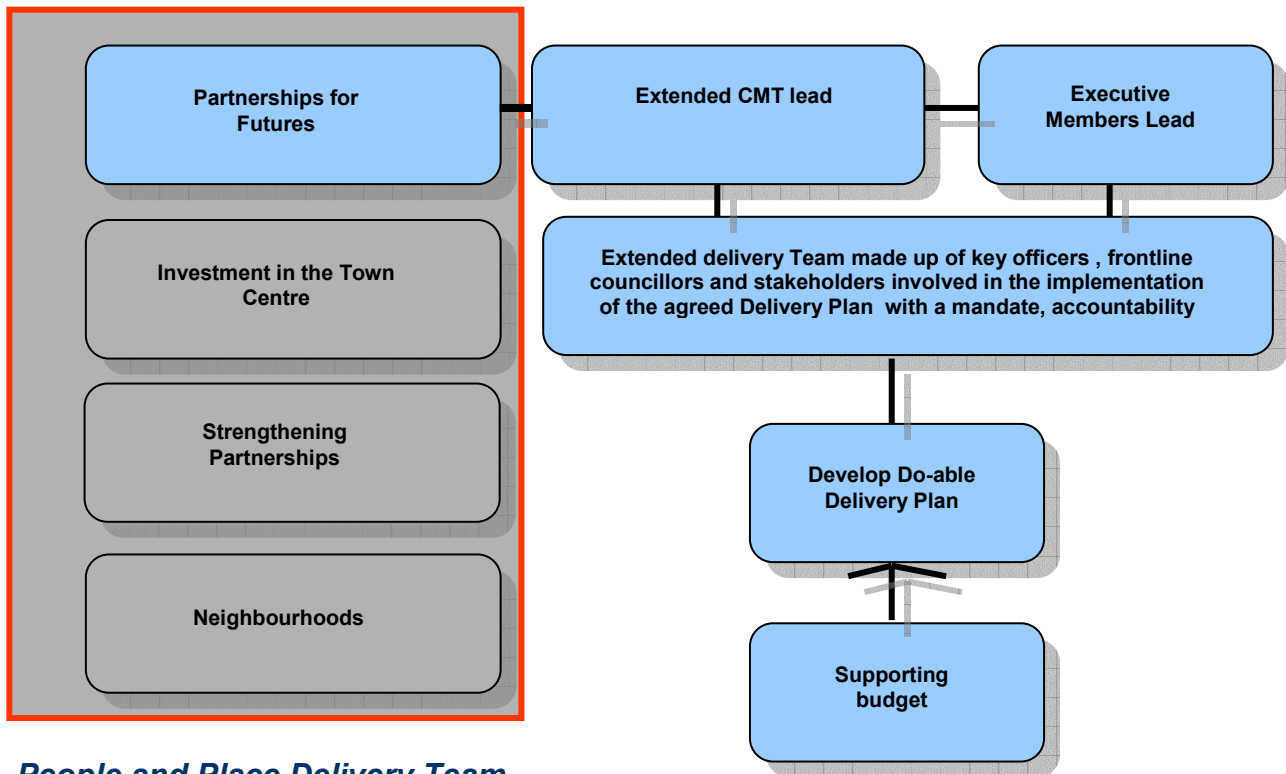
IF THERE IS A GENERAL CONSENT, THEN PROCEED.

IF THERE IS NO GENERAL CONSENT, APPLY TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL FOR CONSENT.



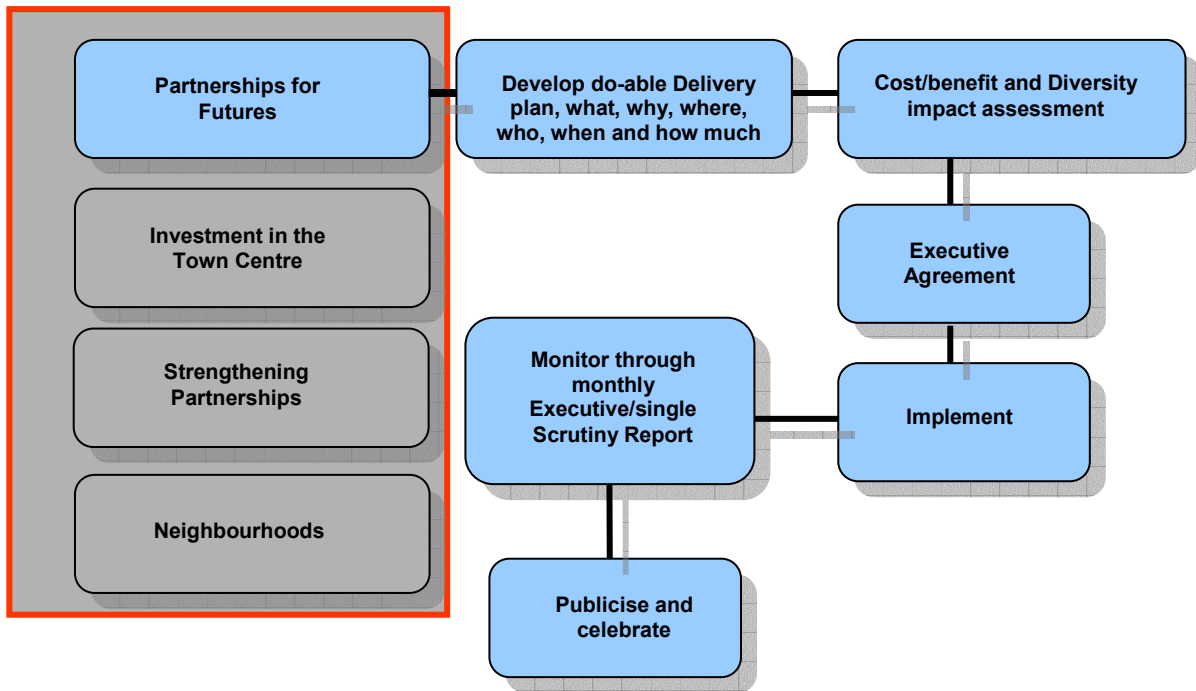
Appendix 2: 'People and Place' Process

People and Place – Action Learning Set approach



People and Place Delivery Team

People and Place – Monitoring Process





Appendix 3: Revised Corporate Plan Proposals

Note: Members and Officer leads subject to change in lifetime of plan

CORPORATE PLAN PROPOSALS – CLLR LINDA EBBATSON

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
CE26	Continue our Organisational Development Programme through to May 2008	Ian Forster/Julie Underwood Cllr Linda Ebbatson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake action learning sets and CPI projects and report by May 2008 ▪ Build in learning to decide future programme by March 2008 ▪ Consider the outcomes of action learning sets and targets by September 2007 ▪ % of members and officers meeting required competencies ▪ Measured outcomes from projects completed against intended outcomes/scope of brief ▪ Some measured outcomes will also be developed as part of the brief for each set/project ▪ Improvement in performance in 100% of CPI project processes ▪ IIP recognition ▪ Engages all services 	On target
CE30	Ensure new elected members are equipped with the relevant skills by August 2008	Ian Forster Cllr Linda Ebbatson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carry out induction programme for new members by August 2007 ▪ Service plans and corporate plan and priorities are delivered on time ▪ Evaluations from training events ▪ Feedback from member support assessments of how learning was applied ▪ Feedback from community groups 	On target But need to review in light of LGR. Need to consider bigger picture including the role of the front line councillor.

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
CE32	Embark upon further programme of elected member development linked to the role of the front line councillor by March 2009	Ian Forster Cllr Linda Ebbatson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members training plan implemented from September 2007 and reviewed annually ▪ Evaluations from training events ▪ Feedback from members support assessments of how learning was applied ▪ Feedback from community groups 	<p>On Target</p> <p>Need to refresh programme to help members motivation</p>
WP1	Complete updating of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and implement action plans through to March 2009	Jeremy Brock Cllr Linda Ebbatson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement action plans ▪ 90% of actions completed on time ▪ 90% of targets met 	<p>On target</p> <p>But need to consider focus on motivating LSP achievements as a result of LGR</p>
WP2	Ensure action plans are established and built into service planning to achieve the actions and targets of the Sustainable Community Strategy by 2009	Jeremy Brock Cllr Linda Ebbatson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure ownership in services of SCS proposals by December 2007 ▪ Establish contribution targets and action by March 2008 ▪ Assess contribution to Respect Agenda by March 2008 ▪ Monitor and review ▪ %internal targets met ▪ %SCS targets met across District 	<p>On target</p>
WP3	Ensure action plans are established and built into service planning to achieve the actions and targets of the Local Area Agreement by 2009	Julie Underwood Cllr Linda Ebbatson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through golden threading exercise, secure ownership in services of LAA proposals by October 2007 ▪ Assess contribution to Respect Agenda by October 2007 ▪ Establish contribution targets and action 	<p>On target</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ by September 2007 ▪ Establish in Service Planning Review by October 2007 ▪ Monitor and review ▪ % internal targets met ▪ % LAA targets met across District 	
WP4	Work in partnership with other councils to develop the implementation of the Local Area Agreement through to March	Ian Forster Cllr Linda Ebbatson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop performance management framework and governance arrangements by September 2007 ▪ Participation on project team and LAA Board ▪ Engage and influence the new LAA for 2008/2011 by March 2008 	On Target
ME1	Seek to secure a positive direction of travel report from the Audit Commission to build on our progress from 'poor' to 'good' by March 2009	Ian Forster Cllr Linda Ebbatson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop action plan to support existing improvement programme ▪ Positively address Audit Programme in reaching their conclusions ▪ Secure positive direction of travel reports annually 	On Target
ME2	Work in partnership, when required, to respond to the challenges of Local Government Review through to March 2009	Roy Templeman Cllr Linda Ebbatson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respond to the impending decision on the future of local government by September 2007 (or as otherwise directed by Government) ▪ Respond to future opportunities for engagement as they arise 	On Target
New	Engage in and influence the development of the Tyne and Wear Multi Area Agreement and the City Region	Roy Templeman Cllr Linda Ebbatson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respond to opportunities to put forward proposals and effect change. 	On Target



CORPORATE PLAN PROPOSALS – COUNCILLOR SIMON HENIG

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
CE9	Develop and implement a benefits take up strategy and implement by March . A benefits take up campaign means working with partners eg Welfare Rights, CAB not just ourselves to maximize benefit entitlement and bring new customers onto benefit	Catherine Lofthouse Cllr Simon Henig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and adopt strategy by April 2008 ▪ Review annually ▪ Annual % increase in benefit take up ▪ 3% increase in benefits customer satisfaction BVPI's 	<p>On target</p> <p>The annual strategy has been written and the action plan is being monitored monthly. Progress to date – Since April 2007 we have paid an additional £39,000 in benefits that would have otherwise not been claimed</p>
CE10	Develop and implement a revenues take up strategy to maximize direct benefits and e-payments and ensure customers have correct entitlement to discounts, reliefs and investment by March	Catherine Lofthouse Cllr Simon Henig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and adopt strategy by March ▪ Annual % increase in revenues take up ▪ Annual % increase in electronic transactions ▪ 3% increase in revenues customer satisfaction 	<p>On target</p> <p>The annual strategy has been written and the action plan is being monitored monthly. Progress to date – Since April 2007 we increased direct debit take up by 3% and paid an additional £237,000 in rate relief</p>
CE11	Develop and implement an anti-fraud strategy by March	Steven Graham Cllr Simon Henig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and adopt strategy by March ▪ Review annually ▪ Targets to be developed by September 2007 	<p>On target</p> <p>The annual strategy has been written and the action plan is being monitored monthly. Progress to date – Since April 2007 we have issued 50 sanctions and prevented in excess of £50,000 in fraudulent benefit payments</p>
CE17	Carry out customer satisfaction for	Alison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement customer satisfaction 	<p>On target</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
	benefits and local taxation customers other than the 3 yearly BVPI (customer satisfaction not currently measure in local taxation) by March 2008	Styring/Angela Cook Cllr Simon Henig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ measurement for 2008/09 ▪ Satisfaction monitored and action plan drawn up to improve by April 2008 	The annual strategy has been written and the action plan is being monitored monthly.
DS4	Continue to deliver the three year capital programme by March 2009	Ian Broughton Cllr Simon Henig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver 2008/09 programme by Mar 2009 ▪ Publish revised three year plan by February 2008 ▪ 100% of budget spent ▪ 100% planned homes improved ▪ 95% customers satisfaction from recipient tenants 	On Target
DS5	Annually update the Housing Strategy in order that it remains fit for purpose through to March 2009	Leila Dawson Cllr Simon Henig/Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update Housing Strategy by Jan 2008 ▪ Create 5 page strategy to meet national guidelines ▪ Fit for purpose judgements by government office ▪ Positive audit reports 	On target Update of housing strategy under way. Consultation work has taken place. Revised strategy will come forward by January 2008.
ME3	Progress our action plan to improve the Council's Use of Resources Assessment through to March 2009	Ian Herberson Cllr Simon Henig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme manage action plan implementation ▪ Ensure embedding of actions taken in organization ▪ Maintain level 3 by March ▪ Positive audit reports ▪ Impacts on all services 	On target The Audit Commission has completed its work on the Use of Resources Assessment for 2007 and the outcome will be received on 19 November.
ME14	Continue to operate an internal audit service that complies with CIPFA Codes of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government through to March 2009	Jim Eider/Mark Jim Jim Eider/Mark Welch Cllr Simon Henig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self assessment for internal audit annual report submitted to Council in June 2008 ▪ Positive external audit reports 	On target Action Plan for full compliance with the Code incorporated in Internal Audit Service Plan. Anticipate that Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit in April/May 2008 will report full compliance

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
ME15	Continue to minimize Audit Commission audit fees by meeting recognized standards through to March 2009	Jim Elder/Mark Welch Clr Simon Henig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positive external audit reports 	<p>On target</p> <p>Audit Manual developed which includes audit procedure compliant with International Standards for Auditing. Staff training on the revised procedures took place.</p>
ME16	Review the role of the Audit Committee and ensure that it meets what is required for corporate governance by March 2009	Jim Elder/Mark Welch Clr Simon Henig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide support to Audit Committee up until March 2009 	<p>On target</p>
ME27	Undertake PACE Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Copyright health check by March 2009	Chris Potter Clr Simon Henig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake survey across Council by September 2008 ▪ Produce audit report by October 2008 ▪ Commence implementation of recommendations by December 2008 ▪ No challenges in respect to FOI, PPA or copyright law 	<p>On target</p>



CORPORATE PLAN PROPOSALS – COUNCILLOR SIMON WESTRIP

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
CE23	Review environmental services customer standards by January 2008	Gordon MacCallam Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor performance of existing standards by September 2007 ▪ Engage community in re-assessing standards and targets by Nov 2007 ▪ Adopt new standards and targets by January 2008 ▪ Improved customer satisfaction 	<p>On target</p> <p>Following the initial review of the Service Standards, further reporting of performance will be done using indicators aligned to existing best value performance indicators and local performance indicators</p>
CE24	Achieve Green Flag Award for Ropery lane Cemetery by March 2009	Gordon MacCallam Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and improve standards of the district's cemeteries through to March 2009 ▪ Apply for Cemetery of the Year Award by December 2007 ▪ Secure improved customer satisfaction ▪ Secure award 	<p>On target</p> <p>Progress on the improvement action plan has encouraged an application for Green Flag Status (superseding Cemetery of the Year)</p>
CE33	Carry out customer satisfaction for building control service customers by March 2008	Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey to be undertaken in accordance with government guidance ▪ Customer satisfaction to be measured from 1 October onwards ▪ Satisfaction monitored and targets and action plan drawn up to improve by February 2008 	<p>On Target</p> <p>Survey began October 2007</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
CE35	Establish business forum for planning and environmental health customers by March 2008	Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Database of customers to be established by 31 July ▪ Inaugural event Autumn 2007 ▪ Terms of reference and future programme and targets agreed by January 2008 ▪ Improved satisfaction for business users 	<p>On target</p> <p>Database of customers to be collated once admin team manager starts in January. Business 'Forum' will be established by March 2008</p>
RD7	Progress the Carbon Neutral Edmondsley project through to March	Andy Stephenson Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop the scheme with the community and partners by June 2006 ▪ Drafting of a business plan by July 2007 ▪ Complete by April 2009 ▪ Establishment of first carbon neutral village in the UK. 	<p>On target</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
RD9	Priorities vulnerable households in the implementation of thermal efficiency measures	Andy Stephenson Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of priority households across the District requiring insulation measures by March 2007 ▪ Assist priority and vulnerable households by providing insulation installations through to March ▪ % of measures undertaken against numbers of properties requiring insulation 	<p>There has been no capital funding available for this scheme and therefore no work undertaken.</p> <p>Revised Milestone</p> <p>Implement subject to availability of capital funding</p>
RD26	To examine, with partners, and reflecting the LAA, the opportunities to promote a culture of encouraging small and medium enterprises and social enterprises within the district, with an audit undertaken and action plan by December 2008	Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group established by 30 July 2007, with relevant officers signed up ▪ Thereafter group meeting on quarterly basis ▪ Able to demonstrate effective recycling of 106 funds to capital schemes 	On target
RD27	Identify and remediate contaminated land within the District through to March 2009	Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop guidelines/information materials for potential developers in the District by October 2007 ▪ Consult on, complete and adopt a robust Contaminated Land Strategy for the district by April 2008 ▪ Rationalise existing data to identify priority sites by April 2008 	On target

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
NM1	Roll out of neighbourhood management through to March	Tony Galloway Clr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce and distribute 'Street Clean' reporting cards by May 2007 ▪ Produce and distribute monthly 'in your ward' Councillor profiles by May 2007 ▪ Provide a 'pride in our Neighbourhoods' freephone line by May 2007 ▪ Prepare and distribute 'pride in our Neighbourhood' leaflet across the District by June 2007 ▪ Review of initiative by September 2007, set targets and make any necessary changes ▪ Publish article on progress in District News by September 2007 ▪ 5% increase in annual customer satisfaction levels ▪ Increase in the number of compliments received from public ▪ Decrease in % of complaints received from public 	<p>On target</p> <p>Milestones 1- 6 achieved Milestones 7- 9 are being monitored and performance outputs will be available March 2008</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
NM4	To target areas for enforcement activities using customer and intelligence led feedback	Gordon MacCallam Clr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify key areas for targeting enforcement from FLARE system by May 2007 ▪ Prepare initial programme of targeted enforcement by December 2007 ▪ Increased number of fixed penalty fines and successful prosecutions ▪ Decrease in number of incidences of environmental crime 	<p>On target</p> <p>We have commenced targeted enforcement activities. Areas covered so far include Pelton Fell, Sacriston, Bournmoor & Fencehouses and starting in Grange Villa next</p> <p>Enforcement activities in each area are being recorded and the effectiveness measured at the end of the year</p>
NM5	Continue to secure Green Flag/Green Pennant awards through to March 2009	Gordon MacCallam Clr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain high standards through to 2009 ▪ Submit applications by December 2007 ▪ Secure awards ▪ Improved customer satisfaction 	<p>On target</p> <p>Green Flag Award 2007 achieved at riverside.</p> <p>Additional sties are identified for submission to GFA 2008</p>
NM7	Review the financial performance of the trade waste service based on the retention of market share and rising disposal costs	Gordon MacCallam Clr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review performance of trade waste service by June 2007 ▪ Develop and consider options report as part of the 2008/09 budget by Sept 2007 ▪ Implement findings by March 2008 	<p>On target</p> <p>Trade accounts are reviewed on a quarterly basis. New legislation on pre-treatment of trade waste has increased the competitive element in this sector</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
NM10	Implement all aspects of the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005	Gordon MacCallam Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review frontline staff awareness of the duties that will be required to use the act appropriately by March 2008 ▪ Identify the areas which require change in current working practices by April 2008, including those aspects of the Clean Neighbourhood Act which are not part of current working practice ▪ Arrange appropriate training to ensure all frontline staff have an appreciation of the new act and how best to use it by April 2008 ▪ Assess likely future demands on services using the data collected on environmental crime and the section performance against the targets already in place for BVPIs 218a and b, 199a, b, c, and d, and monitor our performance against service standards including clearing litter, flytipping, sharps, etc. ▪ Review progress and identify areas not presently adopted within the Council's constitution by September 2008 	<p>On target</p> <p>Key Environmental Service Mangers have been trained in the practicalities and delivery of CNEA.</p> <p>Discussion with Legal Services is currently ongoing to ensure a clear policy and procedure exists in order to implement the CNEA.</p> <p>A value for money report has been completed by the Environmental Services in order to ascertain the overall cost effectiveness of the current enforcement provision. This has been done in conjunction with the Director of Resources</p>
NM11	Increase percentage of households waste recycling through to March 2009	Gordon MacCallam Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare publicity material for campaign by July 2007 ▪ Conduct 3 month publicity campaign by October 2007 	<p>On target</p> <p>Promotion and awareness raising projects have been managed in conjunction with Durham County Waste Awareness Partnership Agreement has been reached with Premier Waste Management Ltd.</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
NM18	Identify and remediate contaminated land within the district through to March 2009	Clr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop guidelines/information materials for potential developers in the District by October 2007 ▪ Consult on, complete and adopt a robust Contaminated Land Strategy for the District by April 2008 ▪ Rationalise existing data to identify priority sites by December 2008 	On Target
NM19	Control emissions to the air from prescribed industrial processes through to March 2009	Clr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete risk assessment of all existing processes to determine appropriate level of 'regulatory effort' required by the District by October 2007 ▪ Ensure that all existing and new installations comply with required upgrades as detailed in relevant process guidance note on or before due date ▪ Survey the District to identify businesses requiring permits that currently to not have them by October 2007 	On target
NM20	Develop and implement an environmental and sustainability educational programme directed at schools through to March 2009	Andy Stephenson Clr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish programme by August 2007 ▪ Implement by September 2007 ▪ Complete by March ▪ Increased number of schools participating ▪ Increase number of children and young people participating 	On target
NM21	Increase the areas that are managed for biodiversity by 10% by March 2009	Gordon MacCallam Clr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify potential areas by Nov 2006 ▪ Conclude public engagement by Feb 2007 ▪ Implement by March by ▪ 10% target indicator achieved ▪ Improve service based performance indicator 	On target 2006 completed target 2007-08 targets will be developed through the award winning action for wildlife project (Northern Region 'Gold' Green Apple Winner)

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
NWL2	To raise the profile of arts within the district through to March 2009	Simon High Cllr Simon Westrip	<p>Corporate Plan Milestones/targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completion of a self assessment in line with ACE NE requirements by October 2007 ▪ Completion and adoption of a local arts plan for the district by Dec 2007 ▪ Contribute to a successful welcome event for the test match in mid June 2007 ▪ 25% increase against previous year on number of arts events/courses in the community <p>Revised Milestone</p> <p>Work deferred due to long term absence of arts officer on maternity leave. Revised date for arts plan is December 2008, no self assessment to be carried out on advice of ACE NE due to LGR. Welcome event achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Green Flag Award retained annually 	<p>On target</p>
NWL3	Ensure that the Riverside continues to retain its Green Flag Award with an improved rating through to March 2009	Simon High Cllr Simon Westrip		<p>On target</p> <p>Achieved for 2007</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
NWL4	Continue to support the Sacriston Community & Sports Trust to attract external funding to assist the construction of new facilities within Sacriston Welfare Ground by July 2008	Simon High Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All required funding for phase 1 to be in place by June 2007 ▪ Construction to begin September 2007 ▪ Phase 1 completed and operational by May 2008 ▪ Football foundation bid towards phase 2 to be submitted by October 2007 	<p>On Target</p> <p>Phase 1 On Target</p> <p>Currently re-appraising options for phase 2 with the Community & Sports Trust and the Regeneration team as part of the wider heart of the village project.</p> <p>Revised timescales on this and possible bid to the football foundation to be confirmed following discussion and agreement with these stakeholders.</p>
NWL6	Work towards Selby Cottage being recognized by OFSTED as being an 'Outstanding' childcare facility through to March 2008	Tony Galloway Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Next inspection due after Sept 2007 ▪ Maintain 'outstanding' judgement 	<p>On Target</p>
NWL7	Develop and implement an annual customer survey plan for the leisure service team as a whole through to March 2009	Tony Galloway Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual plan agreed April 2007 ▪ All surveys to be undertaken in a designated month, monitored on a quarterly basis ▪ All survey results to be available within 2 months of the survey being completed ▪ Targets to be set on completion of initial survey 	<p>On Target</p>
NWL8	Submit an application to the Big Lottery Fund in respect of an available funding package of £200,000 towards improved play provision for young people within the district and implement through to March 2009	Simon High Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community consultation to be completed by the end of May 2007 ▪ Revised play strategy to be completed by end June 2007 ▪ Make application by September 2007 ▪ Receive decision by March 2008 ▪ Implement year 1 of the strategy 	<p>On Target</p> <p>(Funding achieved, implementation of yr 1 has begun)</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
NWL11	Extend delivery of the Family Initiative Supporting Children's Health (FISCH) to deliver phase 2 through to March 2009	Simon High Clr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding from MEND confirmed by May 2007 ▪ First 9 week programme to start in July 2007 ▪ Second 9 week programme to start in October 2007 ▪ 60% of all families who start the programme complete the full course ▪ 80% of children who complete the course see their weight remaining stable at least 6 months after the course end 	On Target

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
	To implement the multi sport environment project at Riverside by July 2008	Simon High Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding application approved May 2007 ▪ Multi sport environment officer appointed July 2007 ▪ Implement, in full, the first year action plan 	<p>On target</p> <p>There have been delays in Sport England considering the application. This is now expected in June 2008.</p> <p>If application successful expect appointment to post in September 2008.</p>
NWL13	To implement the community sports coaching programme within the District by January 2008	Simon High Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appointment of 1 F/T and 2 P/T community sports coaches by Sept 2007 ▪ At least 12 schools within the District engaged in the project by Jan 2008 ▪ 50 hours per week of direct coaching in and around schools by Jan 2008 	<p>On Target</p> <p>Coaches appointed in November 2007, currently only providing 32 hrs coaching per week but this will rise to the target of 50 hrs by June as the weather improves for tennis and rowing.</p>
NWL14	Provide free swimming for all under 18's during the summer holiday period through to Sept 2008	Simon High Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding from Children's Fund confirmed by April 2007 ▪ 50% increase in under 18 attendances from previous level 	<p>On Target</p>
NWL16	Develop links with at least 3 schools within the District for the provision of golf and gym coaching programmes by March 2008	Simon High Cllr Simon Westrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Links established with first school by June 2007 ▪ Links established with second school by September 2007 ▪ Links established with third school by December 2007 ▪ 50 children undertaking a golf coaching programme by end March 2008 ▪ 50 children undertaking a gym induction programme by end March 2008 <p>Revised Milestone</p>	<p>On target</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Not achieved due to capacity issues but now linked into the 'community sports network application' to Sport England for April 2008 start.	
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CORPORATE PLAN PROPOSALS – COUNCILLOR CHRIS JUKES

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
WP8	Coordinate the Economic Development and Regeneration Group of the Local Strategic Partnership through to March 2009	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contributions to the Sustainable Community Strategy action plan completed by September 2006 ▪ Set forward plan of activities for the policy group by March 2008 	On target
WP11	Undertake housing needs study and housing market assessment	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing needs study completed December 2008 ▪ Housing market assessment completed December 2008 	On target Both pieces of work under way and to be completed by December 2008.
DHS5	Annually update the Housing Strategy in order that it remains fit for purpose through to March 2009	Leila Dawson Cllr Simon Henig/Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update Housing Strategy by January 2008 ▪ Create 5 page strategy to meet national guidelines ▪ Fit for purpose judgements by government office ▪ Positive audit reports 	On target Revised strategy under development, will be brought forward by January 2008.
DHS7	Implement priority needs funding for 2007/08 by March 2008	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement funding regime by March 2008 ▪ Targets set by September 2007 ▪ % increase in satisfaction of vulnerable customers 	On target Will be completed by March 2008

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
DHS9	Work in partnership with other county districts to undertake private sector stock condition survey by May 2008	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Procure consultants by November 2007 ▪ Carry out survey by February 2008 ▪ Develop action plan to address results by May 2008 	<p>On target</p> <p>Consultants in place and work under way. Will hit initial timescales.</p>
RD1	Implement our Regeneration Strategy for the district	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement through to March ▪ Improved LAA economic development indicators 	<p>On target</p> <p>Strategy in place and being implemented. 50% actions now complete.</p>
RD2	Develop and publish a Local Development framework	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submission of core strategy and development control planning document to Secretary of State by Feb ▪ Submission of development allocations planning document to Secretary of State by Jan 2009 ▪ Adoption of core strategy and development control planning document by May 2009 ▪ Adoption of development allocations planning document by April 2011 	<p>On target</p> <p>Timescale agreed.</p> <p>Core strategy consultation paper agreed by Council, and consultation about to begin.</p> <p>Work progressing in line with original timescales.</p>
RD3	Complete the town centre regeneration scheme by March 2008	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete market plan regeneration by June 2007 ▪ Develop a business plan for the market, including the maximized use of the 'Civic Heart' space by July 2007 ▪ Develop town centre master plan by March 2008 ▪ Develop links to the Riverside ▪ Develop a 'café culture' ▪ Undertake a town centre health check by March 2008 ▪ Work with partners to develop a town centre ambassadors group by July 2008 ▪ Assess the evening economy and produce a strategic report by March 2008 ▪ Reduction in number of vacant units in the town centre ▪ Increase in number of events held 	<p>On target</p> <p>Market place regeneration complete.</p> <p>Business plan developed.</p> <p>Town Centre master plan under development , and will be completed ahead of schedule (December 2007).</p> <p>Other actions will flow from that.</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
RD4	Implement the regeneration of Pelton Fell by March 2009	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wordsworth Avenue environmental improvement scheme complete by May 2007 ▪ Phase 2 new build complete by July 2007 ▪ Funding in place for the Community Resources Centre (CRC) by April 2008 ▪ Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the village heart approved by Autumn 2007 	<p>On target</p> <p>Wordsworth Avenue scheme complete.</p> <p>Phase 2 new build well under way by Bellway (though not complete). Completion by March .</p> <p>Options for CRC being developed.</p> <p>Consultation on SPD under way – will be reported back to Executive in November 2007.</p>
RD5	Implement the regeneration of Sacriston by March	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete an Area Development Framework for Sacriston by June 2007 ▪ Agree action plan for investment in Sacriston using Single Housing Investment Programme by June 2007 	<p>On target</p> <p>ADF complete. Action plan under development, and reflected in sub-regional Housing Strategy.</p>
RD8	Develop a business led approach to workforce planning under the banner of Partnerships for Futures	Roy Templeman Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreement of principles of project commission by July 2007 ▪ Test viability and principal sponsors by August 2007 ▪ Formation of Board and agree commissioning by January 2008 ▪ Recruit team in Mile House and members by January 2008 ▪ Identify targets to be achieved in Year 1 by January 2008 ▪ Commence workforce planning consultancy by January 2008 ▪ Evaluate commitment against performance targets by May 2008 ▪ Develop Year 2 business plan by May 2008 ▪ Level of activity including numbers of employers and agencies engaged ▪ Identification of gaps in skills/jobs 	<p>On target</p> <p>Business plan in place.</p> <p>Now with partners for approval.</p> <p>Progressing in line with projected timescale.</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
RD10	Promoting a tourism and leisure based economy, building on the unique cultural heritage of the District, with a detailed action plan by December 2007	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustained employment, numbers taking up jobs and for how long ▪ In place by December 2007 ▪ Targets by December 2007 	On target Work under way, will be completed in timescale.
RD11	Work with partners to explore how the enormous potential of the transport infrastructure can be maximized locally by November 2007	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In place by November 2007 ▪ Targets by November 2007 	On target Work under way through LDF process. May need revision of dates depending on consultation responses
RD12	To promote the district and its attractions as a place to visit, live, work and invest with a detailed action plan for the marketing of the district	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In place by December 2007 ▪ Increased visitor numbers ▪ Targets by December 2007 	On target Work under way, will be completed in timescale.
RD15	Develop protocols and partnership agreements that will maximize their impact in the regeneration of the district and contribution to the Decent Homes Standard through to March 2009	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In place by September 2007 ▪ Targets by September 2007 ▪ % decrease in non decent homes 	On target Under negotiation via stock transfer process. To be completed in transfer agreement to be signed off in December 2007.
RD16	To promote further affordable homes nomination agreements in new private sector developments by March 2009	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In place by March 2009 ▪ Targets by December 2007 ▪ Increased percentage of affordable homes 	On target Ongoing. No need for revision.
RD17	To review the community facilities available within the District and to draw up an action plan to fill gaps by December 2007	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In place by December 2007 ▪ Targets by December 2007 ▪ Increase in use of community facilities 	On target Baseline report completed. Work under way, will be completed in timescale.

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
RD18	To work with partners in delivery of the crime and disorder reduction strategy with specific initiatives in regeneration corridors according to locally identified issues through to March 2009	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In place by March 2009 ▪ Targets by December 2007 ▪ The % of residents who feel that they felt 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' 	<p>On target</p> <p>Work under way, will be completed in timescale.</p>
RD19	To audit the engagement of local communities within regeneration and develop an action plan for maximizing engagement	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In place by September 2007 ▪ Targets by September 2007 ▪ Increase in numbers participating in community regeneration 	<p>On target</p> <p>Being taken forward as part of community facilities review. Will be complete by December 2007.</p>
RD20	To work with the community and voluntary sector to understand their current and potential contribution to regeneration objectives and the creation of sustainable communities, with an audit and action plan agreed	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In place by December 2007 ▪ Targets by December 2007 	<p>On target</p> <p>Being taken forward as part of community facilities review. Will be complete by December 2007.</p>
RD24	To work with the Learning District Partnership in examining how the delivery of the Regeneration Strategy can encourage and facilitate wide participation in learning opportunities through to March 2009	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In place by December 2007 ▪ Targets by December 2007 	<p>On target</p> <p>Ongoing, through employability forum. Will be complete in timescale.</p>
RD25	To examine, with partners, and reflecting the LAA, the opportunities to promote a culture of encouraging small and medium enterprises and social enterprises within the district with an audit undertaken and action plan by December 2008	Leila Dawson Cllr Chris Jukes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In place by December 2007 ▪ Targets by December 2007 	<p>On target</p> <p>Work under way, will be completed in timescale.</p>



CORPORATE PLAN PROPOSALS – COUNCILLOR STEVE BARR

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
CE7	Continue roll out of Customer Relationship Management system across all services	Craig Etherington/Graeme Clark Cllr Steve Barr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CRM system operational across all services by March 2008 ▪ Implemented on time and within budget ▪ % of transactions and customer profile recorded on system increases year on year ▪ 	<p>On Target</p> <p>Progress will continue as planned to March 2008. Future development of CRM within Chester-le-street will be determined via customer access LGR worksteam.</p>
CE13	CRM system – website customer self service	Graeme Clark Cllr Steve Barr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce facilities if benefits outweigh costs by April 2008 ▪ Increase in use of the Council website ▪ Improved satisfaction of website users 	<p>On Target</p> <p>Due to testing and upgrading across the whole e-govt partnership VCRM system, this function will go live in March 2008</p>
CE14	Development of Council's website through to 2009	Graeme Clark Cllr Steve Barr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain working partnerships with Derwentside and Easington ▪ Incremental website improvement ▪ Continue to support LAA and LSP website 	<p>On Target</p> <p>Met AAA web accessibility target in June 2007. Revised Home Page in June 2007. Redesigned LSP website in June 2007. Since continued to maintain AAA web accessibility</p>
CE15	Development of Council's intranet through to 2009	Graeme Clark Cllr Steve Barr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incremental intranet improvement 	<p>On target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revised Intranet Pages in Autumn 2007 ▪ Planned redesign of Intranet Home Page in Dec 2007. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intranet made available to staff and members from Home in Sept 2007.

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
CE16	Development of Council's extranet through to 2009	Graeme Clark Cllr Steve Barr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify possible users and communicate facility by July 2007 ▪ Improved capacity for members, community, voluntary groups and partners to share and collaborate more effectively 	<p>On Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction of LSP Extranet site. ▪ Introduction of town twinning extranet site with Kamp-Lintfort.
CE21	Work to develop a Community Hub at Grange Villa by September 2007	Craig Etherington Cllr Steve Barr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Future development of other community access information / service points has been adopted by the customer access workstream and in particular the face to face contact area to be lead by Craig Etherington. 	<p>On Target</p> <p>Grange Villa web-site completed and live August 2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future development of other community access information / service points has been adopted by the customer access workstream and in particular the face to face contact area to be lead by Craig Etherington.
CE20	Improve Council image through Implementation of Corporate Communication Strategy	Craig Etherington Cllr Steve Barr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree Strategy by July 2007 ▪ Implement and agree targets by September 2007 ▪ Increased media releases ▪ Increased positive press coverage ▪ Increase in customer satisfaction ▪ Increased satisfaction and understanding of the Council 	<p>On target</p> <p>2008 / 2009 will continue as planned and link into the overall communication workstream for the proposed unitary authority i.e. branding etc.</p>
WP7	Implement Partnership Strategy proposals in the Improvement and Recovery Plan through to March 2009	Roy Templeman Cllr Steve Barr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reassess current Partnership Strategy in the light of Local Government Re-organisation by December 2008 ▪ Prioritise partnerships for evaluation and develop programme by December 2008 ▪ Set targets by December 2008 % of partnerships evaluated ▪ % of partnerships which are considered to be effective ▪ Assess potential for new partnerships through to March 2009 	<p>On target</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
ME12	Implement e-Government communications plan to maximize investment in new technology through to March 2009	Graeme Clark/Craig Etherington Cllr Steve Barr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Modernisation Project Team agreement to reviewed communications plan by September 2007 ▪ Modernisation Project Team agree targets for current initiatives by September 2007 ▪ Individual services commence implementation of campaigns by October 2007 ▪ Increased take up of facilities against targets set ▪ Improved customer satisfaction ▪ Evidenced Gershon efficiency savings 	<p>On target</p> <p>Customer and access workstream has identified communications as a key issue to support future changes. Therefore a sub-workstream for communications and marketing has been identified and will be lead by Craig Etherington to ensure the Council remains integrated with this plan.</p>

Ref No	Proposal	Responsible Officer/Member	Corporate Plan Milestones/targets	Progress/Revised milestones and targets
New consideration	Consider the implementation of a wireless marketplace for public access to the Internet for general public, visitors and market traders linked with the People and Place Priority	Graeme Clark / Cllr Steve Barr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with general public, visitors and market traders on potential market place. Nov 2007 • If consultation proposes this is a good idea we will investigate potential solutions and providers by March 2008. • If benefits outweigh costs and solution is feasible, we could implement by Sept 2008. 	On target



Chester-le-Street District Council

Appendix 4 : Improvement Plan 2008/2009

Issue	Proposal	Lead	By when	Desired Outcome
Audit Commission CPA Recommendation Formulate and Deliver an action plan to produce a Local Development Framework	A timetable and options document be developed and implemented	Leila Dawson	Achieved	Sound basis for the strategic and detailed planning of the District
Audit Commission CPA Recommendation The council should produce a leisure strategy based on comprehensive engagement with community and local groups to direct future developments in this service	This is no longer relevant in the light of Local Government Review and the council will be making a decision not to progress Leisure Options Review. Position to be kept under review	Tony Galloway	N/A	N/A
Audit Commission CPA Perceived Area for Improvement Improve engagement with minority groups to help understand needs for service delivery	Focus council priorities on community engagement over the next 14 months Re-focus the role of the Equality and Diversity Working Group Maximise the benefits of the councils lead role in the Durham Equality and Diversity Partnership to achieve the best for communities in Chester-le-Street while influencing work streams associated with the new unitary authority.	Ian Forster	April	Ensure we break down barriers to service access and assist in the development of accessible services in the new unitary authority

Issue	Proposal	Lead	By when	Desired Outcome
<p>Audit Commission CPA Perceived Area for Improvement</p> <p>Improve strategic partnership in important areas</p>	<p>Improve Senior office and Executive Member engagement and influence in key partnerships.</p> <p>Identify key partnerships for targeted improvement</p> <p>Develop individual action plans to address</p> <p>Implement individual proposals</p>	<p>Roy Templeman</p>	<p>April 09</p>	<p>Improved influence on partnership actions as a result of senior officer an political engagement</p>
<p>Audit Commission CPA Perceived Area for Improvement</p> <p>Lack of clarity as to how priorities are being delivered</p>	<p>Once the council has reviewed its priorities clearly identify what is to be achieved , by when and what the outcome ought to be</p> <p>Develop a clear action plan for achievement</p> <p>Report progress to Executive and through Quarterly Corporate Performance Report</p>	<p>Roy Templeman</p>	<p>April 09</p>	<p>The community, staff and members are quite clear about the delivery of the councils priorities</p>
<p>Response to 2007/2008 Audits, Annual Audit letter and Direction of travel Report</p> <p>Improve strategic partnership in important areas</p>	<p>Develop action plans to address any area of improvement arising from the recommendations from this years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use of Resources judgement ■ Value for Money judgement ■ Data Quality Audit ■ BVPP audit ■ Annual Audit letter ■ Direction of Travel Report 	<p>Ian Forster</p>	<p>April 09</p>	<p>The community can experience improved value for money, improved services and improved financial management.</p>

Issue	Proposal	Lead	By when	Desired Outcome
<p>Response to Investors in People Accreditation recommendations</p>	<p>Implement the following improvements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use the PDP process to set measurable objectives to enable a closer tie between team and individual objectives ■ Review management competencies to establish expected behaviours ■ Improve promotion of Training Champion and Trade Union representative contacts ■ Review Induction process to ensure agency staff are given an appropriate introduction to the council and its aims and priorities. ■ Continue to develop a thank you culture in the organisation to ensure individual and team contributions are recognised. 	<p>Ian Forster</p>	<p>April</p>	<p>The council continues to improve the way it develops, supports and reward its workforce.</p>



Appendix 5: Capital Programme for 2008/2009

CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2008-09	CDC Cost
	£'000s
Projects – Bids to be Considered by Capital Working Group	
<u>Unreleased Approved 2007-08 Schemes</u>	
Industrial Sites	20
Cemeteries, Footpaths and Headstones	100
Car Parking Repairs	22
Signage at the Leisure Centre	10
Boiler Systems at Riverside	5
Floodlighting-Athletics Track	9
COSY	160
<u>Capital Programme Bids 2008-09</u>	
Discretionary Repairs Assistance	200
Disabled Facilities Grants	85
COSY	200
PC's and Servers	5
Website Development	3
Graffiti Removal Equipment	5
Waste Bins (Front Street) – replace 30	10
Domestic Waste Bins	18
Trade Waste Bins	12
Cemeteries, Footpaths & Headstones	100
Replace 4 Bus Shelters	30
Empty Property Strategy	5
Civic Centre Car Park to DDA	25
Re-grouting of Pools at the Leisure Centre	30
Replace Emergency Exit Path and Stairwell at Leisure Centre	25
Gym Equipment 2 nd year of Contract	7
Refurbish Riverside Park Toilets	15
Remedial Works at Donald Owen Clarke Centre	20
Hardwire Test at Riverside Pavilion	10
Replace Guttering at Riverside Pavilion	5
Repair Wet Pour Surface and Equipment at Riverside Play Area	8.5
Replace Corridor and Reception Floor Surface at Riverside Pavilion	6
Provide New Play Areas in Line with the Play Strategy	80
Redecorate Interior of Selby Cottage Childcare Centre	5
Purchase Loading Tractor for Golf Course	17.5
Purchase of Fairway Cutter for Golf Course	35
Hurdles and Athletics Equipment	6.5
Flood Defence and Environmental Improvements to Cong Burn	60

<u>Capital Investment to Support Priority Areas</u>	
Town Centre	50
Partnerships for Futures	10
Strengthening Partnerships	100
Neighbourhoods	30
<u>Additional Capital Projects Identified by the Executive</u>	
Further Public Toilet Provision	100
Pelton Fell Environmental Improvements	250
<u>Salaries Allocated to 2008-09 Schemes</u>	
As per Salary Allocations 2008-09	232.7
TOTAL	2,127.2



Appendix 6: Progress on Environmental Footprint

Key examples of the council's environmental footprint are:

- Cavity Wall and Loft Insulation work has been carried out as part of the SHIP regeneration works in Sacriston, Grange Villa and Pelton Fell. Both Sacriston and Grange Villa have had all possible work completed where access has been available. SHIP work also included Double Glazing and the installation of Condensing Boilers into private sector homes, helping reduce energy consumption and lowering emissions across the district.
- Chester-le-Street DC Signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and committed to the development of an action plan.
- Chester-le-Street DC has supported and worked towards the achievement of Fairtrade Town Status declared during Fairtrade Fortnight in March when a celebratory meal was held and a visit by a Cashew nut producer from El Salvador took place.
- The Christmas lights were changed to LED this year reducing the energy bill by 80%. To demonstrate the low amount of energy required to light LED's, a pedal bike powered a display of over 2000 in the Civic Heart.
- The Pelton Fell Environmental Scheme consisted of improvements to the street environment with the footpaths constructed to allow on street parking. The scheme includes new footpaths, road surfaces, street lighting and fencing to gardens. The Green areas were re-planted.
- A business plan was completed for the Edmondsley Scheme and as a result the scheme has entered the "Big Green Challenge" organized by NESTA with a prize pot of £1million for the Community most innovative in reducing its Carbon Footprint.
- A Climate Change Newspaper was developed and issued as a wraparound feature of the Chester-le-Street Advertiser. This involved a series of talks and activity sessions with 12 schools across Chester-le-street with the winners being drawn by Trai Anfield from Look North for the newspaper. The focus was on what effect Climate Change would have in Chester-le-Street over the next 50 years.
- Chester-le-Street made a reduction of 3% in its energy across Domestic Housing taking the total % to 28% - 4% ahead of target
- Chester-le-Street Youth Club is actively developing a sustainability plan as part of an initiative developed by the members. Chester-le-Street DC is working in partnership with the Youth Club to help them deliver this by reduce bills, increasing awareness, encouraging recycling, increasing biodiversity and making the centre more sustainable.
- Working in partnership with Grange Villa community centre to develop income generation schemes to ensure its long term sustainability.
- Participating in and developing Action Packed Futures – A community sustainability event held across County Durham to demonstrate sustainable living while promoting the works of local community groups, organisations and the Councils activities
- Partnering the Federation of Environmental Groups, a steering group made up of members from environmental groups across Chester-le-Street District.
- Chester-le-Street also currently chairs the North East Domestic Energy Forum – made up of Local Authority, housing association and private industry members concerned with Domestic Energy Issues. This role also represents the North East on the National UK HECA Executive which acts as a consultation body for Defra on areas such as the National Indicator set, Fuel Poverty and legislation implementation. It also helps and liaises with ANEC, One North East, Government Office and other regional organisations over domestic energy issues.
- Go-Warm is an area based approach to insulation which is partnered by all seven district councils in County Durham. It started across Chester-le-Street and targets Private Sector

Homes only. It offers free Insulation to people in receipt of certain benefits and those over 70 and at a discounted price to all other householders. This scheme involves maximising income through Benefit entitlement checks, home safety checks in conjunction with the Fire Brigade and reduction of fuel bills.

Open space

- National winner of gold green apple award for active open space management for biodiversity in school grounds
- Residents and Parish Councils engaged in developing Neighbourhood Charters and village action plans
- Community cohesion project in developing environmental improvements on public open space (Ouston Gateway on the Wagon Way Project)
- 2 areas of public open space pending Green Flag Status
- 2 Bronze medals for Northumbria in Bloom

Environmental Enforcement

- 3 senior schools engaged in developing a joint memorandum of understanding for alternative penalties for children who drop litter or engage in anti social behaviour
- over 1000 children engaged in learning about good environmental citizen ship
- 15 schools engaged in a 'Pride in Neighbourhoods' approach for environmental enforcement activities
- 3 high profile prosecutions for flytipping (7 pending)
- 5 Fixed penalty notices given for dog fouling
- 20 Fixed penalty notices given for local littering

Other

- leading on 2 subwork-streams for Local Government Review (Waste and Neighbourhood Services)



Chester-le-Street
District Council

REPORT TO: Council

DATE OF MEETING: 27th March 2008

REPORT OF: Director of Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Revised Data Quality Policy and Data Quality Strategy Action Plan

ITEM NUMBER:

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council has invested significantly in improving data quality since 2006. This report seeks to gain members approval to a revised policy and strategy action plan which have been brought up to date as a result of organisational learning.
- 1.2 The Data Quality Policy (appendix 1) has been amended largely to bring the policy in line with Audit Commission guidance published during 2007. This guidance introduced six dimensions of Data Quality in terms of accuracy, validity, reliability, timeliness, relevance and completeness of information. The Data Quality Strategy Action Plan (Appendix 2) has been changed to align with the Audit Commission's revised Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) and the implications of local government re-organisation.
- 1.3 Members are recommended to:
- 1) approve the revised Data Quality Policy in Appendix 1
 - 2) approve the revised Data Quality Strategy Action Plan in Appendix 2

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The Chief Executive, Directors, and Service Team Managers have been consulted on the revised documents through the Performance Clinics and Extended Management Team. Employees have been invited to comment on the documents through the intranet
- 2.2 No other consultations were considered necessary at this stage including external consultations or engagement.

3. CORPORATE PLAN AND PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The performance management framework is a principle part of the Council's Corporate Plan as amended by the Transition Plan. This framework includes the reporting of performance to Executive and subsequently all Scrutiny panels on a quarterly basis. This report is part of the embedding of the performance management framework as data quality is a vitally important part of the process.
- 3.2 Keeping Data Quality practices relevant and up to date is vitally important to achieving the '**People and Place**' priority as well as measuring and reporting performance in the coming year.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial implications and value for money statement

There are specific additional costs to implementing the revised policy and strategy action plan. It is important that information we use to base decisions upon and measure performance is accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete. The revised documents will assist the council in ensuring that this is the case over the next year. The original Strategy approved in November 2006 identified that by March 2008 a value for money decision would be taken as to whether it was appropriate for the council to seek to achieve Level 4 in an Audit Commission Audit of our Data Quality arrangements. This has been undertaken as part of the review of the Strategy Action Plan. In view of Local Government Re-organisation the view is taken that putting in place arrangements to achieve level 4 within the next year would be unrealistic. The revised action plan therefore seeks to continue to achieve a Level 3 by March 2009. It is considered that the implementation of the Policy and the Strategy Action Plan will assist the council's achievement of value for money in terms of how it goes about storing, retrieving analysing and reporting information.

4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Implications

It is not considered that the County Council need to be consulted on the subject matter of this report. The policy document itself involves no significant material change from current policy. It is a matter of bringing the policy more up to date. It is felt that the implementation of the policy will assist the council in responding to information requests as a result of work during the transition year. Indeed the Policy and Strategy Action Plan is considered to be an example of best practice which can be shared in the development of the new unitary council.

4.3 Legal

There are considered to be no direct legal issues of significance arising out of this report.

4.4 Personnel

There are no specific human resource implications to this report. Data Quality responsibilities across the organisation are well defined and documented in existing practices.

4.5 Other Services

Data Quality is a responsibility for all services and Service Team Managers have lead responsibilities as Data Quality champions in their service areas.

4.6 Diversity

There are no specific diversity issues in respect of the policy and strategy action plan. The documents are about ensuring accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete whoever the recipient may be.

4.7 Risk

There are clear risks to the organisation in failing to use s accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete information to case its decisions upon. The policy and strategy are about 'getting it right first time'. The policy and strategy aim to assist the council in doing this.

4.8 Crime and Disorder

It is not felt there are any specific implications of the report on Crime and Disorder.

4.9 Data Quality

This report is about improving Data Quality in the organisation. Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation and the appendices attached are accurate, timely, consistent and comprehensive. The Council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.

4.10 Other Implications

The report does not relate to a key decision. It is considered that the information can be communicated to the community by inclusion on the web – site. The report raises no key issues in respect of procurement, service planning, sustainability, human rights or social inclusion.

5. **BACKGROUND, POSITION STATEMENT AND OPTION APPRAISAL**

5.1 The council adopted the existing Data Quality Policy and Strategy in November 2006. A Data Quality Policy had previously been agreed by Corporate Management Team in June 2006. Since that time, both the Policy and Strategy Action Plan have been kept under review. During the course of the last year and a half there have been two documents published by the Audit Commission which have contributed to the need to review the council's policies and procedures:

- Improving information to support decision making: standards for better quality data- March 2007
- Management arrangements for data quality; Key Lines of Enquiry- March 2007

5.2 The first document introduced the six dimensions of data Quality as:

- accuracy;
- validity;
- reliability;
- timeliness;
- relevance; and
- completeness.

5.3 The second document updated and improved the previous key lines of enquiry (KLOE). These key lines of enquiry are what the Audit Commission use to judge how good council's arrangements for achieving Data Quality are. The commission used these KLOE's to assess the council during their audit of data quality arrangements last year. They published their findings last month. This was a positive report which indicated that 'arrangements for data quality are effective and improving'.

5.5 The council has worked hard to buildup effective arrangements for data quality and to continue to do so there is a need to update the Policy and the strategy action plan. In terms of the Policy this has been updated to ensure that the council addresses the six dimensions detailed above (Appendix 1). The Strategy (Appendix 2) has been reviewed in the light of Local Government Reorganisation and the revised Key lines of enquiry. It is considered unrealistic for the council to put in place the full scale of measures required to meet performance Level 4 in terms of data quality. In view of this

the strategy looks to ensure the achievement of level 3 by March 2009. It has been restructured to take account of the new KLOE and actions have been built in to achieve the revised strategy focus. Actions also address the recommendations of the Audit Commission audit report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Members are recommended to:

- 1) approve the revised Data Quality Policy in Appendix 1
- 2) approve the revised Data Quality Strategy Action Plan in Appendix 2

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS / DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO

- 7.1 Data Quality Policy – November 2006
- 7.2 Data Quality Strategy – November 2006
- 7.3 Improving information to support decision making: standards for better quality data - Audit Commission March 2007.
- 7.4 Management arrangements for Data Quality – Audit Commission March 2007
- 7.5 Chester-le-Street Data Quality Arrangements Audit 2007/2008 – Audit Commission March 20077.6

Ian Forster
Director of Corporate Services
11th March 2008
Version 1.0

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Chester-le-Street
District Council

Appendix1

Data Quality Policy ***'Getting it Right First Time'***



February 2008

About this document

This document has been developed to assist the council in improving the council's performance in data collection, handling, retrieval, use and communications. The document sets out the policy of Chester-le-Street District Council in terms of how it is to respond to the challenges of ensuring the highest quality of the data it uses to demonstrate its performance. A policy summary is included in Annexe 1.

The council's commitment

The council recognises the importance of reliable information to the delivery of excellent customer services. Data quality is crucial and the availability of complete, accurate and timely data is important in supporting customer care, corporate governance, management and service agreements for service planning and accountability.

Chester-le Street District Council aims to achieve quality excellence by constantly meeting the requirements of all customers, both external and internal. Quality excellence means identifying and understanding customer needs and requirements, and meeting both without errors on time every time. **The council is therefore committed to ensuring it maintains the highest standards of data quality and as a result gets its performance information right first time.** All council staff and Members are required to adhere to the Data Quality Policy. The Policy is fully authorised by the council's Corporate Management Team.

The importance of getting it right first time

The council needs accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete information with which to manage services, inform users and account for our performance. Data also needs to be held securely. We make many, often complex, decisions about our priorities and the use of our resources. Service users, and members of the public more widely, need accessible information to make informed decisions. Those organisations monitoring our progress require information to satisfy their responsibilities for making judgements about our performance and governance.

A great deal of time and money is spent on the activities and systems involved in collecting and analysing the data which underpins our performance information, yet there remains a prevailing lack of confidence in much of this data. As increasing reliance is placed on this information in performance management and assessment regimes, the need for reliable data has become even more critical.

Good quality data is the essential ingredient for reliable performance and financial information to support decision making. The data must be sufficiently fit

for purpose, representing in an accurate and timely manner the council's activity. At the same time a balance needs to be struck between the importance of the purpose for which the information is intended and the cost of collecting the data to the necessary level of accuracy, detail and timeliness. The council needs to determine their information priorities and put in place appropriate arrangements to secure the quality of our data.

The council is accountable for the money we spend. We need to prove that we achieve value for money. The council must therefore manage competing claims on resources to meet the needs of the communities we serve, and plan for the future. The financial and performance information we use to account for our activities, both internally and externally, to our customers, partners, and those monitoring our progress, must be appropriate for these purposes, providing the level of accuracy, reliability and consistency required.

The weight attached to published performance indicators as the basis for reducing the burden of regulation and awarding freedoms and flexibilities has significantly increased the importance attached to performance information, and the quality of the underlying data. To be confident that we are focusing on the key areas for improvement, those monitoring our performance, and particularly the Audit Commission need to be assured that reported information reflects actual performance. The quality of our data will be crucial to future assessments in terms of our direction of travel and Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

The quality of financial information has generally been higher than for performance information, because the underlying data is collected according to professional accounting rules, and is subjected to strong internal controls and a formal audit regime. The quality of non-financial performance information tends to be more variable, because internal controls for the recording and preparation of the data are often less developed. There is often also less ownership of performance information by those charged with governance.

The council needs to be assured that the information it uses to demonstrate its performance is accurate and timely, otherwise it will not be able to properly plan and deliver the services we provide. Producing data which is fit for purpose should not be an end in itself, but an integral part of our operational, performance management, and governance arrangements. If we put data quality at the heart of our performance management systems we will be more likely to actively manage data in all aspects of our day-to-day business, in a way which is proportionate to the cost of collection, and turning that data into reliable information.

It is important that the council gets its data quality right first time. It is more cost effective to ensure this than to have to address failings later. Getting things wrong first time can seriously damage the council's health.

The council's approach to data quality improvement

The council understands the importance of data quality and is committed to improving its management within the organisation and in partnership with others. Above all it is committed to continuous improvement.

The council feels that it has made significant progress in developing data quality over the past few years. The Corporate Performance Team and Internal Audit have been working closely with service teams to improve data quality. As a result the council's Best Value Performance Plan was unqualified last year and there were no Best Value Performance Indicators with reservations. The improvements have resulted from targeted and risk assessed control activity and general awareness-raising of the importance of improvement. Improvements have been acknowledged by the Audit Commission.

The council accepts fully that there is a need to sustain the improvements made. The new approach to Data Quality management offers an opportunity for the council to make further incremental improvements to the quality of data it holds and its subsequent use. The council's approach to moving forward is as follows:



Policy objectives

Our vision for data quality is that we get things right first time. This will enable us to have the right information at the right time at the right cost. In order to achieve this, our objectives in relation to data quality are as follows:

- ☑ To ensure that the information we use is of high quality, consistent, timely, comprehensive and held securely and confidentially
- ☑ To put in place arrangements at senior level to secure the quality of data we use to manage our service and demonstrate our performance
- ☑ To make clear what we expect from our staff and Members in terms of the standards of data quality

- ☑ To put in place systems, policies and procedures to ensure the highest possible data quality, particularly where information is shared with partners
- ☑ To ensure that we put in place the right resources, and in particular have the right people with the right skills, to ensure we have timely and accurate performance information
- ☑ To ensure that we have the right controls in place to ensure we meet what is expected of us
- ☑ To ensure that data is stored, used and shared in accordance with the law including the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act

Policy definitions

Definition of 'quality data'

The key characteristics used to describe the quality of data are as follows:

- ☑ **Accurate** - Data should be sufficiently correct for its intended purposes
- ☑ **Valid** - Data should be recorded in an agreed format and used in compliance with recognised council and national standards
- ☑ **Reliable** - Data should reflect stable and consistent data collection processes across the council
- ☑ **Timely** - Data should be available within a reasonable time period, quickly and frequently enough to support information needs
- ☑ **Relevant** - Data captured should be relevant to the purposes for which it is used
- ☑ **Complete** - All data should be captured based on information needs of the council
- ☑ **Secure** - Data should be stored securely and confidentially

Importance of 'quality data'

Performance information is essential for:

- ☑ Customer care – delivering effective, relevant and timely care, and minimising risk
- ☑ Keeping stakeholders informed – through central data collection mechanisms
- ☑ Efficient administration and compliance with the law
- ☑ Operational Management and Strategic Planning to provide appropriate allocation of resources and future service delivery
- ☑ Corporate Governance - which depends on detailed, accurate performance data for the identification of areas where services can be improved

Setting and Meeting of Standards

Chester-le-Street District Council is committed to collecting and processing data according to national and locally defined standards. Where national standards are not available or are not sufficient, local standards will be developed and implemented. Standards are essential to ensure that:

- ☑ data collection is accurate and consistent throughout the council;
- ☑ customer records are accurately completed and processed;
- ☑ data is kept securely and confidentially; and
- ☑ data outputs can be compared both internally and externally.

Standards will relate to key areas such accuracy, validity, reliability, timeliness, relevance, completeness, quality assurance, security and confidentiality.

Where problems are identified, corrective action and any recommendations for change will be identified. This stage may be complex, especially where more than one information system is involved. The 'master' source of the data must be identified and the impact on recipient systems evaluated. Where at all possible data must be corrected at source and it will be the responsibility of the service managers to ensure that this happens. If the corporate monitoring resource identifies areas where issues of incorrect data are not being put right the matter will be referred to the relevant Director.

A formal set of quality requirements will be applied to all data used by the organisation which is shared externally, or which is provided by a third-party organisation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Within the council roles and responsibility for Data Quality are as follows:

- ☑ The Director of Corporate Services has senior management responsibility for data quality and is officer Data Quality Champion (with delegated authority from the Chief Executive)
- ☑ The Portfolio holder for Communications and Performance has Senior Member responsibility for data quality and is Member Data Quality Champion
- ☑ The Senior Performance Officer in the Performance and Improvement team will be the Data Quality Co-ordinator with responsibilities for promoting the importance of data quality throughout the organisation
- ☑ Service Team Managers are responsible for ensuring that adequate, safe systems holding an acceptable standard of information are developed and maintained and that performance information they provide is accurate, timely and meets relevant guidance. They are also responsible for

- ensuring the implementation of corporate policy and procedures and the development of service based policies and procedures
- ☑ Data 'champions' or data 'managers' will be established in all service areas to take particular responsibility for data quality and drive improvement within individual teams
 - ☑ It is the responsibility of all staff who input, store, retrieve or otherwise manage data to ensure that it is of the highest quality
 - ☑ Everyone in the organisation will be responsible for complying with this Data Quality Policy
 - ☑ All staff will be responsible for following policies and procedures, and all line managers for ensuring that this is the case in their respective service teams.

Commitment to data quality will be clearly stated in job descriptions for all relevant roles within the council, ensuring that directors, managers, administrative staff and others recognise their responsibilities as an integral part of their role and profession.

Data quality responsibilities will be documented and therefore become part of the council's appraisal process. Training needs will be identified through the appraisal process and built into personal development plans and corporate training plans.

Partnership Working

The council is committed to working with partners to achieve the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement and to deliver joined up public services. Information sharing is crucial to partnership working. In addition the council is now playing a crucial role in the development of a new unitary council in County Durham. This will necessitate significant data sharing. **The council will ensure that a formal framework for data sharing with partners is put in place.** A formal set of quality requirements will be applied to all data used by the organisation which is shared externally, or which is provided by a partner or third-party organisation. These quality requirements could be in the form of a data sharing protocol, contract or service level agreement. The council will ensure that a framework is put in place for identifying and complying with all relevant legal, compliance and confidentiality standards. A validation process will be established for all data provided by partners or other third parties.

Risk Management

The council will ensure that it adequately manages risk associated with data quality. In particular it will develop a Data Quality Strategy to enable the council to improve and protect it from data quality failures. The council will ensure that adequate Business Continuity Plans are developed and maintained.

People Development and Communication

The council is committed to ensuring that it has the right people with the right skills and knowledge to deliver services. Training and Development of staff is key to the achievement of high levels of data quality. Staff also need to be supported in their responsibility towards capturing quality data. The following principles will be met to achieve this:

- ☑ All new staff who use Information Systems will receive training in the use of the respective systems. Only once training has been completed will passwords to these systems be issued.
- ☑ Policies, procedures and guidance will be developed and updated in association with relevant staff and copies provided to all staff engaged in data quality work. Documents will be made available on the intranet or on knowledge management systems.
- ☑ Staff will be supported through data 'champions' or data 'managers' established in service areas as well as from corporate support (Director of Corporate Services, Performance and Improvement Team or Internal Audit Team). An intranet support resource will also be made available with all current procedures and guidance documents.
- ☑ Policies and procedures will be communicated to all staff. Awareness workshops or briefings will be held with staff and Members to develop awareness in the council of the importance of Data Quality.
- ☑ An on-going and developmental awareness campaign will be undertaken, led by the Corporate Performance and Improvement Team, to ensure that all members of staff are aware of the importance of accurate and timely data collection and recording.

Monitoring and Review

This policy and the council's overall approach to data quality will be monitored by the council's Corporate Governance Group. The Director of Corporate Services will take the lead role on data quality issues. Internal Audit will provide internal assurance controls. A formal reporting structure will be developed as part of the Data Quality Strategy.

Data quality will be regularly monitored by the Performance and Improvement Team and Internal Audit. This will involve:

- ☑ quarterly reports;
- ☑ routine checks;

- ☑ spot checks;
- ☑ mystery shopping; and
- ☑ follow up of any data quality queries from members of staff

Procedures for data capture, processing and storage must be reviewed and updated regularly, normally annually. These procedures will include specific arrangements for ensuring data quality at the point of data capture, during the processing of that data, and appropriate data quality checks before data/information is released. Responsibility for this will rest with the nominated 'data manager' i.e. the departmental manager or champions responsible for the data capture or data processing system.

The council recognises the need to achieve a balance between the resources required to set and meet data quality standards and the relative benefits that follow. It will take this into account in developing its approach to monitoring and review. It will be necessary to focus resources on data that the council regards as critical to its overall business objectives. Equally, the right balance must be achieved and justified between the dimensions of data quality, for example a balance needs to be struck between accuracy and timeliness.

The purpose of the quality reporting process is to ensure that the council supports a learning culture so that future mistakes can be avoided. All members of staff are encouraged to report any data quality issues.



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Data Quality Policy Summary ***'Getting it Right First Time'***

The council's commitment

- ☑ The council recognises the importance of reliable information to the delivery of excellent customer services.
- ☑ The council is therefore committed to ensuring it maintains the highest standards of data quality and as a result gets its performance information right first time.

The importance of getting it right first time

- ☑ The council needs accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete information with which to manage services, inform users and account for our performance. It also need to ensure that data is stored securely.

The council's approach to data quality improvement

- ☑ The council understands the importance of data quality and is committed to improving its management within the organisation and in partnership with others.

Policy objectives

Our objectives in relation to data quality are as follows:

- ☑ To ensure that the information we use is of high quality, consistent, timely, comprehensive and held securely and confidentially.
- ☑ To put in place arrangements at senior level to secure the quality of data we use to manage our service and demonstrate our performance.
- ☑ To make clear what we expect from our staff and Members in terms of the standards of data quality.
- ☑ To put in place systems, policies and procedures to ensure the highest possible data quality, particularly where information is shared with partners.
- ☑ To ensure that we put in place the right resources, and in particular have the right people with the right skills, to ensure we have timely and accurate performance information.
- ☑ To ensure that we have the right controls in place to ensure we meet what is expected of us.
- ☑ To ensure that data is stored, used and shared in accordance with the law

including the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act.

Setting and Meeting of Standards

- ☑ Chester-le-Street District Council is committed to collecting and processing data according to national and locally defined standards

Roles and Responsibilities

Within the council roles and responsibility for Data Quality are as follows:

- ☑ The Director of Corporate Resources has senior management responsibility for data quality and is officer Data Quality Champion
- ☑ The Portfolio holder for Communications and Performance has senior Member responsibility for data quality and is Member Data quality Champion
- ☑ It is the responsibility of all staff who input, store, retrieve or otherwise manage data to ensure that it is of the highest quality and comply with this policy.

Partnership Working

- ☑ The council is committed to working with partners to achieve the Sustainable Community Strategy, The council will ensure that a formal framework for data sharing with partners is put in place.

Risk Management

- ☑ The council will ensure that it adequately manages risk associated with data quality.

People Development and Communication

- ☑ The council is committed to ensuring that it has the right people with the right skills and knowledge to deliver services.
- ☑ An on-going and developmental awareness campaign will be undertaken to ensure that all members of staff are aware of the importance of accurate and timely data collection and recording.

Monitoring and Review

- ☑ The council recognises the need to achieve a balance between the resources required to set and meet data quality standards and the relative benefits that follow. It will take this into account in developing its approach to monitoring and review.

Ian Forster

Director of Corporate Services

(Responsible Officer for data quality)

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Chester-le-Street
District Council

Appendix 2

Getting it Right First Time Data Quality Strategy Review Revised Improvement Action Plan



January 2008

About this document

This document supports the delivery of the council's Data Quality Strategy. In accord with the Strategy it is a living document which will be reviewed against the audited ratings by the Audit Commission.

Self assessment judgement

The council undertook a self assessment in June 2006. There was no individual scoring of the individual KLOE rather a conclusion was drawn on how the council meets overall levels set out in the KLOE guidance. It is not proposed to carry out a separate detailed self assessment. However the council's Data Quality Strategy was approved in November 2006 and its action plan includes progress towards the four levels set out in the Commissions Key Line of Enquiry. The Strategy is realistic. It aimed to ensure that the council continued to meet at level 2 by April 2007, level 3 by April 2008 and make a value for money judgement at that time whether it could progress further.

There were only four months between the adoption of the Strategy, which was a major step forward for the council and the issue of the Commission's first audit on Data Quality. In that time the council has been focussed on the facilitation of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Corporate Assessment which included a production of a self assessment by the end of January 2007 and an inspection at the end of February and beginning of March. This was a proper priority of the council which significantly engaged the corporate centre and the councils Data Quality officer Champion.

The council considers that, while it can evidence some improvement and some criteria in Level 3 and Level 4 it is considered that the council currently and reasonably achieves **Level 2**. It is considered that the council is on course for achievement of Level 3 by March 2008. This is consistent with the targets within the Data Quality Strategy. A value for money judgement has been made that it would be unrealistic for the council to achieve level 4 by March 2009. the revised Strategy action plan therefore seeks to achieve level 3 by March 2009. Improvements so far have included:

- The adoption of the Strategy and action plan;
- Data quality risks, commitment and proposals built into Corporate plan;
- Data Quality Policy and Strategy communicated to customers through the Internet;
- Data Quality Policy and Strategy communicated to staff and members through the Intranet;
- Data Quality built into Performance Management Handbook and communicated to staff;
- Data Quality considered as part of the Performance Management Review;
- Data quality commitment incorporated as a feature of Corporate Performance Reports and within performance clinics:
- Decisions made not to publish information because data quality was not proved e.g. a decision not to publish BV 166 quarterly statistics because the

- information as to performance was not dependable, and now resolved.
- Data Quality included in Corporate Training Plan as part of Performance Management training.
 - Intranet Site developed
 - Corporate Guidelines developed and implemented
 - Corporate Audit devised and built into intranet, will identify gaps to assist strategy development
 - Further awareness undertaken as a result and data quality is communicated more clearly now, Communications plan developed and on intranet
 - Data Quality Responsibility Register developed and significantly completed
 - Programme Management Board taking stronger role on monitoring of data Quality
 - Improved sign off with LPI's following same process as BVPI's
 - Data quality incorporated into all corporate reports and built into Report Writing Protocol
 - Developed revised Service Plan Guidance
 - Staff and Managers Audit undertaken
 - Training presentation provided to all staff
 - Data Quality Training provided as part of Members Induction programme
 - Data quality built into Performance Clinics

The council's approach

The council understands the importance of data quality and is committed to improving its management within the organisation and in partnership with others.

The council feels that it has made significant progress in developing data quality over the past few years. The Corporate Performance Team and Internal Audit have been working closely with service teams to improve data quality. As a result the council's Best Value Performance Plan was again unqualified last year and there were no Best Value Performance Indicators with reservations. The improvements have resulted from targeted and risk assessed control activity and general awareness raising of the importance of improvement. Improvements have been acknowledged by the Audit Commission. The council accepts fully that there is a need to sustain the improvements made. The new approach to Data Quality management including the Data Quality Strategy and the Data Quality policy offers the opportunity to the council to make further incremental improvements to the quality of data it holds and its subsequent use. This revised Action Plan has been developed to ensure that the council's strategy is kept fully up to date. In particular it measures the council's Data Quality achievements against the new Key Lines of Enquiry which were adopted by the Commission during 2007.

Ian Forster, Director of Corporate Services

Data Quality Strategy Monitoring Report

Section 1

Chester-le-Street District Council

Data Quality Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE)

Evidence and Action Plan Level 2

1. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP			
Has the council put in place arrangements at a senior level to secure the quality of data used to manage and report on performance?			
Key line of enquiry			
1.1 Responsibility for data quality is clearly defined.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is top level commitment to data quality; and the council acts on this commitment, to secure the quality of its data. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2	Evidence	Proposed action	Lead
1.1.1 Responsibility for data quality has been assigned within the council, although this may have been assigned to a number of individuals and is not at top management level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigned at Top management level Data quality Register covering organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.1.2 Issues relating to data quality are considered and reported at least to departmental managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported to Executive and Scrutiny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.1.3 The council's commitment to data quality (for example, the importance of, and arrangements for, securing the quality of key data) is outlined in key strategic documents, such as the corporate performance plan or performance management framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out in Corporate Plan Built into reporting process In performance Management Handbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.1.4 Accountability arrangements for data quality are developing, but these may not yet be applied or required in all areas of the council, or be formally defined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established across the council in Register, available on line Responsibilities set out in Policy and Guidance and Service Planning process and objectives Identified as Strategic Corporate Risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
1.2 The council has clear data quality objectives and these are formally documented.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific data quality objectives have been identified; and there is a plan for delivery of these objectives. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2	Evidence	Proposed action	Lead
1.2.1 Arrangements for data quality management are developing, but may not yet be formalised in strategic or planning documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed in policy and formal Data Quality Strategy which are under review Developed in service plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.2.2 The organisation has begun to focus on data quality, but this work has so far been driven departmentally rather than corporately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Driven at corporate and service level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.2.3 The organisation is working to improve data quality, but there may be no defined milestones, targets or monitoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milestones set out in Strategy Regular monitoring of achievement Strategy action plan under review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
1.3 The council has effective arrangements for monitoring and review of data quality.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a framework in place for monitoring performance in relation to data quality; and there is a formal programme of review of data quality. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2			
1.3.1 Monitoring and review of data quality has been undertaken, although this has primarily been on an ad hoc basis rather than via an explicit framework.	Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and regular monitoring in place including quarterly reporting to Executive and Scrutiny BVPI and other indicator monitoring including performance Clinic engagement Reported on web site Identified as Strategic Risk 	Proposed action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	Lead
1.3.2 The council has begun to consider data quality as part of its corporate risk management arrangements.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

2. POLICIES			
Has the Council defined its expectations and requirements in relation to data quality?			
Key line of enquiry			
2.1 Organisational policy for data quality has been defined and is supported by a current set of operational procedures and guidance			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisational policy for data quality has been documented; and operational procedures and guidance meet users' needs. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2	Evidence	Proposed action	Lead
2.1.1 Senior management has defined and approved data quality policies at individual operational or departmental levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established at Corporate Level with service based responsibilities and objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
2.1.2 There are some procedures and guidance notes in place but these do not yet cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all aspects of data collection, recording, analysis and reporting; and/or all business areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance note in place including corporate guidance note but not everything is covered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
2.2 Policies and procedures are followed by staff and applied consistently throughout the organisation.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> processes are carried out in line with established policy and procedures. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2	Evidence	Proposed action	Lead
2.2.1 Relevant staff are aware of the data quality policy, operational procedures and guidance and generally have access to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raised through training and web site content Awareness Audit undertaken Intranet site and regular bulletins form DSC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
2.2.2 Policy or procedure updates are generally notified to staff on a timely basis, although some improvements could be made in this respect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates are notified on a timely basis including monitoring results, including Intranet site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

3. SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES			
Are there effective systems and processes in place to secure the quality of data?			
Key line of enquiry			
3.1 There are appropriate systems in place for the collection, recording, analysis and reporting of the data used to monitor performance.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> systems (manual or computerised) produce data which is fit for purpose. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2	Evidence	Proposed action	Lead
3.1.1 There may be some minor weaknesses in the systems for data collection, recording, analysis and reporting, but action is being taken to address these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where weaknesses are identified these have been addressed See 2006/2007 Audit Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
3.1.2 The council recognises the importance of these systems, whether manual or computerised, operating on a 'right first time' principle. Some work is needed to achieve this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy based on right first time basis Always need to review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
3.2 The council has controls in place to ensure that information systems secure the quality of data used to report on performance and to keep top management aware of necessary action in relation to data quality.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has appropriate controls to ensure that information systems produce accurate information. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2	Evidence	Proposed action	Lead
3.2.1 The council has some arrangements in place to review the effectiveness of controls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal audit undertaken outside external audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
3.3 Security arrangements for performance information systems are robust, and a business continuity plans are in place.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> performance information systems are secure, allowing the organisation to function under adverse circumstances. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2	Evidence	Proposed action	Lead
3.3.1 Security arrangements, including access control, are in place for the organisation's business critical performance information systems (e.g. procurement, cash management, HR/, payroll, social care, benefits, education) though there may be some weaknesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security arrangements are in place ICT has Charter Mark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
3.4 Standards are specified for shared data or data supplied by third parties.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the council specifies and monitors standards for the quality of data it shares or relies on internally and externally. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2	Evidence	Proposed action	Lead
3.4.1 All instances of internal and external data sharing have been formally identified (e.g. with PCTs, police authorities and voluntary bodies to support LAAs and the children's joint area review (JAR)), but formal protocols or standards have yet to be developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all instances identified No consistent approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out audit across the council on where we share data Complete list by March 2008 	Julie Scott
3.4.2 Third party providers of data may subject their data to their own quality controls, but the council is not able to or simply does not carry out any validity checks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No validity checks undertaken across the board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	Julie Scott

4. PEOPLE AND SKILLS			
Does the organisation have the resources in place to achieve quality data?			
Key line of enquiry			
4.1 The council has communicated clearly the responsibilities of staff, where applicable, for achieving data quality.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific skills and responsibilities in relation to data quality have been identified; and staff understand their role in achieving data quality, and are putting the theory into practice. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2		Evidence	Proposed action
4.1.1 The council has considered the roles and responsibilities needed within directorates, necessary to achieve data quality but has not yet formalised how these will work in practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register formalises responsibilities Changes made to job descriptions Data quality PDP issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
4.1.2 All staff are clear about their responsibilities in relation to data quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taken steps to give guidance and reminders issued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
4.1.3 It is recognised that relevant staff need to be supported in their responsibility towards capturing quality data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Team Managers Responsibility Guidance and Intranet provide support resource Policy sets out support Support provided at a corporate level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider clear note in revised policy by March 2008 	Julie Scott

Key line of enquiry			
4.2 The council has arrangements in place to ensure that staff with data responsibility have the necessary skills.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the council has provided training to ensure that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge in relation to data quality. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2	Evidence	Proposed action	Lead
4.2.1 Staff with specific responsibilities for data input or data quality have been identified and received ad hoc data quality training on a departmental basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual processes addressed at service level Training undertaken at corporate level Performance Plus trained across the board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
4.2.2 Some departments are addressing weaknesses identified from data quality reviews through training but this has yet to be developed corporately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Departments are addressing weaknesses through training but not across the board Audit carried out to understand skill needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

5. DATA USE			
Are there effective arrangements for the use of data for performance management and service improvement?			
Key line of enquiry			
5.1 The council has put in place arrangements that are focused on ensuring that data supporting performance information is also used to manage and improve the delivery of services.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reported performance information is actively used in the decision making process. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2			
5.1.1 Reported information is made available to the operational staff who generate it, to reinforce understanding of the way it is used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Done at service level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly raise awareness of report information Communicate quarterly reports more regularly by March 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Forster Ian Forster
5.1.2 Performance information is regularly used, to identify deviations from planned performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamental basis of council's performance management framework including quarterly reporting and performance clinics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
5.2 The council has effective validation procedures in place to ensure the accuracy of data used in reported performance indicators.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> information used to report on performance is subject to a system of internal control and validation. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 2	Evidence	Proposed action	Lead
5.2.1 All BVPI data returns are supported by an audit trail, although there may be some weaknesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of performance management framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
5.2.2 Definitions are usually applied correctly to all BVPI data items and values are checked to be within valid ranges and respect counting rules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit feedback confirms this to be the case but kept under review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
5.2.3 Only some data e.g. BVPIs is signed off by a senior manager. Reported data is usually submitted on a timely basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All data including BVPIs and LPIs signed off by senior managers within time parameters set for reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Data Quality Strategy Monitoring Report

Section 2

Chester-le-Street District Council

Data Quality Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE)

Evidence and Action Plan Level 3

1. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP			
Has the council put in place arrangements at a senior level to secure the quality of data used to manage and report on performance?			
Key line of enquiry			
1.1 Responsibility for data quality is clearly defined.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is top level commitment to data quality; and the council acts on this commitment, to secure the quality of its data. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
1.1.5 An individual at top management level has overall strategic responsibility for data quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed DCS responsibility member responsibility also in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.1.6 Issues relating to data quality are considered by and reported to those charged with governance, e.g. to directors or heads of service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered at CMT and by STMs including engagement in Performance clinics and OSP where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.1.7 The corporate commitment to data quality is actively promoted, making clear to relevant staff their responsibility for data quality (eg accuracy, completeness, timeliness).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly promoted by DCS and Senior Performance Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.1.8 Accountability for data quality throughout the council is clearly and formally defined for relevant staff and is considered as part of the corporate performance appraisal process for those staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register established Built into PDP process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
1.2 The council has clear data quality objectives and these are formally documented.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific data quality objectives have been identified; and there is a plan for delivery of these objectives. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
1.2.4 There is evidence of a strategic approach to data quality in one or more key council documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out in corporate plan Set out in Data Quality Strategy under review Included in all council reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.2.5 Corporate objectives for data quality are formally defined and are linked to business objectives. These have been agreed and adopted at top management level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed at corporate and service level and approved by council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.2.6 There are plans to deliver quality data, with clearly identified actions, responsibilities and timescales to support improvement. This is reflected in an appropriate document e.g. the corporate plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved Data Quality Strategy and action plan which is under review Commitment set out in corporate plan, policy and strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
1.3 The council has effective arrangements for monitoring and review of data quality.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a framework in place for monitoring performance in relation to data quality; and there is a formal programme of review of data quality. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
1.3.3 There is a framework in place which has led to action to address the results of internal and external data quality reviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedded as part of performance management framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.3.4 Data quality is embedded in corporate risk management arrangements, with regular assessments of the risks associated with unreliable and inaccurate information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established as strategic Corporate Risk under review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

2. POLICIES			
Has the Council defined its expectations and requirements in relation to data quality?			
Key line of enquiry			
2.1 Organisational policy for data quality has been defined and is supported by a current set of operational procedures and guidance.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisational policy for data quality has been documented; and • operational procedures and guidance meet users' needs 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3		Evidence	
2.1.3 A comprehensive data quality policy has been defined and approved by senior management. This covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data collection, recording, analysis and reporting; and • all business areas. It also includes any relevant national standards and requirements, as well as defining local practices and monitoring arrangements.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agreed by council and under review to address recent guidance 	
2.1.4 The council's data quality policy is supported by a comprehensive and current set of operational procedures and guidance notes that meet user needs and are fit for purpose.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fundamental Corporate Guidance ■ Some guidance notes at departmental level 	
		Proposed Actions	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review plan by March 2008 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use audit information to identify gaps or carry out revised audit in conjunction with Graeme 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish gaps by March 2008 and develop departmental proposals to fill them 	
		Lead	
		Julie Scott	
		Julie Scott	
		Julie Scott	

Key line of enquiry			
2.2 Policies and procedures are followed by staff and applied consistently throughout the organisation.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> processes are carried out in line with established policy and procedures. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
2.2.3 All relevant staff are able to access the policies, procedures and guidance. Where possible this is supported by information systems or helpdesk provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easily accessed Intranet site Corporate support available to assist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
2.2.4 The council can demonstrate that it is proactive in informing staff of any policy or procedure updates and required standards on a timely basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intranet site regularly updated and communicated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

3. SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES			
Are there effective systems and processes in place to secure the quality of data?			
Key line of enquiry			
3.1 There are appropriate systems in place for the collection, recording, analysis and reporting of the data used to monitor performance.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> systems (manual or computerised) produce data which is fit for purpose. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
3.1.3 There are systems in place (which may be stand alone) for the collection, recording, analysis and reporting of corporate performance information which is based on data which is accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of performance management framework based on current guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
3.1.4 Systems and processes operate according to the principle of 'right first time' rather than employing extensive data cleansing or manipulation processes to produce the information required. Arrangements for recording and reporting data are integrated into the council's wider business management processes, and support staff in their day to day work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basis for council policy Built into corporate performance management framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
3.2 The council has controls in place to ensure that information systems secure the quality of data used to report on performance and to keep top management aware of necessary action in relation to data quality.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has appropriate controls to ensure that information systems produce accurate information. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
3.2.2 Performance information systems are subject to control mapping and testing to prevent and detect data manipulation and error.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit on performance plus Internal Audit processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
3.2.3 Controls are reviewed at least annually to ensure that they are working effectively. Results of annual reviews are reported to top management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit on performance plus Internal Audit processes Results reported to Top management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
3.3 Security arrangements for performance information systems are robust, and business continuity plans are in place.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> performance information systems are secure, allowing the organisation to function under adverse circumstances. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3	3.3.2 The council regularly tests its business critical performance information systems to ensure that processes are secure. Reports are made to top management on outcomes. There are plans which are being implemented to address any identified weaknesses.	Evidence	Proposed Actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Audis report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required
			Lead

Key line of enquiry			
3.4 Standards are specified for shared data or data supplied by third parties.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the council specifies and monitors standards for the quality of data it shares or relies on internally and internally. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
3.4.3 Quality requirements are specified for all data used by the council which is supplied by another internal department, shared with external partners, or which is provided by a third-party organisation. This includes identifying and complying with all relevant legal, compliance and confidentiality standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area for Improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek guidance from AC on best practice Carry out assessment on what is required by March 2008 Implement by March 2009 	<p>Ian Forster</p> <p>Ian Forster</p> <p>Ian Forster</p>
3.4.4 There are some processes in place to validate data from third parties eg. council staff check samples of data against source records, eg. the social services department may check the timesheets of home help carers where this service is contracted out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks in place in some processes such as BVPI's, neighbourhood profiles and Revs and Bens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

4. PEOPLE AND SKILLS			
Does the organisation have the resources in place to achieve quality data?			
Key line of enquiry			
4.1 The council has communicated clearly the responsibilities of staff, where applicable, for achieving data quality.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific skills and responsibilities in relation to data quality have been identified; and staff understand their role in achieving data quality, and are putting the theory into practice. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3		Evidence	
4.1.4 Roles and responsibilities of management and operational staff, in relation to data quality, are clearly defined and documented, eg. these may be incorporated into job descriptions.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved 	
4.1.5 Data quality targets and standards are set for relevant staff who are assessed against these.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of PDP and set where developed 	
4.1.6 Relevant staff have access to guidelines when inputting data e.g. classification conventions, on-line help or quick reference guides to hand.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out for performance plus and training manuals 	
		Proposed Actions	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
		Lead	

Key line of enquiry		
4.2 The council has arrangements in place to ensure that staff with data quality responsibility have the necessary skills.		
Audit Focus		
Evidence that:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the council has provided training to ensure that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge in relation to data quality. 		
Criteria for Judgement		
Level 3	Evidence	Proposed Actions
4.2.3 There is a formal programme of training (including updates when necessary) on data quality issues tailored to the varying needs of all relevant staff. Corporate arrangements are in place to ensure that this training is periodically evaluated and adapted to changing needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training set out in Training and Development Plan Reviewed to tailor to needs through on line facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required
4.2.4 Any weaknesses identified through internal or external reviews of data quality are adequately addressed through the training programme or debriefing and sharing good practice sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weaknesses identified through audit Performance Clinic shares good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance Performance Clinic & devote February clinic to Data Quality Review additional requirements by March 2008
		Ian Forster
		Ian Forster

5. DATA USE			
Are there effective arrangements for the use of data for performance management and service improvement?			
Key line of enquiry			
5.1 The council has put in place arrangements that are focused on ensuring that data supporting performance information is also used to manage and improve the delivery of services.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reported performance information is actively used in the decision making process. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
5.1.3 Data used for reporting to those charged with governance is also used for day-to-day management and improvement of the council's business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamental to performance management framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
5.1.4 Reports relate performance information to specific targets in the business plan and are used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor service delivery forecast year-end achievement identify areas where action is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamental to performance management framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
5.2 The council has effective validation procedures in place to ensure the accuracy of data used in reported performance indicators.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> information used to report on performance is subject to a system of internal control and validation. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 3	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
5.2.4 Data returns to government departments, their agencies and regulators are supported by a clear and complete audit trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamental to performance Management Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
5.2.5 Data underpinning the information which is used for external reporting e.g. to AC, IPF, CLG, DH, is subject to departmental verification checks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamental to performance Management Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
5.2.6 All data is subject to senior management approval prior to external reporting to regulators and government departments e.g. AC, IPF, CLG, DH, DEFRA and is submitted on a timely basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamental to performance Management Framework and submitted within agreed timescales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Data Quality Strategy Monitoring Report

Section 3

Chester-le-Street District Council

Data Quality Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE)

Evidence and Action Plan Level 4

1. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP			
Has the council put in place arrangements at a senior level to secure the quality of data used to manage and report on performance?			
Key line of enquiry			
1.1 Responsibility for data quality is clearly defined.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is top level commitment to data quality; and the council acts on this commitment, to secure the quality of its data. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
1.1.9 The council has a member lead for data quality issues and this role is undertaken effectively. Members should have received training on the importance of data quality and should also have an awareness of the arrangements the council has put in place to mitigate the risks associated with poor quality data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio member responsibility Steve Barr Induction training undertaken with members Members have Access to web based tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.1.10 Data quality is fully integrated into the council's planning, monitoring and reporting processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamental to performance Management Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
1.2 The body has clear data quality objectives and these are formally documented.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific data quality objectives have been identified; and there is a plan for delivery of these objectives. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
1.2.7 A formal strategy for data quality is in place and has been approved at top management level. The strategy covers all departments and functions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy agreed, approved by council, being implemented, monitored and under review Part of Service Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.2.8 Challenging data quality objectives have been set for all individual departments or functions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of Service Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
1.2.9 Regular monitoring of the delivery plan can demonstrate that data quality objectives are being achieved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring, report to Executive and OSP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

Key line of enquiry			
1.3 The council has effective arrangements for monitoring and review of data quality.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a framework in place for monitoring performance in relation to data quality; and there is a formal programme of review of data quality. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4			
1.3.5 There is a framework for monitoring and review of data quality, with regular formal reporting on the accuracy of data supporting key performance indicators. Examples of good practice in securing data quality are shared and promoted for adoption to all relevant staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring and reporting, including Internal audit, supporting KPIs Performance Clinic shares good practice Corporate Support issues guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required although could be improved 	Lead
1.3.6 Where appropriate, risks associated with data quality have been fed through to the production of the statement on internal control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carried out through DCS engagement in Corporate Governance Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	

2. POLICIES			
Has the council defined its expectations and requirements in relation to data quality?			
Key line of enquiry			
2.1 Organisational policy for data quality has been defined and is supported by a current set of operational procedures and guidance.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisational policy for data quality has been documented; and operational procedures and guidance meet users' needs. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
2.1.5 The data quality policy covers data quality requirements in relation to partnership working, where relevant. (see KLOE 3.4 on shared data)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes requirements but in need of improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess needs by March 2008 Agree Policy content with Ian Foster Implement by March 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Julie Scott Julie Scott Ian Forster
2.1.6 The council can demonstrate that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> data quality procedures and guidance notes are reviewed at least annually and updated when needed; operational processes and guidance continue to be developed and updated; relevant staff are fully involved in the development and updating of data quality policies, procedures and guidance notes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out requirement in Policy Assess needs by March 2008 Implement by March 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Julie Scott Julie Scott Julie Scott

Key line of enquiry			
2.2 Policies and procedures are followed by staff and applied consistently throughout the organisation.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> processes are carried out in line with established policy and procedures. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
2.2.5 Each department has been assigned a data quality champion (or equivalent) who promotes existing data quality policies and procedures and who regularly reviews and reports on compliance .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not achieved formally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address in February Performance Clinic Agree formal process by March 2008 	Julie Scott
2.2.6 The data quality champion (or equivalent) is effective in rectifying any non-compliance and can demonstrate an impact on data quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not achieved formally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address in February Performance Clinic Agree formal process by March 2008 	Julie Scott

3. SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES			
Are there effective systems and processes in place to secure the quality of data?			
Key line of enquiry			
3.1 There are appropriate systems in place for the collection, recording, analysis and reporting of the data used to monitor performance.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> systems (manual or computerised) produce data which is fit for purpose. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
3.1.5 Systems from different departments are linked for reporting corporate performance information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not achieved outside performance plus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a priority in the light of LGR 	
3.1.6 Where appropriate, systems have eliminated the need for data cleansing and manipulation. System output is still however monitored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a priority in the light of LGR 	
3.1.7 The council consults effectively with staff when developing or implementing new information systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurs as part of system development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required in view of LGR 	

Key line of enquiry			
3.2 The council has controls in place to ensure that information systems produce the quality of data needed to report on performance and to keep top management aware of necessary action to relation to data quality.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has appropriate controls to ensure that information systems produce accurate information. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
3.2.4 The council can demonstrate that: it is proactive in strengthening performance information system controls rather than merely reacting to issues when detected. it keeps senior management informed of identified issues and how these are being addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough information available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address in Performance Clinic Assess needs by March 2008 Implement by March 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Forster Ian Forster Ian Forster

Key line of enquiry			
3.3 Security arrangements for performance information systems are robust, and business continuity plans are in place.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> performance information systems are secure, allowing the organisation to function under adverse circumstances. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
3.3.3 A business continuity plan is in place to provide protection for records and performance data which are vital to the continued effective functioning of the body. The organisation can demonstrate that it has carried out detailed risk analysis of current and future challenges to the robustness of its performance information systems and made changes to address any weaknesses identified. For example, this may manifest itself as scenario planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the council has a business continuity plan in place its is unrealistic to ensure the organisation can demonstrate that it has carried out detailed risk analysis of current and future challenges to the robustness of its performance information systems and made changes to address any weaknesses identified. For example, this may manifest itself as scenario planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business continuity plan in place Not a priority in the light of LGR 	Jim Elder

Key line of enquiry			
3.4 Standards are specified for shared data or data supplied by third parties.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the council specifies and monitors standards for the quality of data it shares or relies on internally and externally. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
3.4.5 There is a formal data sharing protocol(s) which specifies the responsibilities of partners to provide data which is 'fit for purpose'. If the council contracts out services the service level agreement should state how performance is to be reported and that the data is of the required quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take up through LGR Assess needs by March 2008 Implement by March 2009 	Ian Forster
3.4.6 The council seeks assurance that supplied data are of a reasonable quality e.g. a data quality assessment may be carried out by internal or external audit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take up through LGR Assess needs by March 2008 Implement by March 2009 	Ian Forster

4. PEOPLE AND SKILLS			
Does the organisation have the resources in place to secure quality data?			
Key line of enquiry			
4.1 The council has communicated clearly the responsibilities of staff, where applicable, for achieving data quality.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific skills and responsibilities in relation to data quality have been identified; and staff understand their role in achieving data quality, and are putting the theory into practice. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
4.1.7 The council can demonstrate that it has an effective internal network of data quality champions (or equivalent) that have successfully driven data quality improvement throughout the council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not achieved in formal sense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement by March 2008 	Ian Forster
4.1.8 Staff are proactively informed of the results of their efforts in ensuring data quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally Achieved through feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise further awareness of performance achievement through regular briefings by March 2008 	Ian Forster
4.1.9 Information staff work closely with service level staff to address data recording problems and other data issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough information available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address in Performance Clinic 	Ian Forster
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess needs by March 2008 	Ian Forster
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement by March 2009 	Ian Forster

Key line of enquiry			
4.2 The council has arrangements in place to ensure that staff with data quality responsibility have the necessary skills.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the council has provided training to ensure that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge in relation to data quality. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
4.2.5 The council can demonstrate that it has identified the implications and impact of future developments on data quality staff skills and capacity, and is proactively managing these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough information available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess needs by March 2008 	Ian Forster
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement by March 2009 	Ian Forster
4.2.6 The departmental data quality champion or information staff strengthen the feedback loops by identifying potential data quality issues through, for example, error reports, and see that they are addressed through front line staff training or briefing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough information available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess needs by March 2008 	Ian Forster
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement by March 2009 	Ian Forster

5. DATA USE			
Are there effective arrangements for the use of data for performance management and service improvement?			
Key line of enquiry			
5.1 The council has put in place arrangements that are focused on ensuring that data supporting performance information is also used to manage and improve the delivery of services.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reported performance information is actively used in the decision making process. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4		Evidence	Proposed Actions
5.1.5 Senior management routinely and actively use data supporting performance information to plan services and allocate resources.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamental to performance Management Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required
5.1.6 There is evidence that management action is taken to address service delivery issues identified by data returns and performance information reports. Members have available to them high level information with which they can assess delivery of services in relation to agreed milestones.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundamental to performance Management Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required
			Lead

Key line of enquiry			
5.2 The council has effective validation procedures in place to ensure the accuracy of data used in reported performance indicators.			
Audit Focus			
Evidence that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> information used to report on performance is subject to a system of internal control and validation. 			
Criteria for Judgement			
Level 4	Evidence	Proposed Actions	Lead
5.2.7 There is evidence of the outcome of effective quality assurance of the audit trail confirming accuracy of the data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved, Audit and Ac reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action required 	
5.2.8 Councils have limited resources so all reported data is rigorously verified both departmentally and corporately, but the extent of this is informed by an analysis of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> level of the risk of the data being mis-stated; likelihood and impact of data errors; and accuracy required in the reported performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough information available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess needs by March 2008 	Ian Forster
5.2.9 A formal documented process for checking externally reported data/performance indicators, both departmentally and corporately, is in place to assure the quality of the data. An example (for this level) is given below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough information available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement by March 2009 	Ian Forster
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess needs by March 2008 	Ian Forster
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement by March 2009 	Ian Forster

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