

Contents

Annual report foreword	2
.....
Teesdale	3
.....
The Council	5
.....
Local Government Reorganisation	8
.....
Comprehensive Performance Assessment	9
.....
Our vision, values & priorities	10
.....
To make Teesdale a cleaner, greener place	12
.....
To grow Teesdale's economy	15
.....
To improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and develop safer communities	18
.....
To meet the housing needs of all our residents	21
.....
Improving together	24
.....
Our performance in 2007/2008	26
.....
Annual Governance Statement	28
.....
Summary of Accounts	32
.....
More information	37

Annual report foreword

Welcome to Teesdale District Council's Annual Report. It details our achievements, how we spent our money and our performance for the year 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008.

The report also sets out our priorities for the coming year and beyond; ensuring the quality of life for people in Teesdale continues to improve after the District Council ceases to exist in April 2009.

More information on our performance and priorities is included in the Council's Corporate Plan. Further financial information is detailed in our Annual Statement of Accounts. Both documents are available on the Council's website www.teesdale.gov.uk



Neil Stokell
Chief Executive



Councillor Richard Betton
Leader

Teesdale

Area and Population

Teesdale is a predominantly rural area, located in the south west of County Durham, bordering Cumbria to the west and North Yorkshire to the south. While it covers a geographic area of 836 sq km and is the largest of the seven districts which currently make up County Durham, with a population of just 24,900 (ONS, 2005) it has the lowest population of any district in England and Wales. The population density is just 29 people per sq km. Only 6 local authorities in England and Wales are more sparsely populated. The district is divided into 19 wards and 50 Parishes.

Around 5,000 people or 23% of the population live in Barnard Castle, the market town and administrative centre, located in the south west of the district. Barnard Castle is recognised as one of the most historically and architecturally important towns in the country. Other population centres are Middleton in Teesdale, Staindrop, Cockfield, Evenwood and Etherley. The rest of the district is characterised by many small communities, including former mining villages in the east, a large number of farms and agricultural holdings, isolated dwellings and a few large estates.

The main transport route through the district is the recently upgraded A66, running east to west across the southern part of the district. The nearest main north to south routes are the A1 and the A68, with Darlington the nearest mainline station and Durham Tees Valley the nearest airport. Accessibility is a major issue in the district.

Over half of the district is designated as part of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The majority of the remainder is recognised as having High Landscape Value. Teesdale is hugely important for its bio and geo-diversity, with 3 internationally recognised Nature Reserves and nearly 40% of the area classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. On the other hand high levels of domestic waste are produced, energy use is high and there is a high carbon footprint.

Employment

Teesdale is perceived as a relatively prosperous district with low levels of deprivation, a healthy population and low levels of crime. 1.2% of the population of working age is unemployed compared to 2.9% for the region and 2.1% for Great Britain, but economic opportunity is limited. There are also pockets of worklessness in the former coalfield area. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 shows that two of our wards are in the 10% most deprived for both employment and health. Seven are in the top 10% most deprived for access to services and eleven are in the top 50% most deprived wards.

The district's employment base largely comprises service and manufacturing sectors, with Glaxo Smith Kline pharmaceutical company the largest employer.

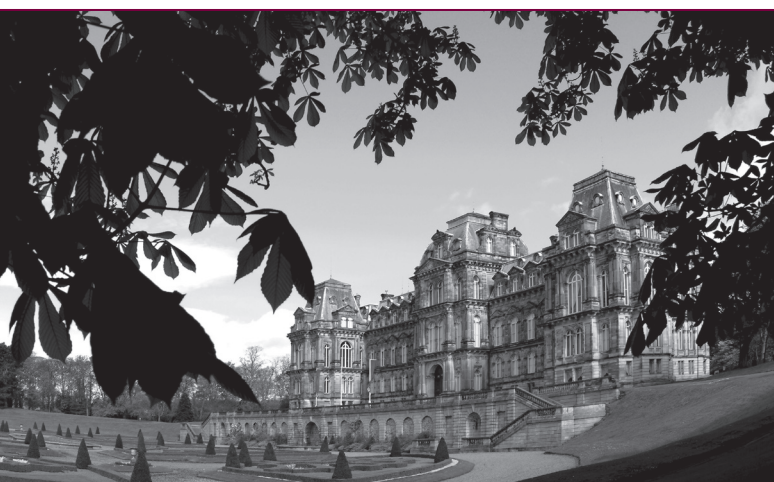
Employment cont.

Stainton Grove Industrial Estate has provided opportunities for growth of the employment base, feeding more established businesses at Harmire Enterprise Park. Public administration, education and health still account for 27.8% of employment. Agriculture remains a small but significant sector. Tourism accounts for £88.12m of annual income (STEAM 2005), generated by the district's many tourism attractions. Diversification of the employment base is increasingly important to secure the district's economy.

Education and Health

Teesdale is also a popular place for retirement, reflected in the age profile of our population, the fastest ageing in the north east. Our young people have high levels of educational attainment with 67.2% achieving 5 or more A to C grades at GCSE, compared to the England average of 59.2% (DFES 2006), yet many of them leave to seek work, housing and other opportunities. With a rising ratio of 6.5 of house price to income, affordable housing is now one of the key issues for retaining young people.

Despite the ageing population and pockets of ill health, the health of our residents is marginally better than the rest of the region and life expectancy is higher than the national average, currently 76.6 for males and 81.9 for females. The overwhelming majority of the population, 98.2%, are White British. Black and Minority ethnic groups form only 0.8% of the population with the largest minority ethnic group being Chinese at 0.2%. However, the district has recently seen the arrival of people from Eastern Europe, mainly to work in the service and agricultural sectors.



The Council

Teesdale District Council comprises 32 councillors representing 19 wards. Councillors are democratically elected by and accountable to the residents of their ward.

The member structure is as follows:

- Executive Committee
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Audit and Governance Committee

The Executive Committee is responsible for taking key decisions, ensuring that the Council achieves its aims and objectives within the budget resource available. It comprises the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and 6 lead members. Each member is responsible for a specific area.



LEADER

Councillor Richard Betton

Strategic and Community Leadership,
Executive Oversight



DEPUTY LEADER

Councillor Madeleine Walton

Local Strategic Partnership, Local Area
Agreement, Partnerships, Engagement,
Consultation



IMPROVEMENT

Councillor John Salter

Organisational Development, Member
Development, Performance Management,
Service Transformation, Customer Services,
Reputation, Equality and Diversity,
Accessibility to Services, Modernisation
(Strong and Prosperous Communities)



RESOURCES

Councillor Ken Robinson

Value for Money, Use of Resources, Procurement, Best Value, Medium Term Financial Plan/Strategy, Ethical and Corporate Governance



ENVIRONMENT

Councillor Ossie Hedley

Corporate priority 'To make Teesdale a cleaner and greener place'. Including Environmental Services, Transport, Development Control, Refuse/Recycling



REGENERATION

Councillor Josephine Fergus

Corporate priority 'To grow the economy of Teesdale'. Including Strategic Planning, Employment, Economic Development, Tourism, Car Parking



HEALTH AND SAFER COMMUNITIES

Councillor Keith Stansfield

Corporate priority 'To improve the health and well being of our residents and develop safer communities'. Including Leisure and Culture, Healthy Living, Community Safety



HOUSING

Councillor Pauline Charlton

(From 2008/2009 Councillor Dreda Forster)

Corporate priority 'To meet the housing needs of all our residents'. Including Strategic Housing Function, Housing Advice Service, Promotion of Affordable Housing Provision.

The Chief Executive Officer is the Head of Paid Service, overseeing 147 employees across 6 Directorates. The Chief Executive along with the 6 Directors form the Corporate Management Team who are responsible for ensuring the strategic use of the Council's service performance and customer feedback information in order to proactively promote and direct change, improvement and the efficient deployment of resources, translating customer needs, service constraints and Council priorities into deliverable change and improvement initiatives.

The Corporate Management Team is made up of the following Officers:

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Neil Stokell

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (INTERIM)

Paul Wilding

Environmental Services, Street Care Services, Licensing and Enforcement

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Rachel Bowles

Corporate Policy and Partnerships, HR and Improvement, PR and Consultation, Community Engagement, Corporate Projects

DIRECTOR CUSTOMER SERVICES

Helen Finnimore

Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits Services, Leisure and Cultural Services, IT

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (Section 151 Officer)

Joanne Kellett

Accountancy, Audit, Corporate Finance, Procurement, Risk Management, Asset Management

CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER (Monitoring Officer)

Mike Dennis

Governance, Democratic Services, Legal Services

DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION

Trevor Watson

Strategic Planning, Development Control, Housing Strategy, Building Control, Regeneration

Local Government Reorganisation

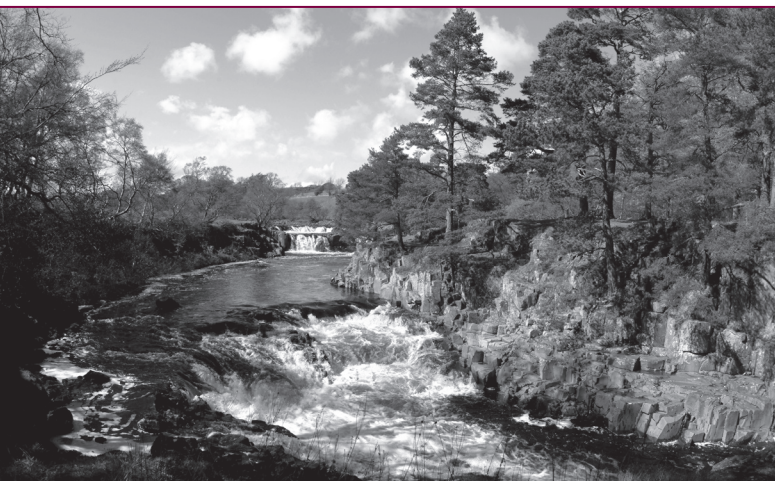
During 2007, the Government decided to support the development of a single unitary council for County Durham. This means that Teesdale District Council will no longer exist and a new single unitary council will be formed on 1st April 2009. The Implementation Order came into effect at the end of February 2008 with an election to the new Council in May 2008.

This transition process will not happen overnight and substantial work towards the creation of the new single unitary council has been taking place. We are committed as an authority, and have a duty to co-operate, in the setting up of the new organisation.

All of the councils within County Durham have agreed a programme structure for the transition to one unitary council.

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.’



Comprehensive Performance Assessment

In March 2008 the Audit Commission undertook a Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Council. As a result Teesdale District Council was re-categorised as Fair.

The Audit Commission made the following statement:

“Teesdale District Council has made substantial progress since the ‘poor’ CPA judgement of 2004 and is now categorised as ‘fair’. It is performing at least adequately in all aspects covered by this assessment, which is a significant improvement from 2004 when almost all were judged to be inadequate.”

Following the CPA judgement, we have closed our internal improvement programme and main streamed our improvement approach through the delivery of the work stream objectives linked to Local Government Reorganisation.



Our vision, values and priorities

Our Vision

Our vision for Teesdale, which we have jointly agreed with our Local Strategic Partnership, is:

“Teesdale will be a place where people will want to live, work and visit while we protect and enhance our valuable environment; where we use opportunities to strengthen our economy; where our communities are vibrant and prosperous; and where our people are safe and healthy and able to realise their full potential.”

From this vision we have developed a series of Strategic Priorities for the future delivery of services. These priorities take account of:

- The views of local people and the needs of our community.
- How the Council and our services are performing (what we are doing well and what we need to improve).
- The views of our partners, employees, elected members and consideration of government priorities.

Our Priorities

Our priorities at Teesdale are:

- To make Teesdale a cleaner, greener, place.
- To grow Teesdale's economy.
- To improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and develop safer communities.
- To meet the housing needs of our residents.
- Improving together.

Our Core Values

Our Core values underpin our approach to achieving our vision and delivering our priorities. They reflect our rural nature, the need for ensuring sustainable communities, high standards, efficiency and working in partnership.

Our Core Values at Teesdale are:

- Equality and diversity.
- Effective partnership working.
- Innovation and imagination.
- Listening and acting.



To make Teesdale a cleaner, greener place

Priority Objectives

- Achieve and maintain a clean and attractive environment for residents, businesses and visitors.
- Reduce our ecological footprint by promoting and delivering sustainable living.
- Reduce waste, improve recycling and encourage reuse.

At Teesdale District Council we are working with our partners to ensure Teesdale is a clean, green, beautiful and attractive place with everyone minimising their impact on the environment by:

- Reducing the amount of waste they produce.
- Reusing and recycling when they can.
- Improving street cleanliness.
- Reducing the amount of energy they use.
- Preserving and enhancing Teesdale's natural and built heritage.



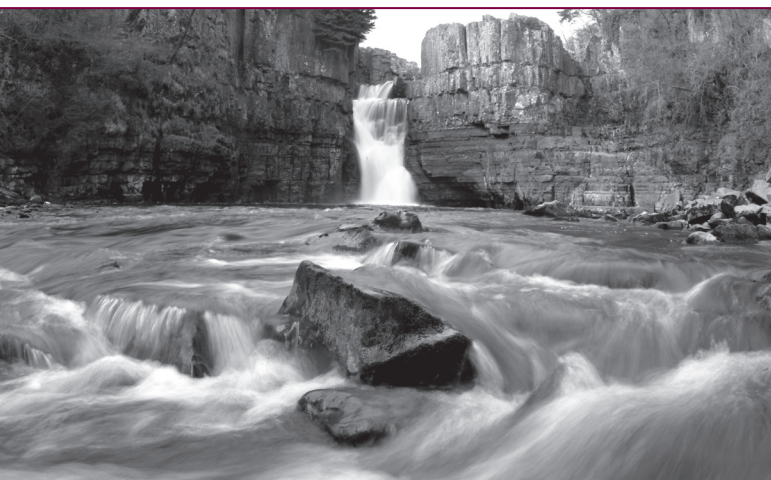
Our key achievements in 2007/2008

- Increased the % of household waste recycled from 17.41% to 19.90%.
- Strengthened the Dog Warden Service to ensure better targeting of dog fouling prevention, 35 dog bins have been placed at known hotspots and free dog poop bags issued to residents.
- Introduced service standards for Environmental Services.
- Recycling campaigns undertaken (using Waste Resources Action Programme funding) in poor performing areas. This has raised resident participation by 12% (128 households have reduced their excess waste).
- Environmental Protection Permit inspections undertaken by specialist Pollution Control Environmental Health Officers facilitated a 100% achievement of pollution control improvements by local premises particularly quarries and heavy plant suppliers.
- Trainee Environmental Health Officer employed to strengthen service provision.
- Increased partnership working with other local authorities through the introduction of the Health and Safety County Group.
- Engaged with local businesses to promote smoke free workplaces.



Our key priorities for 2008/2009

- Provide further dog waste bins at targeted sites and extend the emptying service across the district.
- Improve the cleanliness of the district by targeting specific areas of concern and by working in partnership with the Campaign for Rural England on a litter campaign.
- Provide a targeted dog warden enforcement service taking proportional enforcement action against dog fouling offenders and publicising enforcement activities and outcomes.
- Achieve the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) standards by working in partnership with Wear Valley District Council.
- Incorporate measures within the Local Development Framework to reduce the need to travel and continue to provide concessionary travel.
- Work in partnership, to proactively protect the natural and built environment in the district and continue to produce Conservation Character Appraisals and an Article 4 Direction.
- Through collaboration with Durham County Council increase the amount of household waste recovered by using the anaerobic digester.
- Produce a Waste Strategy for Teesdale and implement it in accordance with the Durham County Council Waste Strategy and the Local Government Reorganisation workstream.
- Work in partnership with Rotters to maintain the collection of green waste across the district.
- Provide greater education and raise further awareness about waste reduction and recycling to encourage more residents to reduce waste, reuse, and recycle.



To grow Teesdale's economy

Priority Objectives

- Create an enterprising district with Barnard Castle as a vibrant market town at its centre.
- Have a well educated and skilled workforce with access to latest ICT technology.
- Work with our partners to create a strong economy based upon equality of opportunity for employment.
- Ensure that economic growth and change is sustainable both in economic and environmental terms.

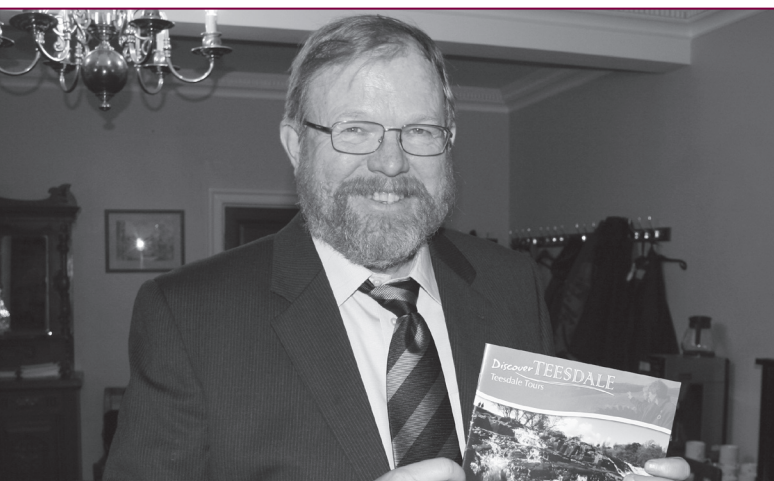
At Teesdale District Council we are working with our partners to ensure Teesdale enjoys economic prosperity and everyone has access to lifelong learning by:

- Increasing entrepreneurial activity and innovation, with more jobs created and existing ones sustained.
- Residents having improved skills and confidence to meet current and future business needs.
- Increasing the supply of business space to meet current and future business needs.
- Increasing income from tourism.



Our key achievements in 2007/2008

- The Councils Regeneration Service achieved a Good, 2 star rating following the Audit Commission inspection.
- Increased visitor numbers and revenue income at the Tourist Information Centre, improving the retail offer, with a fair trade coffee shop and public internet access.
- Working in partnership, rebranded the award winning website www.exploreeteesdale.com to fit with national and regional strategies.
- Working in partnership, commissioned the Barnard Castle Vision to provide a 20 year vision and implementation plan setting out economic and development opportunities for Barnard Castle. Funding was secured from the Sub-Regional Investment Plan to develop and implement a streetscape strategy and a transport and access study as part of this Vision.
- Commissioned an Economic Options Study and Employment Land Study to provide the Strategy for the Economic Development and Regeneration for the whole of Teesdale.
- Working in partnership with Teesdale Marketing and Teesdale Enterprise Agency, enabled a large number of people who live or work in the Teesdale area to undertake skills training resulting in the successful creation of new businesses and in turn the creation of jobs.
- Working with the Local Strategic Partnership, submitted a successful Expression of Interest for New Leader funding for the rural regeneration of the district and subsequently worked with partners to submit a successful final bid. New Leader will provide a five year programme of funding for rural communities, to be delivered through a 'grass roots' community development approach.



Our key priorities for 2008/2009

- Increase available industrial land through participation in the development of the Local Development Framework (LDF) by being demand responsive to businesses wanting to grow and relocate in Teesdale and by taking forward an Economic Strategy for Teesdale which can inform the LDF for the district.
- Increase the number of office and workshop units available to business at Stainton Grove Industrial Estate and Enterprise House.
- Promote Barnard Castle as an investment location (Retail Distinctiveness Study Action Plan).
- Work in partnership with the Teesdale Enterprise Agency and Teesdale Development Company to support local business.
- Market Teesdale as a place to visit by undertaking 'Discover Teesdale' marketing projects with Bowes Museum / Raby Castle and working with our partners to promote local food and produce including further development of the eat Teesdale website www.eatteesdale.co.uk
- Encourage more visitors to stay overnight in Teesdale by working in partnership with the private sector to maximise the opportunities identified within the Barnard Castle Vision and Hamsterley Forest re-development project.
- Continue partnership working with the Durham Tourism Partnership to deliver Teesdale's Tourism Strategy.
- Identify, develop and deliver new visitor attractions within areas such as Hamsterley Cycle Centre and Barnard Castle Historic Centre.
- Further deliver the Action Plan for Barnard Castle Vision – a 20 year programme of investment for the benefit of the whole District by completing the Operating Plan for 2008/09 and submitting a full business case for funding to One North East.



To improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and develop safer communities

Priority Objectives

- Develop our leisure provision to meet the changing needs of our community.
- Develop the arts within the district, meeting the aspirations of the community.
- Encourage the people of Teesdale to lead healthier lifestyles.
- Reduce nuisance behaviour in our communities.

At Teesdale District Council we are working with our partners to ensure Teesdale is a place where people are safe and well and they enjoy a good quality of life with:

- Everyone enjoying good health, having active and healthy lifestyles and health inequalities reduced
- Everyone, especially young, older and vulnerable people, being reassured that Teesdale is a safe place to live and work.
- Everyone having access to a wide range of leisure, sport and cultural activities.



Our key achievements in 2007/2008

- Stroke Survivors Rehabilitation Programme delivered at Teesdale Leisure Centre and the Butterwick Hospice in Bishop Auckland to enable stroke survivors to regain their confidence and independence.
- Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme delivered at Teesdale Leisure Centre and the Richardson Hospital in Barnard Castle providing advice and education on adapting a new lifestyle.
- Teesdale Leisure Centre scored 70% in second QUEST inspection.
- Sports Directory produced, providing information on clubs and facilities available within the Teesdale district.
- Passport to Sports scheme delivered to give young people discounted access to sports facilities, resulting in 1,200 young people joining the scheme since the scheme started.
- Positive Futures Programme designed and delivered to young people at risk of offending.
- Environmental Health systems and Enforcement services improved resulting in successful prosecutions on Food Safety and Health and Safety.
- Seminars and workshops in Food Safety and Hygiene delivered to retailers and other service providers.
- British Crime Survey Comparator crimes reduced through the Community Safety Partnership by 9% from 2006/7 to 2007/8, domestic burglary reduced by 43% in 2007/8 compared to the baseline.



Our key priorities for 2008/2009

- Maintain QUEST Accreditation by ensuring that the QUEST Improvement Plan is delivered.
- Work closely with Sport England to improve sporting facilities within the District. A Climbing Wall at Teesdale Leisure Centre and Multi Use Games Area at Evenwood are timetabled to be installed and completed during 2008/2009.
- Implement a Coach Education Programme designed to underpin the development of sport in Teesdale.
- Support a diverse range of arts activities to meet the needs and aspirations of all age groups.
- Develop awareness of arts for young people and encourage increased participation, by developing links with schools through the delivery of the Land and Locality Development Project, the Street Arts/Music Programme and Artworks, participatory out-of-school arts workshops.
- Expand and deliver young peoples activities and initiatives in conjunction with partners and develop young persons clubs.
- Deliver leisure activities and initiatives to support the National Service Framework for older people in all areas of the district.
- Expand the Healthy Schools Programme by delivering Healthy Heart talks to years 5 and 6 at primary schools.
- Develop a young peoples/children's health and activity club.
- Continue to develop the rehabilitation and referral opportunities available to our residents by expanding the programme to cater for wider health issues over a greater geographic area.
- Participate actively in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) to set the direction of community safety in Teesdale.
- Strengthen Neighbourhood Watch Schemes by closer working with the Local Strategic Partnership and Crime Reduction Partnership.



To meet the housing needs of all our residents

Priority Objectives

- Ensure all households are able to access the housing of their choice, that meets their needs, at a price they can afford.
- Enable people to maintain their independence, health and well being in their own homes for as long as possible.

At Teesdale District Council we are working with our partners to ensure housing is of a decent standard and is affordable and accessible, to meet the housing needs of Teesdale's residents with:

- Everyone being able to secure good quality housing.
- Everyone, especially young people, being able to stay in the area.



Our key achievements in 2007/2008

- Housing Policy and Enabling Officer appointed to co-ordinate the Strategic Housing Service.
- Innovative Community Land Trust setup approved to enable the development of further affordable units for rent and shared equity.
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Policy Document approved for consultation to enable the annual construction of 25 affordable housing units in new housing developments.
- Working in partnership with the Durham Housing Neighbourhood Group, completed the first sub-regional housing strategy for County Durham. The Strategy was assessed and passed as 'fit for purpose' by Government Office North East.
- Updated the Housing Needs Assessment providing up to date information on housing affordability.
- Working in partnership with Centrepoint, developed a new Private Sector Rent Deposit Scheme for vulnerable people.
- Working in partnership with other County Durham Local Authorities, commissioned a Condition of Private Sector Housing Stock survey.
- Published leaflets informing residents of the Housing Service Standards.
- Working in partnership with Teesdale Housing Association, improved homelessness prevention by providing a housing options advisory service.
- Working in partnership with other County Durham local authorities, commissioned a study into the housing needs of gypsies and travellers.
- Constructed 9 affordable houses at Mickleton.



Our key priorities for 2008/2009

- Carry out a local needs survey to supplement Durham Housing Market Assessment and update local primary evidence base and housing need demand.
- Reduce numbers of privately owned properties not meeting decent homes standards.
- Implement the Community Land Trust by attaining more affordable housing.
- Review of Homelessness Strategy to reduce and prevent homelessness in Teesdale.
- Introduce sub regional choice based lettings scheme.
- Establish a Landlords Forum to improve relationships with local landlords and increase the choice and supply of affordable housing.
- Provide improvement grants to residents, and carry out adaptations to homes to enable independent living (through Disabled Facilities Grant funding).
- Implement a support service to vulnerable groups requiring support to enable independent living.
- Implement a Handy Van repair service for vulnerable groups, delivering a minor repairs and adaptations service.



Improving together

Priority Objectives

- Provide accessible, quality services.
- Be effective community leaders.
- Have well managed and efficient use of resources.
- Improve the Council's reputation.
- Have effective partnerships delivering the requirements of the community.

At Teesdale District Council we are working with our partners to ensure we are:

- Leading our community, listening to and acting on their needs, shaping the place they live and providing feedback.
- Providing high quality, accessible services.
- Managing our resources and our assets efficiently and effectively, ensuring value for money.
- Managing our projects and performance to achieve our priorities and improve our service provision.
- Having effective, value for money partnerships.
- Developing our staff and members to achieve their full potential.

Our key achievements in 2007/2008

- CPA re-categorisation to fair.
- Further significant improvements made on the Use of Resources Key Lines of Enquiry.
- Produced Partnerships Strategy identifying key partnerships and improved monitoring and governance arrangements.
- Delivered a Member Improvement Programme and revised Committee Structure.
- Implemented a full management restructure, strengthening strategic management within the Council.
- Launched the Sustainable Community Strategy in March 2008.
- Achieved Level 2 in the Equality and Diversity Standard.
- Developed a People Strategy in January 2008.
- Completed a Community Engagement Strategy and work plan including the launch of the 'Talk Teesdale' newspaper.

Our Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2007/2008 included the following statement:

"During the year we continued to prepare reports on the Council's progress for the Government Monitoring Board for the Council. All these reports showed improvement in key areas of how the Council works including community leadership and performance management." Audit Commission.

The letter received from the from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Department for Communities and Local Government) contained the following:

"I am pleased to acknowledge that Teesdale District Council has made positive and demonstrable improvements to service delivery and strategic leadership since we agreed the terms of our engagement process in 2004. The latest CPA report of your council confirms the overall rating of performance as 'Fair' and this reflects significant improvement in several areas of your management and strategic responsibilities..... In view of these encouraging trends over the past four years and, upon the advice of the Government Office for the North East, I am pleased to propose that the formal engagement process which had been in place since 2004 is no longer necessary....."

Following the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment judgement of Fair we have closed our internal improvement programme 'Improving Together' and mainstreamed our improvement approach through the delivery of the work stream objectives linked to Local Government Reorganisation.

Our performance in 2007/08

Performance Indicators are used to measure the Council's progress and to identify opportunities for improvement.

We set challenging yet achievable targets at the start of each year to ensure that we continue to improve and provide high quality services for people in our communities.

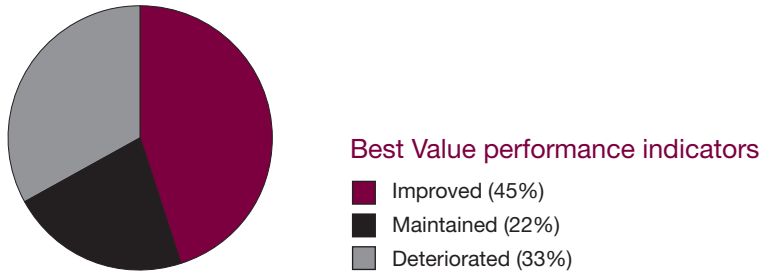
We used Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's), introduced by the government to assess the performance of Local Authorities, as well as Local Indicators (LPI's) which we have chosen ourselves to review our performance more closely in 2007/08.

To give us a clear picture of the performance for each priority objective we have a basket of performance indicators for each priority theme. These include key performance indicators which are used to measure the delivery of our corporate priorities:

- To make Teesdale a cleaner, greener, place.
- To grow Teesdale's economy.
- To improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and develop safer communities.
- To meet the housing needs of our residents.
- Improving together.

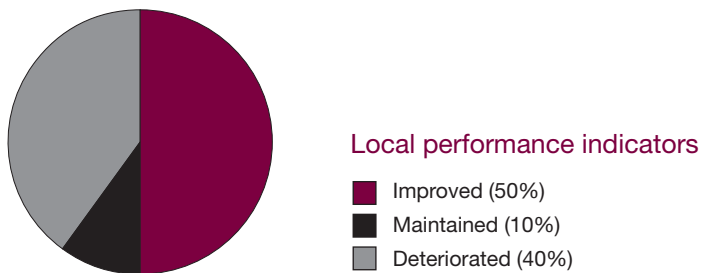
How we performed during 2007/2008

The charts below show the proportion of our 2007/08 performance indicators that improved, were maintained or deteriorated, compared to our performance in 2006/07.



During 2007/08 we collected 65 BVPI's.

We have improved or maintained our performance in 44 out of 65 indicators (67%) and declined in performance in 21 out of 65 indicators (33%)



During 2007/08 we collected 16 LPI's

We have improved or maintained our performance in 10 out of 16 indicators (60%) and declined in performance in 6 out of 16 indicators (40%)

Annual Governance Statement

Scope of responsibility

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

Discharging the responsibility

The Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs facilitating the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk. During 2007/08, the Council adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance, which complies with the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework for Corporate Governance, and prepared an Annual Governance Statement which explains how the Council has complied with the Code and met its obligations in relation to the publication of a Statement on Internal Control.

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which the Council is directed and controlled and the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services. The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to manage risk to an acceptable level.

Key processes and controls in place to ensure sound governance

The Combined Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan clearly sets out the Council's purpose and vision. The vision and corporate priorities have been agreed jointly with the Local Strategic Partnership and are reflected in the Sustainable Community Strategy. These priorities are also reflected within the Council's various strategies and plans, and in annual departmental service plans. The Council has established a robust performance management system. Performance against these objectives is monitored, and action taken as appropriate, by the Corporate Management Team and the Improvement and Performance Board; the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Monitoring Group undertakes service performance reviews on an exception basis.

The Council has adopted a Constitution which sets out how it operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The Executive Committee has delegated authority from the Council to make decisions in accordance with the policy and budget framework, subject to the call-in provisions which may be exercised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Key processes and controls in place to ensure sound governance cont.

Regulatory functions are undertaken by the Planning and Licensing Committees. In 2007, a re-vamped Audit and Governance Committee was established, with separate membership from both Executive and Overview & Scrutiny Committees (including two independent co-opted members) and this committee has an important role in ensuring and overseeing good governance arrangements. There is a robust budget and policy framework and detailed financial and contract procedures, which are updated as required.

Member and officer behaviour is regulated through separate codes of conduct which are supported by a series of protocols and policies which apply the principles of these codes to specific areas of Council activity (for example, Member Officer Protocol, Planning Code of Practice, Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Whistle Blowing Policy). The Member Code of Conduct, first introduced in 2002 and revised in 2007, is monitored and enforced by the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee, which comprises, as required, independent and parish representatives. Internal and External Audit work together to provide annual opinions of the control framework, governance arrangements and the validity of the annual accounts. The financial management of the Council is conducted in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution. The overall financial arrangements are governed by the Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategy; supported by robust budget setting and monitoring arrangements.

The Council's Constitution provides for transparent and accountable decision making, with provision for appropriate challenge and scrutiny. This is provided, particularly, by the Audit and Governance Committee (which oversees the risk and internal control framework, financial reporting and auditing processes, and corporate governance framework) and Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which has a statutory right (and responsibility) to review or scrutinise any area of the Council's activity or community interest. Risk management is overseen by the Risk Management Group (now comprising chief officers and member champions from Executive and Audit & Governance) which reports to the Audit and Governance Committee. Members of the Planning and Licensing Committees, in particular, need to be alert to the possible conflicts which may arise during the decision making process.

The Council has devoted resources to ensuring high levels of experience and expertise among its staff so that Council services are delivered by trained and experienced officers. All staff receive an annual performance development review: training needs are identified as part of this process and addressed via the annual Corporate Training Plan. Member development has historically suffered from limited budget. This was highlighted as a significant weakness in the Council's 2004 Comprehensive Performance Assessment and subsequent development programmes have focused on capacity building in this area.

The Council recognises that communication with all stakeholders plays a fundamental role in the successful delivery of quality, efficient and cost effective services. Recent innovations have included the introduction of a Customer Services contact centre, the establishment of a new post of PR and Communications Manager, and the adoption of a new Communications and Engagement Strategy. All Council and committee meetings are open to the public except where exempt or confidential matters are considered and agendas and minutes are available on the Council's recently improved, customer-friendly website. The corporate complaints procedure, updated in 2006, has direct links to the Local Government Ombudsman, Standards Board for England and Information Commissioner.

Review of Effectiveness

The Council has a responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control. The review is informed by the work of the executive managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, by the work of the internal auditors, and other review agencies and inspectorates.

The full Council is responsible for setting the internal control framework, the budget and policy framework, financial and contact procedure rules, procedure rules for the conduct of Council and committee meetings, and access to information procedure rules.

Various committees have a particular role to play in ensuring effectiveness: Overview and Scrutiny through scrutiny and the right of call-in of executive decisions, Standards through monitoring the conduct and behaviour of members, Audit and Governance through oversight of the corporate governance framework.

Internal Audit is responsible for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of systems of internal control, reporting to the Audit and Governance Committee and retaining a degree of autonomy from the Council's senior management structure.

Other assurance mechanisms include the annual assurance reports from service managers, and those provided by the performance management and risk management systems.

External assurance is provided by the annual report of the Local Government Ombudsman. The 2007/08 report showed that, whilst there had been a slight increase in complaints made against the Council, none reached the stage of being classed as a formal complaint. The Ombudsman stated that no issues had arisen during the year to suggest that there were any problems with how the Council dealt with any complaints made by members of the public.

The other significant area of external review is that provided by the Audit Commission, both in terms of its regular auditing functions (Annual Audit of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement, Use of Resources judgment) and also the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). In 2004, the Council was judged to be 'Poor' and then embarked upon a programme of recovery and improvement, supported by Central Government, Audit Commission and Improvement & Development Agency. In 2008, the Council was re-inspected and re-assessed as 'Fair'.

The CPA report, issued in June 2008, highlighted a number of areas upon which the Council should now concentrate, in its final year before local government reorganisation.

Review of Effectiveness cont.

To exercise its community leadership role effectively during the transition to a new unitary council for the county of Durham, the Council should:

- Ensure that it continues to play an appropriate role in the various work streams underway, contributing effectively to local government reorganisation and ensuring that it promotes the needs of the district and the interests of local people so that these can be reflected in the development of new local government structures and future delivery of services in the county;
- Ensure that it does not allow the demands of local government reorganisation to impact negatively on service quality during the transition period, whilst continuing to actively address areas of relatively poor performance; and
- Improve the attendance and contribution of councillors at partnership groups, keeping the profile of the district and the needs of its residents as high as possible during the period of transition.

To continue improving the way in which it functions, the Council should:

- Tackle the shortcomings of the scrutiny function, manage it more effectively and ensure that the energy of scrutiny is channelled into supporting achievement of the Council's priorities, management of performance, policy development and value for money;
- Build on recent improvements to its overall approach to promoting equality and diversity by ensuring the pace of this work continues and that all minority groups are given the opportunity to participate in setting local priorities for improvement;
- Ensure that staff concerns over strategic leadership are fully tackled; and
- Ensure that action plans are sufficiently robust so that outcomes are improved, and clear, achievable but challenging targets are set.

The Council proposes over this final year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance its governance arrangements. The Council is satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that have been identified and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of the final review of the Council's arrangements.

Summary of Accounts

Chief Finance Officer's Statement

The Council's Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2007. The figures behind this summary were originally compiled having regard to proper accounting practice, but to provide simplified and summarised information, some figures have been combined and modified.

A copy of the Council's 2007/08 accounts is available for examination on request.

Please contact Jo McMahon, Corporate Accountancy Manager on 01833 696 298 or via email j.mcmahon@teesdale.gov.uk

A copy can also be found on the Council's website www.teesdale.gov.uk

Financial Review

General Fund

The General Fund covers all the day to day expenditure and income on services carried out by the Council. In 2007/08 the Council budgeted for a deficit of £35,000. At the year end, a surplus of £528,000 was achieved which equates to an underspend of £563,000 when compared to budget. This surplus was attributable to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) balances being transferred following the closure of the HRA.

Council Housing – Housing Revenue Account

On 26 July 2005, tenants voted to transfer the housing stock to Teesdale Housing Association Ltd. The transfer completed on 3 July 2006. On 29 November 2007, the Council received consent from the Secretary of State to close the HRA with effect from 31 March 2008.

Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure represents the investment by the Council in purchasing, upgrading and/or enhancing land, buildings and equipment or any other expenditure classified as capital. The benefit from this expenditure is received by the Council over more than one year. In 2007/08 the Council spent £980,000 on capital. A summary is shown later.

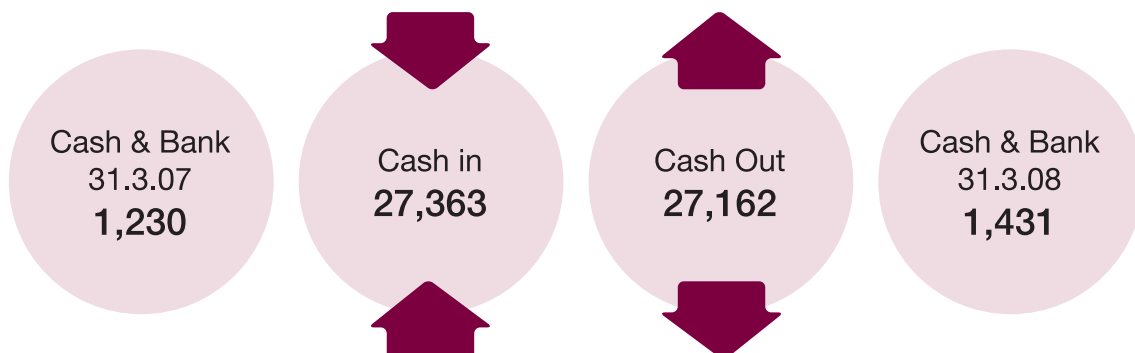
Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March 2008

(incorporating the Statement of Movement on the General Fund Balance)

This account summarises the net resources that have been consumed in providing services and managing the Council during the last year. It includes all day-to-day expenses such as staff costs, council buildings and vehicle maintenance and payments for goods and services. The net cost (expenditure less related income) of each service provision is shown below together with how these services were funded/financed.

	£000
Central Services to the Public	245
Cultural, environmental and planning services	2,712
Highways, roads and transport services	327
Other housing services	375
Social services	7
Corporate and democratic core	1,449
Non distributed costs	1
	5,116
Interest and investment income	(312)
Capital Transactions	754
Pensions Adjustment	181
	5,739
Financed by:	
General Government Grants	(1,578)
Business Rate Contribution	(2062)
Council Tax	(1859)
	240
Transfer to/from Earmarked Reserves	(768)
Increase in General Fund Balance	(528)

Cash Flow £000



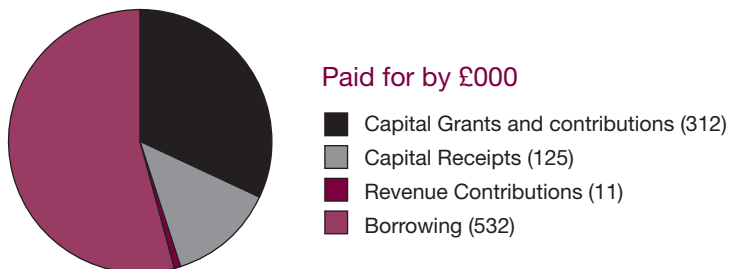
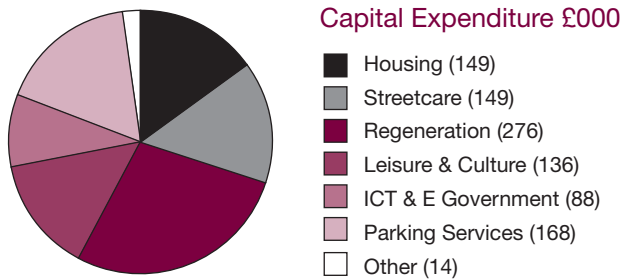
Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2008

	£000
Fixed assets	5,523
Stocks and work in progress	40
Investments	2,565
Cash and Bank	1,431
Money owed to Council	1,107
Money owed by Council – Creditors/ Short Term Borrowing	(2,124)
Long Term Borrowing	(2,101)
Pension Liability	(5,310)
Deferred Government Grants	(454)
	677
Financed by:	
Capital Accounting reserves	(4,017)
Pensions reserve	5,310
General Fund balance	(1,373)
Earmarked reserves	(427)
Financial Instruments	(170)
	677

Capital Expenditure and Financing

Capital expenditure is the amount spent by the Council on purchasing, upgrading and improving assets such as land, buildings and equipment or any other expenditure classified as capital. The major schemes in 2007/08 were as follows:

- Regeneration -Barnard Castle Vision, Economic Strategy
- Housing -Private Sector Grants and Consultancy
- Leisure and Culture -Changing Room Redevelopment, Plant Replacement, Energy Savings Initiatives
- Streetcare -Recycling Schemes, Public Convenience Refurbishment, Waste Strategy
- ICT & E Government - Hardware Replacements, Software and Licences
- Parking Services - Car Park Improvements



Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account is a separate account detailing income and expenditure relating to rented council housing. The housing stock was transferred to Teesdale Housing Association Ltd on 3 July 2006. From this date the Council ceased to be a provider of rented accommodation in the district. 2007/08 was the final year that the Council maintained a Housing Revenue Account as consent was received from the Secretary of State to close it on 31 March 2008.

	2007/2008 £000
Expenditure	
Repairs and maintenance of houses	0
Supervision and management of houses and tenants	0
Interest payable and similar charges	0
Capital expenditure	13
Sums directed by the Secretary of State to be debited to the HRA	686
	699
Income	
Dwelling and Non-dwelling rents	(1)
Charges for services	(1)
Government Subsidy (grant)	(125)
Interest and Investment Income	(1)
Other	(13)
Transfer to/from earmarked reserves	(201)
	(342)
Decrease in HRA balance	357

Council Tax

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Band D Council Tax Charge	1,280.54	1,336.75	1,412.37
In year collection - Teesdale	98.7%	98.8%	98.8%
In year collection - England	96.8%	96.9%	96.9%
Number of people paying by Direct Debit	5,817	6,113	6,394
Population	24,439	24,584	24,584

Business Rates

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
In year collection %	99.3%	99.6%	99.6%
In year collection - England	99.35%	99.58%	99.87%

Creditors

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number of invoices processed*	4,995	4,600	3,623
% of invoices paid within 30 days	94.01%	96.84%	97.23%

*Housing stock transferred in 05/06

More information

If you have any queries or you would like anymore information regarding this Annual Report and Summary Statement of Accounts, please contact:

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A full unaudited copy of the Statement of Accounts 2007/2008, together with a wide range of information about Teesdale District Council is available on the Council's website www.teesdale.gov.uk

If you, or someone you know, find it difficult to read or understand this information, we can provide it in different languages or formats such as large print or audio, on request.

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