



Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Date **Tuesday 22 October 2019**
Time **9.30 am**
Venue **Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's
agreement.**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2019 (Pages 3 - 16)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Regulation of Investigative Powers Act 2000 - Annual Review of the Council's use of Powers: (Pages 17 - 22)
Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
6. Council's use of Powers under the Regulation of Investigative Powers Act 2000 - Quarter One 2019/20: (Pages 23 - 26)
Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
7. Update on the Delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan 9 - Quarter One 2019/20: (Pages 27 - 32)
Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships.
8. Welfare Reform and Poverty Issues: (Pages 33 - 106)
Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships.

9. Quarter One 2019/20 Customer Feedback: (Pages 107 - 128)
Report of the Corporate Director of Resources.
10. Quarter One 2019/20 Performance Management: (Pages 129 - 204)
Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships.
11. Attendance Management: (Pages 205 - 232)
Report of the Corporate Director of Resources.
12. Update in relation to Petitions: (Pages 233 - 254)
Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
13. Notice of Key Decisions: (Pages 255 - 262)
Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
14. Information Update from the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committees: (Pages 263 - 270)
Report of Director of Transformation and Partnerships.
15. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the
meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Lynch
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
14 October 2019

To: **The Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

Councillor R Crute (Chair)
Councillor A Batey (Vice-Chair)

Councillors E Adam, R Bell, D Boyes, J Chaplow, M Clarke, A Hopgood,
P Jopling, B Kellett, H Liddle, L Maddison, J Makepeace, R Manchester,
C Martin, O Milburn, C Potts, J Robinson, J Rowlandson, A Savory,
A Shield, H Smith, F Tinsley, J Turnbull, M Wilkes and A Willis

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** held in **Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 13 September 2019** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor R Crute (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors A Batey (Vice-Chair), E Adam, M Clarke, P Jopling, B Kellett, L Maddison, J Makepeace, R Manchester, C Martin, O Milburn, J Robinson, J Rowlandson, A Savory, H Smith, F Tinsley, J Turnbull, A Willis, E Scott (substitute for A Hopgood) and J Nicholson (substitute for A Shield)

Also in attendance:

Councillor J Considine

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Hopgood, C Potts and A Shield.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor J Nicholson substituted for Councillor A Shield and Councillor E Scott substituted for Councillor A Hopgood.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held 21 June 2019 and special meeting held 23 July 2019 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

With regards to matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2019, the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager, Tom Gorman confirmed the following:

- Minute six, paragraphs four and five - issues raised by Councillor B Kellett in respect of the Performance Management report, looking at employment rates for males, females and full and part-time and business survival rates. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager explained that the Managing Director, Business Durham, Brian Archer copied a response to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee in this regard.
- Minute six, paragraph nine - in respect of an issue raised by Councillor F Tinsley regards use of gross value added (GVA) figures rather than gross domestic product (GDP) figures, the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager noted that GDP figures were only available nationally and regionally, therefore GVA was used as that measure was available at the local authority level. He added that following a comment from Councillor R Crute in respect of the GVA Grant figures it was noted there had been a typographical error, the figure should have read £38 million, not £3.8 million.
- Minute six, paragraph twenty - the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager explained that following a comment from Councillor M Wilkes in respect of passenger data calculations for the new Horden Train Station and promotion of the station, Councillor M Wilkes was provided with the background information.
- Minute eight, paragraph two - the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager noted a query from Councillor F Tinsley as regards electric vehicle charging points, with a further item on this matter being scheduled for a future meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

5 Quarter 1 June 2019: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2019/20 and Revenue and Capital Outturn 2018/19

The Board considered two reports, the first of the Corporate Director of Resources and the second of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships, which both provided details of the forecast outturn budget position for the above service groupings highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget based on the position to the end of June 2019 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

6 Update on the delivery of the Medium Term - Financial Plan 8

The Board considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which provided an update on the progress made on the delivery of the 2018/19 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP8) (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chair noted the gender split relating to early retirements and voluntary redundancies and asked for further information. The Head of Transformation, Andy Palmer noted that the split reflected the ratios of females and males within posts, examples being: historically there would be more female posts within services such as social care, more male posts within areas such as Clean and Green. He added that the overall splits mirrored the splits within most unitary local authorities.

Councillor F Tinsley noted paragraphs five and eight of the report referred to savings of £224 million and being on target for savings of £251 million for the period 2020/21 and asked if the additional £10 million of savings agreed by Cabinet in February was from the current year. The Head of Transformation noted the £224 million was to date, the £251 million was predicted with the forecast being prudent. The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services, Jeff Garfoot, noted the additional £10 million was for the current year, totalling £234 million, with £17 million to be saved the following year.

Resolved:

That the content of the report and progress made in delivering MTFP8 be noted.

7 Medium Term Financial Plan (10) 2020/21 to 2023/24 and Review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21

The Board received a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and Director of Transformation and Partnerships which provided the Cabinet report of 10 July 2019 relating to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) (10) 2020/21 to 2023/24 and Review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services noted that there had been a delay in information relating to the Fair Funding Review until

2021/22 and longer-term information would not be received until next year, with the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review.

Councillor L Maddison entered the meeting at 10.00am

The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services noted there was uncertainty beyond 2021/22 in terms of: the Adult Social Care allocation; Schools funding; the High Need Dedicated Schools Grant; and changes to the New Homes Bonus.

The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services explained the proposed continuation of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, with the Council now being the only local authority in the North East to retain entitlement levels for Council Tax Support. He added there was a high collection rate in terms of Council Tax, 99 percent.

The Chair noted there were some positives within the report, albeit with uncertainty and pressures beyond the next financial year.

Councillor J Makepeace noted the art of forecasting was not fool-proof and added that given the uncertainties and budget pressures whether a new headquarters for the Council was prudent. The Chair noted that the move to the new headquarters was, in part to make savings, as set out at Agenda Item 9, Smarter Working.

Councillor E Scott noted reduced car parking income from the closed Sands car park should be taken into account with works having begun on the new headquarters site, and also asked if any compensation was available for areas such as the city as many properties would be occupied by students and therefore Council Tax exempt. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services, Paul Darby noted that in the past there had been a grant in terms of areas which had universities, though this had not been in effect since 2013.

The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services noted there would be a short-term reduction in car parking income as stated, however over the longer-term it was expected there would be an overall increase in income with the new multi-storey car park.

Councillor E Adam asked as regards the Budget Support Reserve and whether it was added to each year, and at what point would that reserve be used up. The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services noted that the Budget Support Reserve would be utilised to support frontline services and be topped up via the MTFP.

He added this was good practice with the Council being ranked 35 of 100 of local authorities in respect of levels of reserves against budget.

Councillor F Tinsley referred to the recent reports in the press as regards the Government's plans relating to business rates retention and asked, given the pressures in relation to the high street, how this could impact on the Council. The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services noted that it was an issue to keep an eye on, however, it was not possible to second-guess when businesses fail. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services explained as regards Business Rate Relief, noting it had tended to be neutral for local authorities, though there had been no announcements from Government within recent spending reviews on the matter. He added that any compensation tended to be time-limited and to be delivered via local policies, placing the burden on local authorities rather than Government. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted that the main contributors in terms of business rates within the County were large supermarkets.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

Councillor J Considine left the meeting at 10.33am

8 Review of the Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium Charges

The Board received a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an update on the Review of the Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium Charges (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Finance and Transactional Services gave a presentation on the Housing Strategy and Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium Charges, noting that the current stage represented an opportunity for views on the proposals within the report and presentation.

He explained that the current policy formed part of the wider Housing and Homeless Strategies and was a tool to incentivise the owners of long-term empty properties to bring them back into use. He outlined that the current policy on long term empty properties, which applied to those empty for over two years, was implemented in 2013 and allowed for a 50 percent premium to be charged. He added that a period of occupation of over six weeks would 'reset the clock' in terms of the two-year empty period.

The Head of Finance and Transactional Services reminded Members that the number of long-term empty properties had reduced, with the Council working

hard to bring them back into use, noting figures of 2,007 in March 2013 reducing to 1,364 in April 2019. He explained that The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (empty Dwellings) Act 2018 aimed to encourage the owners of long-term empty homes to bring them back into use by enabling local authorities to charge a higher premium from 1 April 2019. Councillors noted that the new maximum premium charges allowed was: 100 percent from April 2019 for those empty for two years or more; 200 percent from 1 April 2020 for those empty for five years or more; with further powers were expected in terms of 300 percent from 1 April 2021 for those empty for more than 10 years or more.

The Head of Finance and Transactional Services set out the potential impact if the 100 percent premium was applied to those properties empty for two to five years, and also if the 200 percent premium was applied to those empty for over five years. It was added that this assumed properties at Council Tax Band A, the majority of properties within the County, and Members noted the potential in terms of a MTFP savings for 2020/21. He highlighted that Government guidance noted the premium was not intended to penalise owners of properties that were genuinely on the housing market for sale or rent, with local authorities having the discretion to grant relief as appropriate.

The Head of Finance and Transactional Services explained potential issues: impact on the collection rate for long-term empty properties; impact on owners of properties that could not be sold or let; and avoidance through short-term occupation to 'reset the clock'. Members were made aware of options available in terms of hardship relief and noted the proposals and consultation to be undertaken, with a further report to be considered by Cabinet in November / December. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted that the 300 percent premium was not being consulted on at this time as this couldn't be introduced until April 2021 and noted key dates in terms of reporting to Cabinet, policy implementation and review of impacts.

The Chair thanked the Head of Finance and Transactional Services for his presentation and asked the Committee for their comments and questions.

Councillor P Jopling asked about the current collection rates for Council Tax from empty properties. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted the rates were set out within a table at paragraph 35 which showed the amount collected both in year and over time for each financial year. He explained that the amount recovered increased over time and that there was an overall collection rate of around 98 percent. Councillor P Jopling asked as regards the cases where an owner could not be traced.

The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted that such cases were rare, and that the Council did look to records, such as those at the Land Registry, when looking for owners and landlords and normal recovery processes would apply, regardless of where they lived.

The Chair noted that collection rates on accounts subject to the empty homes premium had been identified as a risk. He added that the creation of a database of private sector landlords for the selective licensing business case would help mitigate this risk. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted this was a good point and added that three Local Authorities had already implemented the 100% charge from April 2019 and that Durham had not progressed the proposals thus far as we were wanting to dovetail this with the review of the Housing and Homeless Strategies and the introduction of selective licensing. He added that around 30 percent of empty properties were those owned by landlords with more than one property, with around 70 percent being owned by those that only had a single property, for example those that may have inherited a property.

Councillor E Adam noted he felt the increase in the premium should not be seen as a method of increasing income, rather as a tool to encourage empty properties to be brought back into use, adding that the report merely exemplified the impact in terms of additional council tax charges should the numbers of properties subject to the premium remain the same.

Councillor B Kellett left the meeting at 10.56am

Councillor E Adam noted concern in the case where a long-term empty property may be on the market for sale and was in a poor state of repair and this could prevent the property from selling and asked what discretion the Council had in those instances. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted that it would depend upon the individual situation, with the Authority having schemes in place to offer support in the form of grants or loans should there be requirements for major works in order to have the property ready for sale or rent. He added that the Council would inspect such properties as part of the process. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services reiterated that these were the elements that would need to be considered carefully by Members in finalising any proposals to change the current policy.

Councillor H Smith left the meeting at 11.00am

Councillor E Adam noted that those properties that had been vacant for a number of years would have the potential for a large number of repairs to be carried out. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services explained there were Council grants and loan schemes to aid in such repairs.

Councillor A Batey asked whether the Council would look to provide relief in cases where a landlord declined the offer of a loan to restore a property. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted that they could qualify for an exemption as long as works were ongoing to bring the property back into a saleable or rentable standard. The exemption lasted for a maximum of 12 months. Councillor A Batey asked as regards cases where properties had been empty for over 10 years. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted that the Council had powers to increase the charge to 300% from April 2021 but that was not being consulted on at this stage. In those cases under the proposals would attract the larger premiums, which it was hoped would incentivise landlords into bringing a property back into use.

Councillor C Martin noted the proposals were very good and he felt they were very balanced and fair, looking to bring the benefits of having empty properties brought back into use. He asked how much income had been lost by not implementing the new premiums from 1 April 2019. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted the premium that potentially would have been generated was set out within the presentation, around £788,000. Councillor C Martin noted his concern that the opportunity for such an amount had been missed, adding every penny counted in the current financial climate. The Chair noted he understood the point Councillor C Martin was making, however, he felt it was very important to ensure the Council carried out the process properly and linked in with the overall Housing and Homeless Strategies and Selective Licensing, making sure consultation was carried out correctly. Councillor C Martin agreed it was important to get the process right, however, he noted that he wished that the process had begun a year ago or so. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted as the process was in tandem with the review of the Housing and Homelessness Strategies and the potential introduction of Selective Licensing, the Authority was not in the position to do so last year. He added that while a number of local authorities that had introduced the premiums from 1 April, they were in very different financial positions to Durham County Council.

Councillor F Tinsley agreed it was important to get the process right. He explained that house prices in his electoral division were the lowest in the county and with a lot of stock being built in the early part of the twentieth century, circa 1920s, with many not financially viable in terms of repair and then sale.

He added that given the low house prices, owners which inherit a property may not be able to invest to make it habitable which could give rise to the risk of people simply walking away from their properties.

The Head of Finance and Transactional Services agreed with the points made and explained that the Valuation Office Agency, part of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) was the agency to assess properties and maintain the Council Tax Valuation List.

Councillor F Tinsley noted a case in his area where an inherited property was considered a liability and asked if there was help the Council could offer in such cases, for example a zero-cost transfer to the local authority or housing association.

Councillor L Maddison referred to instances when Members had visited empty properties where there was due to be large scale regeneration it could be difficult and asked what could be done in terms of the Council taking over properties.

Councillor H Smith entered the meeting at 11.12am

The Head of Finance and Transactional Services stated there was a number of issues, with planning and environmental health legislation that could apply in certain circumstances. However, in terms of Council Tax collection there was the usual process of reminder, notice, court, orders and enforcement, but no options in terms of compulsory purchase under that legislation. The Chair noted that particular issue fell outside of the scope of this specific legislation and the policies being looked at.

Councillor J Turnbull asked about a scenario where people 'worked the system' to be able to 'reset the clock', with some people claiming to live in a property part-time, whilst working away from home. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted that if a person did live at another address then the Council would look to pursue the empty property premium if the property was found to be unoccupied.

Councillor J Makepeace asked if the premium would apply to Council owned properties in addition to privately owned properties. The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted that it applied to all domestic properties adding that the only domestic properties the Authority owned were cemetery caretaker's properties, with business properties not being subject to Council Tax.

Councillor O Milburn noted some empty properties had suddenly become 'holiday homes' or had furniture added to look to avoid the premiums and asked what work we undertook to investigate this.

The Head of Finance and Transactional Services noted that there was conditions that must be met to class a home as a holiday let, that there needed to be evidence that the properties were being occupied and that checks would be made, he added that simply advertising a property for let was not sufficient to avoid a premium, there would need to be evidence as regards occupation.

Resolved:

That the content of the report and presentation be noted.

9 Smarter Working

The Board received a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which provided an update on Smarter Working (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Transformation gave a presentation on Smarter Working, with Members having visited the 'Inspire' offices at Crook around 18 months ago. He reminded the Board that while on site Members had raised questions in terms of: what other sites would have works similar to Crook; what work was being undertaken with staff to help the work differently; and what the reasons were behind the changes taking place.

The Head of Transformation noted the wider transformation objectives were: to redesign our services from the outside in, meeting customer needs at a reduced cost to the Council; to help our communities to be resilient and self-reliant; to move our partnerships from good to great; to become renowned for our skilled and flexible workforce and our employee engagement.

He added that the focus on a flexible and skilled workforce would help increase productivity. He reminded Members of the process undertaken by Price Waterhouse Cooper around two and a half years ago, looking at how work could be done differently. Members were referred to a Venn diagram highlighting the areas of overlap of 'Inspiring People'; 'Inspiring Places'; and 'Inspiring Change'. It was explained the common overlap between all three was 'Smarter Working'.

The Head of Transformation noted the key features in terms of 'Inspiring Places' included: developing the smaller, more efficient headquarters in Durham City; redevelopment of Aykley Heads for jobs and investment; relocating staff to the headquarters and other strategic sites; consolidating the Council's property portfolio; reducing desk ratios to a common 7:10 standard; refurbishment works at four strategic sites, Crook, Green Lane, Spectrum 8 and Meadowfield Depot; and smarter working and cultural change by design. The Board noted the use of off-site storage, where appropriate, and record retention to ensure documents that were no longer required were disposed of correctly.

The Head of Transformation noted that in designing spaces there was the need to factor different types of activities, for example having private areas to enable sensitive telephone calls, and this was very important. He gave an update on the ongoing works at the four strategic sites and the timetable in terms of the new headquarters in Durham City.

The Head of Transformation explained that in order to deliver a 'culture of excellence' then simply having new buildings would not necessarily lead to changing and improving ways of working. He noted that accordingly, there needed to be culture change, based on a baseline position being established, a list of actions required to improve and a process of measuring the results to ensure what was being done was working. He added that the action plans that would drive the change were known as Team Agreements.

The Head of Transformation noted that change would also be driven by legislation and would provide opportunities to review business processes to look for improvements. He added that new technology and workspace would also allow, in some cases, the opportunity to go back to 'first principles' when looking at how we could make processes more efficient and effective for our end users. The Board noted the ongoing Business Process Reviews, being undertaken using the lean six sigma approach: define, measure, analyse; improve; control (DMAIC). The Head of Transformation explained as regards digital upskilling which in turn helped to enable mobile and more flexible working, not just through corporate training programmes, but also through needs identified by teams themselves. He added that Human Resources policies would be changed and updated to help support employees in being able to work flexibly and efficiently.

Councillor F Tinsley left the meeting at 11.41am

The Chair thanked the Head of Transformation and noted the 200 'businesses' within the Authority made it complex in terms of transformation. The Head of Transformation noted he would encourage Members to take the opportunity to visit refurbished offices and to speak to staff to get a flavour of the work and changes being undertaken.

He added that how spaces were being utilised for work and meetings were changing, an example being at the Green Lane offices with options being looked at for 'pods' to allow meetings to be quicker and easier. The Chair noted the offer in respect of visiting newly renovated offices.

Councillor H Smith asked what was meant by the term 'value engineering'. The Head of Transformation noted this was a construction term, with a design having an associated cost which could then be made cheaper through different materials or processes being used.

Councillor E Scott noted that Members needed to be mobile and flexible in how they worked and added she was not aware of Members' input into the process and believed they should be offered that opportunity. The Chair noted that as part of broader Overview and Scrutiny training for 2021 such issues would be looked at. The Head of Transformation noted that training could be included, perhaps within the Member Development Programme, on moving to new working environments and utilising new working practises.

Councillor L Maddison asked how we digitally protected lone workers. The Head of Transformation noted a number of options, including a feature available on work mobile phones, and explained that protocols on this would be developed within Team Agreements. Councillor L Maddison asked as regards a situation where a member of staff was ill in transit. The Head of Transformation noted that this was another issue that could be incorporated within Team Agreements, though the normal processes as regards sickness would need to be followed.

Resolved:

That the content of the report and presentation be noted.

10 Notice of Key Decisions

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which provided a list of key decisions that were scheduled to be considered by the Executive (for copy see file of minutes).

The Senior Committee Services Officer, Jackie Graham informed the Board that the following were new to the plan:

- To agree the Draft County Durham Vision
- New Development Merchant Park
- Habitats Regulations Assessment Developer guidance and Requirements in County Durham

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

11 Information Update from the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Board considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which provided an information update of Overview and Scrutiny activity from 21 June 2019 to September 2019 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

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Corporate Overview and Scrutiny

Management Board

22 October 2019



Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 – Annual Review of the Council's use of powers

Report of Helen Lynch Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members about the Council's use of its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ('RIPA') during the period of 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.
2. To inform Members of the changes to the legislation and policy.

Executive Summary

3. The report sets out an overview of the Council's use of its powers under RIPA. This includes details of RIPA authorisations that have been granted during the period of 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 and the outcome of the operations that these authorisations relate to. Additionally, the report details the recent changes in the law regarding investigatory powers and the steps taken to incorporate these changes in to the Council's policies and procedures. These steps include, re-constituted the RIPA Officers Group, training for Officers and a review of the Council's corporate guidance on RIPA.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that Members:
 - a. Receive the annual report on the Council's use of powers under RIPA; and
 - b. Note that RIPA Corporate Guidance has been updated to reflect current legislation and best practice.

The Council's use of RIPA between 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

6. The table below provides details of RIPA authorisations that have been granted by the Council during the period of 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.
7. Authorisations must be approved by Magistrates, who ensure that the correct procedures have been followed and that the relevant factors have been taken into account.

Type of Investigation	Number of authorisations during the period of 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019	
	Directed Surveillance	CHIS
Illicit tobacco products	2	1
Alcohol Test Purchasing	2	NIL
Counterfeit Goods	NIL	1
Benefit Fraud	1	NIL
Total	5	2

The Council's use of its powers under RIPA have decreased from the previous year with 7 RIPA authorisations granted in 2018-2019 compared with 14 in 2017-2018. The reduction in the number of applications is attributed in part to the use of alternative investigative techniques not requiring RIPA authorisation.

8. A direct surveillance relating to possible offences contrary to the Trade Marks Act 1994, Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015 resulted in prosecution. 140 cigarettes and 0.15kg of hand rolling tobacco was seized as part of this operation and during the test purchase 640 cigarettes were supplied. The Defendant pleaded guilty and was subject to a fine of £120.00, costs totalling £400.00 and a £30.00 victim surcharge.
9. A further operation with a linked direct surveillance for the tobacco products resulted in a prosecution for offences contrary to the Trade Marks Act 1994, Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015. A total of 8,800 cigarettes and 9.35kg of hand rolling tobacco was seized. The Defendant pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a 12-month community order, 250-hour unpaid work requirement, costs totalling £500 and a £85 victim surcharge.
10. The investigation into the sale of counterfeit goods, where a CHIS was used to contact via the internet resulted in the offender being issued with a caution for the offence detected.
11. A test purchase operation for the underage sale of alcohol resulted in the premises being required to appear before the Licensing Committee where more stringent conditions were imposed on the licence.
12. These successful outcomes help demonstrate that the use of surveillance powers is proportionate and necessary.

RIPA Officers Group

13. The terms of reference and membership of the RIPA officers group have been reviewed and re-constituted to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and all relevant Council services are represented. The group continue to meet on a quarterly basis with a defined work programme and schedule including the review of the Corporate Guidance, in house practices and training to officers undertaking this work.

Training

14. The Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office, which oversees the use of covert surveillance by designated public authorities, places a high value on training. RIPA training was last held in 2017 and the next round of training for Officers specialising in this area of work is to take place in 2019/2020.

15. There is a planned programme for new training options for all staff, this will consider raising awareness of staff around the use of social media within their work role and new methods of training delivery such as E-learning.

Changes in Legislation and National Practice

16. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) only regulates Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources. The Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA) regulates the acquisition and disclosure of communications data from communication service providers by a number of bodies, including local authorities.

17. RIPA and IPA were introduced to ensure that 'individuals' rights are protected, while also ensuring that law enforcement and security agencies have the powers that they need to do their job effectively.

18. The Investigatory Powers Act 2016 brought in changes in the process to obtain Communication data which were introduced in June 2019. The change has resulted in the authorisation process to rest with the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN). The applications are made online by designated officers within the Council. The application is then submitted to NAFN who seek authorisation from the authorisation officer within the Council. Once authorisation has been ascertained, the application is processed by NAFN. This has reduced the administrative burden and paper trail for the Council officers. It is recognised that the existing arrangements have one authorising officer however this will be increased to three to reflect the current authorisation officers to ensure internal resilience.

19. A new Communications Data Code of Practice has produced and the updated codes have been incorporated into the Corporate Guidance. This includes the changes in the categorisation of communications data is re-categorised as Entity and Events data.

Review of the Councils Corporate Guidance on RIPA

20. The established practice has been to review the Corporate Guidance on RIPA simultaneously with producing this report. The Guidance has been reviewed and updated.
21. The updates to the Corporate Guidance reflect changes in legislation as well as a updates to reflect organisational changes such as the change in post holder titles and service directorates.
22. The updates to the Corporate Guidance also include a revision of the communications data process following changes in the legislation which places the overall oversight with the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN).
23. A section has been included on social media within the Corporate Guidance. This section sets out the use of social media accounts for investigative purposes such as steps to set up the accounts and the use of such accounts for investigation purposes. It also links the use of social media to the to the ICT policies which apply to all staff.
24. The Corporate Guidance will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis to reflect changes in practices, policies and legalisation.

Background Papers

- None

Contact: Kamila Coulson-Patel Tel. 03000 269674

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Council's objective is to make lawful and appropriate use of surveillance techniques where required whilst complying with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and in particular of Article 8 of the ECHR securing respect for an individual's (qualified right) to privacy.

Finance

None.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

Use of investigatory powers potentially engages the Human Rights Act 1998 and in particular the qualified right to private and family life under article 8 of the European Convention. This right may only be interfered with in circumstances where it is necessary and proportionate to do so in pursuit of the public interest. Oversight by the Board of the Council's RIPA operations is designed to facilitate compliance with the Human Rights Act.

Crime and Disorder

The appropriate use of an oversight of RIPA powers will enable the Council to provide evidence to support appropriate prosecutions and tackle crime.

Staffing

With the report it is recognised that there is a need for an education programme for the workforce.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

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**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

22 October 2019



**Report on the Council's use of powers
under the Regulation of Investigatory
Powers Act 2000 - Quarter 1 2019/2020**

Helen Lynch, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To inform members about the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ('RIPA') during the period 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019 (Quarter 1) to ensure that it is being used consistently with the Council's policy and that the policy remains fit for purpose.

Executive summary

- 2 There were no authorisations for Directed Surveillance (DS) or Covert Human Intelligence Surveillance (CHIS) during Quarter 1.
- 3 The Council's Senior Responsible Officer is satisfied that the Council's use of its powers under RIPA during Quarter is consistent with the Council's policy and that the policy remains fit for purpose.

Recommendation

- 4 It is recommended that Members:
 - i. Receive the quarterly report on the Council's use of RIPA for the period 1 April 2019 until 30 June 2019.
 - ii. Resolve that the powers are being used consistently with the Council's policy and that the policy remains fit for purpose.

Background

- 6 As members are aware, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) enables local authorities to carry out certain types of surveillance activity provided that specified procedures are followed.
- 7 Directed Surveillance is covert surveillance that is not intrusive and is carried out in relation to a specific investigation or operation in such a manner as is likely to result in the obtaining of private information about any person (other than by way of an immediate response to events or circumstances such that it is not reasonably practicable to seek authorisation under the 2000 Act).
- 8 The Local Authority is able to rely upon the information obtained from those surveillance activities within court proceedings.
- 9 This report gives details of RIPA applications that have been authorised during the quarter 1 with the outcomes following surveillance.

Quarter 1 Activity

- 10 During Quarter 1 there were no applications for DS or CHIS and the comparison for the number of authorisations for the quarter 1 in 2018/2019 are shown in the table below.

Period	CHIS authorisations	Directed Surveillance authorisations
Q1 2018/2019	1	1
Q1 2019/2020	0	0

Update from Quarter 4

- 11 A surveillance took place in quarter 4 for 2018/2019 which at the time of the last report could not be detailed as the investigation was ongoing. The aim of the surveillance was to obtain evidence to prove whether had been a fraudulent benefit claim. Whilst the surveillance has been concluded the investigation remains ongoing and a prosecution decision has not yet been taken.

Contact: Kamila Coulson-Patel

Tel: 03000 269674

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Council's objective is to make lawful and appropriate use of surveillance techniques where required whilst complying with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and in particular the provisions of Article 8 of the ECHR securing respect for an individual's (qualified) right to privacy. Quarterly oversight by the board helps secure this objective.

Finance

Not applicable.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable.

Climate Change

Not applicable.

Human Rights

Use of investigatory powers potentially engages the Human Rights Act 1998 and in particular the qualified right to private and family life under article 8 of the European Convention. This right may only be interfered with in circumstances where it is necessary and proportionate to do so in pursuit of the public interest. Oversight by the Board of the Council's RIPA operations is designed to facilitate compliance with the Human Rights Act.

Crime and Disorder

The appropriate use of an oversight of RIPA powers will enable the Council to provide evidence to support appropriate prosecutions and tackle crime.

Staffing

Not applicable.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

An individual may complain to Investigatory Powers Tribunal that surveillance has been unlawful and if found to be unlawful could result in financial penalties and reputational damage.

Procurement

Not applicable.

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**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

22 October 2019



**Update on the delivery of the Medium Term
Financial Plan 9**
For Information

Report of Corporate Management Team

Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships

**Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council and all Cabinet
collectively**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report provides an update on the position of the delivery of the 2019/20 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP9).

Executive summary

- 2 This report gives detail of the cumulative MTFP savings since 2011 and confirmation of the savings achieved up to the end of quarter 1 for the MTFP9 period of 2019/20.
- 3 For MTFP9 the council has delivered quarter 1 savings of £7,958,118 which is 77% of the £10,334,712 target.
- 4 In total to date, the Council has delivered almost £232 million in savings since 2011.

Recommendation

- 5 Members are recommended to:
 - (a) note the contents of this report and the amount of savings delivered during quarter 1 of the MTFP9 period.
 - (b) Note progress on MTFP10 proposals.

Background

- 6 Cabinet has received regular updates on the progress made by the Council in delivering the financial targets within the MTFP since 2011/12.
- 7 MTFP9 savings were agreed by Council in February 2019 and set a savings target of just under £10 million for 2019/20. This brings the overall savings target for the period from 2011/12 to 2020/21 to circa £251 million. At the current time there is significant progress towards these savings.

Progress to date

- 8 The delivery of the MTFP has been managed through a robust programme management approach to ensure the Council takes into account:
 - (a) the duties under the Equality Act;
 - (b) appropriate consultation;
 - (c) the HR implications of the change including consultation with employees and trade unions;
 - (d) communication of the change and the consultation results;
 - (e) sound risk management.
- 9 Through this approach the Council is managing the programme to ensure the savings for 2019/20 are successfully delivered.
- 10 Members have been advised of the careful planning and monitoring of the savings which is carried out. On occasions plans need to change which could delay when savings are made, but through the ongoing management of the process we are able to smooth out delivery of savings using cash limits, ensuring we haven't missed our overall savings targets.
- 11 To date, there is no planned use of cash limits in order to achieve the MTFP savings for 2019/20.
- 12 The development of MTFP10 proposals for 2020/21 is currently underway in order to meet the ongoing austerity. Proposals are being financially assessed and the implications on the equal treatment of client groups is being considered through equality impact screenings and assessments. Proposals are on track to be presented to Cabinet in February 2020.

Consultation

- 13 There has not been any public consultation on MTFP (9) proposals in the last quarter.
- 14 Consultation did begin in July 2019 in connection with the review of the High Needs Block Funding for SEND and Inclusion (MTFP10) which was approved by Cabinet on 10 July 2019.

HR Implications

- 15 As only 2 employees have left through voluntary redundancy, early retirement in quarter 1, the number leaving is too low to effectively analyse at this stage.
- 16 The numbers of those leaving through compulsory redundancy are also too low to effectively analyse (zero).
- 17 Since austerity began in 2011, equality data relating to staff leaving through voluntary redundancy, showed that 62% were female and 38% were male. This is in line with the gender balance of employees in the Council as a whole which is typical of unitary Councils.
- 18 In terms of race, 32% of leavers had not disclosed their ethnicity, with 67% stating that they were white British or white English. Regarding disability status 4.1% said they had a disability, 15.7% had no disability and 80.2% did not disclose their disability status.

Equality Impact Assessments

- 19 Equality impact assessments (EIA) form a key part of the ongoing MTFP process. A number of initial screenings for new savings and updated EIAs for ongoing savings were provided to Cabinet ahead of the budget setting decision in February 2019 and will continue for those identified for MTFP10. EIA's are updated regularly throughout the year to take account of consultation responses and additional evidence and progress against the savings; the updates also include information on any mitigating actions.
- 20 Proposals for MTFP 10 are currently under development, however the proposals have been submitted this year without an EIA screening.
- 21 Some services have completed screenings as part of the usual decision-making process, some services have completed these screenings, for example, where provided to Cabinet with a report ahead of consultation or where a further report is received with any final recommendations. The remaining assessments are underway in order to be presented as part of the budget setting process in February 2020.

Project Management Approach

- 22 MTFP savings are monitored and managed through a recognised and robust approach utilising service-based savings targets and associated project plans for their delivery which are reviewed independently to provide assurance that they are realistic and achievable.
- 23 Through the Transformation Programme, a number of efficiencies are becoming Council Wide and non-service specific due to cross cutting nature of both efficiency and income generation. In order to accommodate the additional methods of achieving efficiency savings, the way in which savings are to be monitored for 2020/21 includes an additional element relating to Council Wide initiatives and progress towards their achievement. The process will remain transparent and with regular updates to cabinet on progress.

Conclusion

- 24 We are continuing to plan on the basis that the government's austerity will continue for several more years. The Council remains in a strong position to meet the ongoing financial challenges through an updated and refreshed robust programme management process.
- 25 For MTFP9 the council has delivered quarter 1 savings of £7,958,118 which is 77% of the £10,334,712 target and in total to date, we have delivered almost £232 million in savings since 2011.
- 26 From MTFP10 onwards, monitoring will include an additional element to track progress against Council Wide Transformation based efficiency savings and income targets.

Contact: Andy Palmer

Tel: 03000 268551

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The legal implications of any decisions required are being considered as part of the delivery of the proposals.

Finance

The delivery of the MTFP involves cumulative saving of approximately £251million over the period from 2011 to 2021 of which over £232 million has been delivered to date.

Consultation

A full consultation with a range of stakeholders was undertaken on the MTFP prior to its agreement and again in 2013 and 2018. In addition, where appropriate for individual proposals, internal and external consultation plans are developed so that consultation informs the decision making process.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken for the original 4 year MTFP plan and additional screening is undertaken for proposals which are identified for subsequent MTFPs, together with any other changes made to the original plan. In addition, for each proposal an EIA is undertaken as part of the decision-making before the proposal is implemented.

Human Rights

N/A.

Crime and Disorder

N/A.

Staffing

Where the proposals affect staff, full consultation is undertaken and the trade unions consulted. Wherever possible, staff reductions are done through voluntary means. In addition, there has been a proactive management of vacancies to lessen the impact on staff and the Council has a redeployment process which continues to find alternative employment for a number of staff.

Accommodation

As proposals are planned the impact on accommodation is ascertained, with staff being consulted on any moves as part of the process. The loss of over 2,800 posts from the Authority will mean a requirement for less accommodation and the Office Accommodation Team has built this into the Office Accommodation Strategy.

Risk

The delivery of the MTFP is highlighted as one of the Council's strategic risks and is monitored through the corporate risk management process. In addition, risks for individual proposals are being monitored through the work undertaken to deliver the proposal.

Procurement

A number of the proposals involve the changing of existing contracts and this work is being taken forward through the Council's agreed procurement processes.

Climate Change

N/A.

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

22 October 2019

Welfare Reform and Poverty Issues

Ordinary Decision



Report of Corporate Management Team

Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships

Councillor Angela Surtees, Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To share with Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board a report considered by Cabinet on 19 September 2019 on:
 - (a) the implications of the government's welfare reform programme and the impacts on the county;
 - (b) progress with the council and partners' efforts to address and alleviate poverty; and
 - (c) the development of the poverty action strategy and plan.

Executive summary

- 2 Welfare reform has been a priority for successive governments since 2010. The main changes initially introduced under the Welfare Reform Act 2012 included:
 - (a) the introduction of Universal Credit (UC);
 - (b) the abolition of Council Tax Benefit (CTB) replaced with Local Council Tax Support;
 - (c) changes to Housing Benefit, including the application of a size criterion in social-sector houses (the so-called 'spare room subsidy' or 'bedroom tax');

- (d) the abolition of the Social Fund;
- (e) replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with Personal Independence Payments (PIP);
- (f) the introduction of a cap on the total benefits to which an individual or couple is entitled from out of work benefits;
- (g) a four-year freeze on most working-age benefits and tax credits;
- (h) limiting the amount of time that people can receive contribution-based Employment Support Allowance (ESA);
- (i) the abolition of the 'Youth' provision, which enabled disabled young people to qualify for the benefit without paying National Insurance contributions;
- (j) limiting the amount of the child element of UC paid for third or subsequent children.

3 Since the last update to Cabinet, the main policy developments include:

- (a) a delay to the planned "managed migration" process for UC, which will now start next year rather than this;
- (b) the introduction of a range of measures to offer more support to UC claimants including a revised approach to advances and delays in payment;
- (c) Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funding for Citizens Advice to provide a new 'Help to Claim' service to support vulnerable claimants up until their first full UC payment coinciding with the withdrawal of funding to local authorities for previous support arrangements;
- (d) reversal of the decision to bar 18- to 21-year-olds from receiving housing benefit;
- (e) a move to join-up the assessment processes for PIP, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and UC;
- (f) a lighter touch review programmes for people receiving Personal Independence Payments (PIP) who have reached State Pension age;
- (g) the inclusion of questions on food buying and eating habits in the annual Family Resources Survey;
- (h) the removal of free TV licences for the over 75 year olds;
- (i) access to free sanitary products for all girls attending secondary schools from this year, and primary schools from next;

- (j) a new and revised remit for the Low Pay Commission, with a report and recommendations on tackling low pay anticipated this autumn.
- 4 The government's welfare changes are affecting people in the county however it is difficult to distinguish between changes resulting from welfare reforms and the continuing impact of wider economic trends associated with recession and recovery and Brexit, all of which affect the underlying issues of poverty and wealth.
- 5 Previous reports on welfare reform highlighted the lack of a cumulative impact assessment of the various components of welfare reform at national level and drew from a number of sources to understand the potential impact in the county. This remains the case however, the government has announced that new analysis for poverty based on the work by the Social Metrics Commission will be developed. These experimental statistics will be available in the second half of 2020.
- 6 Since 2010, the council has been monitoring the impact of welfare reform and benefit changes on the residents in the county. Compared with our initial estimate, the overall number of households affected by the transition to Universal Credit has reduced over the last seven years, in part due to increases in employment but also due to delays and changes to the rollout of the welfare reform changes introduced by the government.
- 7 In 2012, we estimated that 109,500 households would be affected by UC; we now estimate that this will be 85,400 households, with the proviso that 63,200 households are still to migrate to UC due to the delay in the rollout programme. There will therefore be an even more significant impact on the numbers of working age families affected, when the 63,200 households migrate across to the new benefit.
- 8 The county experiences higher rates of poverty amongst children and working age people than national averages. The one exception is poverty amongst older people which is around the same level as the country as a whole, in part due to the protection the government has given to pensioners through its welfare changes.
- 9 The council plans and coordinates its work with partners to mitigate poverty. The council has an overarching Poverty Action Steering Group to oversee and co-ordinate its approach and has developed a comprehensive network of statutory, voluntary and community organisations who work together to provide advice services across the county through the Advice in County Durham Partnership. Considerable progress has been made implementing the existing poverty action plan, as outlined in appendix 2.

- 10 The steering group has developed a new poverty action strategy, the vision for which is to *“improve the standard of living and daily lives of those residents in County Durham who are currently experiencing poverty; and to help alleviate issues that can lead households on low incomes to experience poverty”*.
- 11 To achieve the best possible outcomes for residents experiencing poverty, the strategic aims of the strategy are:
 - (a) to improve our understanding of the types of poverty and its impacts on County Durham residents;
 - (b) to increase employability, personal wellbeing and sense of worth for residents;
 - (c) that residents receive the best support and advice available concerning their financial situation; and
 - (d) that children, young people and families have the resources to meet their basic needs including accessing opportunities to take part in society.
- 12 To realise the strategy, the poverty action plan has been reviewed and revised in order to improve and develop service provision and assistance to people in need. The revised action plan is attached as appendix 3.
- 13 Financial pressures on lower-income households have increased considerably in recent years. A combination of depressed real wage growth, the government’s programme of welfare reforms, and longer term challenges in the labour market are creating serious financial problems.
- 14 The economic uncertainty caused by Brexit and anticipated impacts on employment and prices, together with the impending migration of significant numbers of households onto UC, means that hard-pressed individuals and communities in the county are likely to be particularly vulnerable while the country adjusts to life outside of the European Union.
- 15 The council will therefore continue to work closely with partners to anticipate and manage impacts and support individuals and communities vulnerable to poverty in the county.

Recommendation(s)

- 16 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is recommended to:
- (a) note the progress being made by the council and its partners in addressing welfare reform and the wider poverty issues in the county, including the updated Poverty Action Strategy and Poverty Action Plan included in the report.

Background

- 17 On 13 September 2017, Cabinet considered the most recent report on the implications for the government's welfare reform programme and the progress being made by the council and its partners in addressing welfare reform and the wider poverty issues in the county.
- 18 This report provides an aide-memoire on the raft of changes introduced by government to reduce spending on welfare and an update on recent policy announcements and changes. It focuses in particular on the most recent welfare, economic and poverty indicators for the county and the council's response to date including the review of the council's Poverty Action Plan, and a revised approach to addressing poverty in County Durham building on the achievements and learning to date.
- 19 The financial pressures on lower-income households have increased considerably in recent years. A combination of depressed real wage growth, the government's programme of welfare reforms, and longer term challenges in the labour market is creating serious financial problems.
- 20 The government's flagship Universal Credit (UC) was supposed to be up and running by April 2017, but is now not expected to be fully operational until December 2023, however full plans for the next stage of UC rollout, including managed migration (transferring those residents still claiming legacy benefits to UC) have yet to be announced by the government, and the full impacts are yet to be seen by our residents.
- 21 In November 2017, the Local Government Association commissioned the Learning and Work Institute and Policy in Practice to review the cumulative impact of welfare reform on people, communities and services. It concluded that "the average working-age household will be on average £40.52 per week worse off by 2020 as a result of welfare reform, while a total of 2.14 million working-age households, more than half of which are in work will be facing losses of over £50 per week".
https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/The-cumulative-impacts-of-welfare-reform-a-national-picture_full-report.pdf
- 22 However, the resources available to councils to help address the financial problems of low-income residents are now severely constrained. Local councils face a £5.8 billion funding gap in the next two years (<https://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-finance-settlement-2018>).

- 23 On 10 July 2019, Cabinet considered an update report on its Medium Term Financial Planning forecasts. In that report it was highlighted that local government continues to operate in a period of significant financial uncertainty brought about by a combination of on-going austerity, significant budget pressures in social care and special educational needs and disability services and other unfunded pressures arising from demographic and pay and price inflation.
- 24 The financial outlook for the council is forecast to continue to be extremely challenging for the foreseeable future.
- 25 There continues to be significant uncertainty in terms the financial settlements for local government in the future and how available funding will be shared between local authorities. The government was expected to publish a Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in summer 2019 covering a three year period however this has been delayed and we will only receive a one year settlement for 2020/21.
- 26 The delay in the CSR is driven by lack of clarity on the outcome of Brexit and the views of the new prime minister. It was also expected that the outcome of the Fair Funding Review (FFR) including the move to 75 percent Business Rate Retention would be published during 2019. In line with the delay in the CSR the outcome of the FFR will not now be published until 2020.
- 27 The lack of clarity in relation to the CSR and FFR, are exacerbated by uncertainties in relation to future council tax referendum levels, the Improved Better Care Fund, delays in the publication of the Social Care Green Paper, short term funding provided to local authorities in 2019/20 for adult and children social care pressures and funding for the High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant. This level of uncertainty is making financial planning extremely difficult and requires the council to be flexible and adaptable in its financial planning.
- 28 The strong financial position of the council will ensure that the council is well placed to react effectively to any outcome, however planning with this level of uncertainty is not conducive to effective long term decision making.
- 29 Our financial planning at this stage assumes that the council will lose a further £10 million of government funding over a five year transition period as a result of the FFR implementation in 2021/22. This position primarily reflects ongoing concerns regarding the expected utilisation of the Advisory Council for Resource Allocation (ACRA) methodology for apportioning Public Health Grant which would result in a loss of £18 million of funding. It has been assumed, that the £4.8 million of one off funding received in 2019/20 for Adult and Children's social care pressures will continue on a recurrent basis.

- 30 The MTFP forecasts reported to Cabinet in July showed savings of £34.2 million were required to balance the budget over the 2020/21 to 2023/24 period. Despite the funding constraints that we face, we remain committed to providing help and support for residents in financial difficulty as part of our vision for County Durham. It is important that the council and its partners continue to respond through the comprehensive approach we now have to welfare reform and poverty issues, overseen by the council's Poverty Action Steering Group (PASG).

Changes to welfare

- 31 Since 2010, welfare reform has been a major theme of government policy and a raft of changes to reduce government spending on welfare have been introduced. The changes, which are intended to encourage people to support themselves through work rather than welfare, have seen people affected by reductions in benefit entitlements as well as the amount of benefit people may receive. People of pension age continue to be protected from many of the wider reform changes.
- 32 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 consolidated a raft of changes intended to reduce government spending on welfare by £18 billion by 2015 (and summer budget statement in July 2015 committed to reduce welfare spending by a further £12 billion by 2018) by encouraging people to support themselves through work rather than welfare.
- 33 The main changes already introduced include:
- (a) the introduction of Universal Credit (UC), a single benefit to be paid on a monthly basis, to replace Income Support, income-based Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA), income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credit, and Working Tax Credit. The effective date for the introduction of Universal Credit in Durham for new claimants was 21 September 2015;
 - (b) the abolition of Council Tax Benefit (CTB) which was administered by local authorities on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The Act replaced centralised support for CTB with local Council Tax support with effect from 1 April 2013, with funding from un-ringfenced grants paid directly to local authorities. Government funding was reduced by 10 percent before being devolved to local authorities to implement locally;
 - (c) changes to Housing Benefit, including the application of a size criterion in social-sector houses, with any working-age household deemed to be under-occupying their home having part of their Housing Benefit removed (the so-called 'spare room subsidy' or 'bedroom tax') and abolishing automatic entitlement for housing benefit for 18-21 year olds (this was reversed in 2018);

- (d) the abolition of the Social Fund with effect from 31 March 2013, which used to fund 'last resort' benefits such as crisis loans, and its replacement with a 'one off' non-ring fenced welfare assistance grant paid to local authorities to fund local schemes;
- (e) replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for all working-age claimants with a new Personal Independence Payment (PIP);
- (f) the introduction of a cap on the total benefits to which an individual or couple is entitled from out of work benefits. The cap was introduced in April 2013, and set at £26,000 a year (a maximum of £500 per week) for lone parents and couples with or without children, and around £18,000 a year (a maximum of £350 per week) for single people without children or whose children for whom they have responsibility do not live with them. These amounts were reduced to £20,000 and £13,400 in November 2016;
- (g) the 2015 Budget introduced a four-year freeze on most working-age benefits and tax credits. This meant that in 2016 and onwards their value remained as it had been in 2015 rather than rising with inflation;
- (h) limiting the amount of time that people can receive contribution-based Employment Support Allowance (ESA) to 365 days for those claimants in a work-related activity group or in the assessment phase;
- (i) the abolition of the 'Youth' provision, which enabled disabled young people to qualify for the benefit without paying National Insurance contributions;
- (j) limiting the amount of the child element of UC paid for third or subsequent children born on or after 6 April 2017 (there is provisions for exceptional circumstances like "multiple births").

Policy update

34 The government has continued with its policy of welfare reform and has made further welfare and benefits policy announcements since the last report to Cabinet in September 2017. Key headlines include:

- (a) the planned "managed migration" process for UC is now due to start in 2020 rather than 2019, following the Government's announcement that it plans to first run an initial pilot with 10,000 claimants this year. Benefit claimants in Harrogate who still receive old style benefits will be the first people moved onto UC under this pilot;

- (b) the introduction of a range of measures to support UC claimants including:
 - (i) revising the approach to advances;
 - (ii) removing the seven waiting days;
 - (iii) providing an additional transitional payment of two weeks of Housing Benefit;
 - (iv) changing how claimants in temporary accommodation receive support for their housing costs;
 - (v) the maximum rate at which deductions can be made from a Universal Credit award from 40 percent to 30 percent of the standard allowance, with the period over which these recoveries are made extended from 12 to 16 months in October 2021;
 - (vi) payment of Income Support and the income related elements of Employment and Support Allowance and Jobseeker's Allowance will continue for two weeks after a claim for Universal Credit has been made, effective from July 2020;
 - (vii) from April 2019, there will be a £1,000 increase in work allowances;
 - (viii) working parents on UC can have up to 85 percent of their childcare costs reimbursed with additional flexibility on support for up front childcare costs.
- (c) Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) now fund Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland to provide a new 'Help to Claim' service from 1 April 2019 to support vulnerable claimants in making a claim to UC - up to their first full UC payment. Funding previously provided to local authorities for local support was withdrawn in April 2019 to coincide with these new arrangements;
- (d) the government has reversed its year-old decision to bar 18- to 21-year-olds from receiving housing benefit and announced that all people in this age group would qualify for the housing element of Universal Credit;
- (e) from 2021 the DWP will combine the separate assessment processes for PIP, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and UC into one integrated service;

- (f) people receiving Personal Independence Payment (PIP) who have reached State Pension age will no longer have their awards regularly reviewed, instead moving to a light touch review every 10 years; and
- (g) the DWP will add 10 questions about food buying and eating habits to its annual Family Resources Survey, which will be sent to 20,000 UK households in April. The data will be reported publicly in March 2021;
- (h) the BBC will remove free TV licences for the over 75 year olds;
- (i) access to free sanitary products for all girls attending secondary schools from September 2019 and primary schools from 2020
- (j) Low Pay Commission to receive a new remit beyond 2020, with the ultimate objective to end low pay in the UK. The government will engage with employers, TUC and the commission to gather evidence and listen to views with report and recommendations to be made by October 2019.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

- 35 Homelessness legislation introduced in 1977 gave households in 'priority need' a right to statutory assistance and an offer of settled accommodation, but in doing so excluded most single homeless people.
- 36 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (the Act) came into force on 3 April 2018. It places new legal duties on English Local Authorities and some public bodies, with a focus on preventing homelessness. In a significant change, anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will be able to access support, regardless of their priority need status.
- 37 The key measures in the Act are:
 - (a) an extension of the period 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days;
 - (b) a new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need;
 - (c) a new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need; and
 - (d) a new 'duty to refer' - public services will need to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

- 38 There are no specific duties on housing associations and the Act requires local authorities to develop homelessness strategies based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district and outlining how local partners will work together.

Rough sleeping strategy

- 39 On 13 August 2018, the government published a policy paper laying out the government's plans to help people who are sleeping rough now and to put in place the structures to end rough sleeping by 2027. The rough sleeping strategy takes a three-pronged approach to ending rough sleeping through prevention, intervention, and recovery.
- 40 The government committed to updating the Rough Sleeping Strategy annually, as well as developing a new separate strategy to tackle homelessness in its wider forms.

Increases to social housing rents

- 41 On 4 October 2017, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) announced that "increases to social housing rents will be limited to CPI plus one percent for 5 years from 2020." Consultation on a new rent direction took place between September and November 2018. The response to the consultation was published on 26 February 2019 – the government confirmed the October 2017 announcement.

Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES)

- 42 On 10 December 2018 the DWP announced a new employment support programme to start in 2019 for people living with a disability who are unlikely to move into work within the next year or longer and may need additional support. The Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES) programme will provide highly personalised packages of employment support for people who are at least a year away from moving into work. The support comes from a new £40 million fund and is expected to benefit 10,000 people.
- 43 People on the scheme will get a dedicated key worker who will work with them to overcome complex barriers which may be preventing them from entering work, ensuring they have a personal support network in place. It is thought that the programme is aimed at jobseekers who need more intensive support than is offered through the Work and Health Programme but who would not be eligible for the current Supported Employment Proof of Concept.

- 44 The voluntary scheme will be rolled out across England and Wales in 2019, and applicants will receive support for up to 21 months, including six months of in-work support for those who get a job.

Brexit

- 45 Following the outcome of the European Union membership referendum in 2016, the country is heading towards exiting the European Union. Since 2017 when the government triggered the Article 50 process, the government and parliament have been consumed with what approach to take to managing and negotiating the exit process.
- 46 The immediate impact of this has been parliamentary and policy preoccupation with Brexit, which has overshadowed consideration of other policy issues including welfare reform.
- 47 In addition, the economic uncertainty caused by the referendum outcome and lack of progress in agreeing the terms of the UK's exit from the Union have impacted on the economy.
- 48 Depending on the outcome of the Brexit process, it is probable that the county will experience wider impacts during the transition period, as businesses adjust and the government negotiates new trade agreements and economic accords outside of the EU framework.
- 49 A number of studies have suggested that the North East including the county is one of the most vulnerable parts of the country to Brexit, likely to experience detrimental impacts before the economy adjusts and recovers. In part this is due to the strength and competitiveness of the regional economy as is, and its reliance on sectors and employment likely to be most affected by Brexit.
- 50 In addition, concern has been expressed about the impact of suppressed growth, devaluation and potential price rises on individuals and communities already experiencing economic hardship.
- 51 Government contingency planning has primarily focussed on contingency planning for a 'no deal' Brexit and how to manage and respond to the immediate impacts when the country leaves the EU.
- 52 As part of this, the council and its partners have been assessing local risks and developing contingency plans, which have included consideration of how we can support vulnerable individuals who may be more affected by price and cost increases and supply issues.

- 53 While the government is tending to focus on immediate contingency planning, the council and its partners are also taking a longer term focus, conscious that hard-pressed communities and individuals in the county may experience detrimental impacts over a longer period of time. This has been taken into account in the development of the poverty action strategy and action plan outlined below.
- 54 With the change in leadership of the government and the formation of a new Cabinet, this is a very fluid situation. While the new Prime Minister has asserted his commitment to exiting the EU with or without a deal on 31 October 2019, it remains to be seen how the EU responds and also whether there are any moves in parliament to take a different approach.
- 55 Although the situation is very uncertain, the council and its partners are planning as best they can.

Impacts on the county

- 56 The government's welfare changes are affecting people in the County however it is difficult to distinguish between changes resulting from welfare reforms and the continuing impact of wider economic trends associated with recession and recovery, all of which affect the underlying issues of poverty and wealth.
- 57 Previous reports on welfare reform highlighted the lack of a cumulative impact assessment of the various components of welfare reform at national level and drew from a number of sources to understand the potential impact in the county.
- 58 In May 2019, the government announced that new analysis for poverty based on the work by the Social Metrics Commission will be developed and improved further to increase the value of statistics to the public.
- 59 DWP will publish these experimental statistics in the second half of 2020 after and in addition to the government's annual official Households Below Average Income (HBAI) publication. The HBAI figures are based on households' incomes and will continue to be the main measure of poverty in the UK whilst these experimental statistics are developed.

Welfare impacts

- 60 Since the Welfare Reform Act was introduced in 2012, the council has been monitoring the anticipated impacts on residents and the local economy. Our latest assessment is attached as appendix 2. Our principal conclusions are as follows:

Universal credit

- 61 Compared with our initial estimate, the overall number of households affected by the transition to Universal Credit has reduced over the last seven years, in part due to increases in employment but also due to the rollout of welfare reform changes introduced by the government. Initially we estimated that almost half all households in County Durham could be affected by the transition to UC. Our latest estimate, largely based on 2018 data, shows this estimate has fallen by over a fifth to around 83,900 claimants – principally because of the delayed rollout to UC, increases in employment and a reduction in the number of families claiming in-work benefits (Tax Credits).

Impact of uprating caps and freezes since 2010

- 62 Since 2010, successive government budgets have implemented various uprating caps and benefit freezes, which have had the effect of restricting increases in many benefits. Trends show that many DWP benefits and Tax Credits paid to working age families have not kept pace with long term inflation and earnings increases.
- 63 In March 2019, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported in its briefing “end the benefit freeze to stop people being swept into poverty” that after three years of the freeze, “people in poverty are on average £340 a year worse off than they would have been had this support not been eroded by the freeze” and if the freeze does not end until April 2020 (as currently planned), people living in poverty will be on average £560 worse off, equivalent to around three months of food shopping for an average low-income family.

Employment Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefit (ESA/IB)

- 64 In February 2014 the number of County Durham residents claiming ESA/IB¹ fell to 25,700 claimants, the lowest number claiming sickness related benefits since comparable records began. The number of claimants then increased to 28,300 in November 2015 but fell back to 24,700 claimants in May 2018 (the most recent data). This might indicate people returning to sickness-related benefits in due course after being moved onto ESA following their work capability assessment.

Housing Benefit

- 65 The number of working age HB claims in County Durham has not varied greatly since 2011.

¹ DWP Benefits, Working age client group – ESA/IB/Income Support, accessed via www.nomisweb.co.uk

- 66 While the number of claimants has fallen to 25,600 by October 2017 from a recession peak of over 30,000, it should be noted that anecdotally, social landlords are now starting to report an increase in rent arrears for those tenants who are claiming UC compared to before.

Other Welfare Reform Changes

Personal Independence Payments/Disability Living Allowance

- 67 Just before Personal independence Payments (PIP) were rolled out in 2013 there were around 23,100 people on Disability Living Allowance (DLA) aged 16-64. Since then, this number has fallen, but not by as much as PIP has increased. The DLA caseload fell by over 7,200 with the corresponding PIP figure rising to 14,700, (November 2016). However, the latest data shows 25,900 people are now claiming PIP (July 2018).

Spare Room Subsidy

- 68 The total number of tenants under occupying as at April 2013 was 8,001. Over the years, this has decreased significantly to 5,971 in April 2018, a reduction over five years of 2,030 households. As at April 2018, the number of under-occupiers (5,971) has reduced by 505 since April 2017.

Benefit cap

- 69 The government's latest reductions to the Benefit Cap were announced in November 2016. Initial indications from DWP were that approximately 620 families may be affected in the county. The reduced cap came into effect in January 2017 and as of July 2017, there were 424 active claims in the county with a cap applied. The average amount benefits were capped by was £37.62.

Economic trends

Gross Disposable Income and Earnings

- 70 Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head of population in County Durham stood at £15,445 in 2017 – 79.1 percent of the UK average of £19,514. GDHI has grown in the county by 13.5 percent since 2011, almost the same rate as for the North East region (13.6 percent) but at a slower growth rate than the UK (17.8 percent growth).

Earnings from Employment²

- 71 The average full-time weekly wage for County Durham residents in 2018 was £503. This was slightly lower than the regional average (£507), but much lower than the national average which stood at £575.

² Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Median Wage

- 72 The average part-time weekly wage for County Durham residents in 2018 was £194, slightly higher than regional average (£187) and higher than the national average of £188.
- 73 Local part time wages have increased by 28.9 percent since 2011, higher than the North East region at 25.4 percent growth and higher than the UK increase at 22.4 percent.
- 74 Further information can be found in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earning factsheet on www.durhaminsight.info

Poverty trends

- 75 In the North East one in four children (25 percent) live in a household in relative poverty, i.e. with a weekly household income of £304 per week or less. This is five percentage points higher than the national average at 20 percent. If housing costs are considered, the proportion rises to more than one in three: 35 percent, which is four percentage points higher than the national average of 30 percent.
- 76 In the region, just under a fifth of working age people (18 percent) live in a household in relative poverty, higher than the national average of 15 percent. If housing costs are taken into account, the proportion rises to around one in four, or 23 percent, which again is higher than the national average of 21 percent.
- 77 In the North East just under a sixth of pensioners, or 16 percent live in a household in relative poverty compared with the national average of 17 percent. Taking into account housing costs, the proportion decreases to 15 percent compared with 16 percent nationally.
- 78 In 2018, new Minimum Income Standard (MIS) research³ took an alternative approach to measuring poverty and has recalculated from scratch the minimum budgets for pensioner and working-age households without children, while reviewing the budgets set in 2016 for families with children.
- 79 MIS is based on the items that members of the public think UK households need to be able to afford in order to meet material needs such as food, clothing and shelter, as well as to have the opportunities and choices required to participate in society.

³ Joseph Rowntree Foundation 'A Minimum Income Standard for the UK in 2018'.
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/minimum-income-standard-uk-2018>

- 80 The main finding is that benefit levels and incomes available to lower-earning working households have not kept up with rising costs, and these barriers are preventing people from reaching a decent standard of living. In 2018, benefits provide only a third of what working-age adults without children need, down from 42 percent in 2008.

Employment trends

- 81 Overall, the employment rate has been improving steadily in County Durham but remains significantly below national levels. However, latest data show just under three in four of the 16-64 population are in employment in County Durham (74.2 percent) compared to just over three-quarters nationally (75.5 percent).
- 82 Employment rates vary considerably between different population groups and further information can be found in the Employment Factsheet on www.durhaminsight.info.

Unemployment trends⁴

- 83 Unemployment levels have improved over the last three years. Latest data⁵ show 10,500 people were unemployed in the period between April 2018 to March 2019. This is equivalent to 4.2 percent of the 16-64 population, lower than the regional rate of 5.8 percent and the same as the national rate of 4.2 percent. It should also be noted that unemployment is now lower than pre-recession levels (which averaged around 5.4 percent between 2004 and 2007). Further information can be found in the Economic Inactivity Factsheet on www.durhaminsight.info.

Economic inactivity

- 84 Since 2004, levels of economic inactivity have been greater in County Durham than in England and Wales, with a slight downward trend over this period. Economically inactive people are defined as being outside of the labour market, as they are either not actively seeking work or are not currently available for work. This could be for a variety of reasons, commonly including being a full-time student, retired from work (but not yet reached state pension age), looking after a family and being unable to work because of sickness or disability.

⁴ ONS Employment Rate aged 16-64, Annual Population Survey extracted from NOMIS, for the latest period April 2018 to March 2019. The unemployment rate differs in its calculation from Employment rate as the denominator used is the economically active population rather than the 16-64 population.

⁵ ONS, Annual Population Survey extracted from NOMIS, for the latest period April 2018 to March 2019

Zero hours contracts

- 85 The latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) for zero hours contracts covers the period April to June 2018 with comparison data from the previous year⁶. During this period 2.2 percent of people in employment in the North East were on 'zero hour' contracts totalling 26,300 contracts - a fall from 3.7 percent (44,600 contracts) from the previous year.
- 86 This data gives the North East the second lowest rate out of all English regions in April to June 2018 and is lower than the England rate of 2.5 percent (671,400 contracts) and the UK rate of 2.4 percent (779,600 contracts). However, nationally the percentage and number has fallen from 2.8 percent (757,800 contracts) in England and 2.8 percent (883,500 contracts) in the UK in the period April to June 2017.

Wider poverty and social impacts

Shoplifting

- 87 It is difficult to identify whether there is a link between trends in shoplifting and rollout of Universal Credit without DWP data. However, working with Durham Constabulary, we have examined localised crime data in relation to shoplifting, compared with the phased roll out of Universal Credit and concluded that although there were increases within a number of areas coinciding with the roll out of UC, in the main they were either not significant or after initial increases, returned to normal levels of variance. Two areas demonstrated significantly higher levels of shoplifting compared with previous years and continuing increasing trends as opposed to initial spikes: Crook and Spennymoor.

Foodbanks

- 88 The Durham Foodbank report they have provided enough food to feed 16,004 people (10,432 adults and 5,572 children) in the 10 month period to 31 January 2019. Based on the average use of the foodbank being 1.6 times, this would give a total of 10,000 unique individuals receiving food parcels in the first 10 months on this year. This is a 10 percent increase year on year.
- 89 The FEED project which operates in East Durham has distributed 1,375 food parcels in the 10 month period to 31 January 2019, which is a 44 percent increase year on year.

6 ONS - People in employment on a zero-hours contract:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/emp17peopleinemploymentonzerohourscontracts>

Public Health funerals

- 90 Under the National Assistance Act 1948 and the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act of the same year, the council has a duty to dispose of a deceased body, if the person who died has no assets or if there are no relatives who can make funeral arrangements.
- 91 Since the roll out of Universal Credit in 2017 and 2018 the number of unrecovered public health funerals has remained relatively static, compared with previous years. However, because the numbers are so low, it is not possible to draw any correlation between the incidence of such funerals and the introduction of UC.

The council's response

- 92 The council is in the front-line of responding to these challenges through the services we provide and our network of Area Actions Partnerships (AAPs) supporting local action. Working with our partners, we are at the heart of our local areas and interact with residents lives on a daily basis and are committed to achieving greater social mobility, fairness and community cohesion.
- 93 We have a direct financial relationship with our residents: collecting council tax payments, administering benefits and other discretionary payments. This provides us with an opportunity to identify households in financial difficulty and provide them with support and to manage the nature of that relationship in a way that supports financial inclusion.
- 94 The council has taken a lead through a strategic and co-ordinated approach to the changes made to the welfare system and the impacts of poverty to date, including how the funding available from government has been used to support people affected by the changes. This has identified the benefit of joining services across service groupings. In doing so, it has become apparent that alongside the welfare reform changes there are areas of work already being delivered which are complementary and collectively address the underlying issues around the county.
- 95 To provide clear political stewardship for this work, the council has also created a specific Cabinet portfolio for social inclusion which includes responsibility for welfare reform and impact.
- 96 The council's response to the welfare changes has been shared widely with the County Durham Partnership and has involved working closely with many key partners.

- 97 The council's PASG co-ordinates the delivery of a range of new and existing policy work which seeks to achieve a much broader understanding of the issues affecting residents, resulting from continuing changes to welfare and other issues which mean that residents can experience poverty. Building on this understanding, the group will seek to identify actions to support residents and help address identified inequalities.
- 98 The council has a number of key policies such as the Discretionary Housing Payments Policy, Welfare Assistance Scheme and Residential and Non-residential charging policies, which are approved by Cabinet. In the review of the council's Constitution in January 2019, Cabinet agreed that the Corporate Director of Resources will now have delegated authority to make minor changes to these policies in consultation with the relevant portfolio holders, removing the requirement for Cabinet approval.
- 99 There is a comprehensive network of statutory, voluntary and community organisations who work together to provide advice services across the county through the Advice in County Durham Partnership. This is underpinned by comprehensive communications programme to ensure that claimants understand changes and are signposted to the most appropriate sources of advice, help and support, and council employees, particularly those in customer-facing roles, receive regular information and training to help them understand the changes to welfare and poverty issues and how the council and partners can help.
- 100 The council has commissioned Policy in Practice (PinP), a software and consulting company with a social focus to analyse the data held by the council and other partners which will allow for the targeting of take up to be directed at our most vulnerable residents who are either in crisis or at risk of being in crisis. The aim is to make the welfare system simpler to understand and importantly to identify past, current and future impacts on individual households. This will then assist in the planning for future service requirements and have application aligned to the Poverty Action Plan.
- 101 In addition, as a matter of course when the council considers policy changes or service restructurings, it undertakes thorough impact assessments to understand the effect of proposed changes and to identify what could be done to mitigate any detrimental effects on disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups, where possible.
- 102 This is particularly important as the recession and public spending reductions have disproportionately affected northern and poorer areas such as the county, which have lower levels of economic growth, higher rates of benefit dependency and disproportionately higher levels of public sector employment.

- 103 Reductions in welfare support, at a time when public sector employment is falling and private sector growth has yet to create sufficient numbers of replacement jobs, present the county and local partners with a significant and major challenge.
- 104 The council has worked closely with many key partners since 2011 to help County Durham residents cope with the changes to welfare and issues relating to poverty. In recognition of the wider impact of the changes on the county, the scope of the PASG was broadened in 2015 to take a more comprehensive overview of the poverty issues, and the council's first Poverty Action Plan was approved by Cabinet in October 2015.

Poverty Action Plan

- 105 The action plan aimed to “*work together to reduce and prevent poverty as far as possible across County Durham*” and Members agreed that the council should work with partners to focus on the following themes:
- (a) Attitudes to poverty and raising its profile;
 - (b) Focus on child poverty;
 - (c) Credit and debt;
 - (d) Further welfare reform and benefit changes; and
 - (e) Work and personal wellbeing and sense of worth.
- 106 New sub-groups of the Poverty Action Steering Group, such as the ‘Child Poverty Working Group’ and ‘Universal Credit Working Group’ etc., were established to deliver some of the actions where necessary, although a lot of the activity and initiatives were delivered through mainstream service budgets and existing resources and organisations. Working with our partners across the public, private and third sector was key to underpinning our approach.
- 107 To help deliver actions, where possible, additional discretionary funds such as prior years’ underspend from the council’s Welfare Assistance Scheme budget have also been made available, for example:
- (a) £120,000 to Managing Money Better project;
 - (b) £1 million to employment initiatives scheme;
 - (c) £840,000 to AAP projects and initiatives helping with welfare and/or poverty;
 - (d) £100,000 to the Durham Foodbank;
 - (e) £64,000 to the Wheels to Work Scheme; and

- (f) £5,400 to East Durham Trust Feed project.
- 108 Delivery of the actions was monitored by the council's PASG and progress and achievements were regularly reported to Cabinet and partners.
- 109 Appendix 3 provides a summary of progress against the five themes in the action plan, the highlights of which include:
- (a) a comprehensive internal and external communications programme including the training of front-line customer-facing staff;
 - (b) 50 organisations and over 400 delegates engaged through a programme of poverty and welfare conferences;
 - (c) the establishment of the Advice In County Durham (AiCD) partnership, bringing 180 organisations/advisors together with advice and assistance provided to over 11,500 people to date;
 - (d) the council's Welfare Rights service and Citizens Advice County Durham have assisted claimants to secure over £25.66 million of benefits claims in 2018/19;
 - (e) over 80 welfare and poverty related projects delivered through the council's AAPs, supporting over 21,000 beneficiaries. The £840,000 provided by the council to of support to this work has attracted £1.38 million in match funding;
 - (f) the introduction of a triage process by Housing Welfare Reform Group to help tenants affected by the under-occupancy charge;
 - (g) initiatives to address child poverty including 'cutting the costs of the school day, promotion of Free School meals take-up and the introduction of 'holiday hunger' schemes
 - (h) the council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme, its Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) policy and Welfare Assistance Scheme which have had a positive impact on preventing people falling into rent arrears and being at risk of eviction and helping those that fall into financial crisis;
 - (i) the County Durham Energy and Fuel Poverty Partnership which since 2013 has assisted over 9,100 residents with over £13.4 million worth of energy saving solutions.
 - (j) the Durham Savers project which raises the profile of credit unions as an alternative to loan sharks and payday lenders

- (k) collaboration with foodbanks in the county including financial support to Durham Foodbank and the FEED project;
- (l) work to improve employability and employment opportunities as a route to economic independence.

Review

- 110 A review of the Poverty Action Plan was undertaken by the PASG earlier this year which included attendees from across council services attending a practical workshop. The workshop was facilitated by our Partnerships and Community Engagement team and looked back on what we have delivered and achieved so far and identified new/revised practical interventions that would mitigate or prevent the impacts of poverty and help shape the revised action plan.
- 111 There were a significant number of examples of good practice mentioned by attendees, particularly those which highlighted joint working across council services such as the targeted work in preparation for the introduction of the spare room subsidy by the Housing Solutions and Revenues and Benefits teams, and, the provision of free healthy snacks and free holiday activities during the 2018 summer holiday period by teams in the council's One Point service, Culture and Sport and Direct Services.
- 112 Attendees recognised the importance of working with our partners and examples of good practice noted included: support to, and promotion of Credit Unions as a safer and more cost-effective alternative to payday lenders; the 'Routes out of Poverty' sessions which promote awareness of council and partners' service provision to frontline staff and volunteers; and the UC working group which saw partners from council services, DWP, Citizens Advice Bureau and the voluntary and community sector work together to ensure that those residents affected by the roll out of UC in County Durham received sufficient levels of advice, support and guidance. Our approach to the rollout of UC has been recognised by DWP as an exemplar model of best practice.
- 113 Attendees also highlighted the positive impacts we had seen by using intelligence more effectively and combining data to better target people and intervene before people get into crisis, for example: the council's Welfare Assistance Scheme and Discretionary Housing Payments; the council's benefits take-up campaign; and Employment Initiatives etc.
- 114 Some attendees identified some positive impacts seen as a result of changes to welfare which they described as including increased community spirit and increased volunteering opportunities. However there was also recognition that UC has still yet to be fully rolled out for a large number of the population and therefore impacts will inevitably get worse.

- 115 Through group discussions it was apparent that many actions have been adopted as permanent ways of working i.e. 'business as usual' as they complement and help collectively address the underlying issues around the county, such as the council's work on financial inclusion, fuel poverty and child poverty etc. Gaps in current service provision, projects and initiatives were also highlighted and new priorities and actions were identified and discussed.
- 116 The importance of utilising data to proactively identify groups that have been affected by welfare reforms, or are experiencing poverty related issues to provide immediate assistance was noted, however it was agreed that more robust data collection and evaluation needs to be done to inform more proactive, preventative approaches which may be more cost-effective than dealing with residents at crisis point.
- 117 The review concluded that responding to welfare reforms and the impacts of poverty cannot be responded to cost effectively by a single service. We therefore need to strengthen our systems, to further coordinate and join up services and partners to support residents and make it everyone's business to respond to poverty and the risk to financial exclusion and homelessness.

Poverty Action Strategy

- 118 Clearly, many of the drivers of poverty - such as the strength of the economy, employment, wage rates and inflation - are beyond the council's control, so we have developed a poverty action strategy to help us mitigate the effects and make some of the impacts less severe, where possible. The strategy aims to provide focus and direction on the priorities for improving services and opportunities for residents in County Durham who are experiencing poverty and will cover a two-year period up to 2021.
- 119 We want to do more than just support residents to claim benefits and pay their rent. We want to improve our evidence and analysis to make it everyone's business to support residents and mitigate the impacts of welfare reforms and poverty. We aspire to develop a compassionate coherent culture that seeks to maximise the value of our collective resources and appreciates the obstacles that internal and external silos create to supporting vulnerable residents.
- 120 Our vision is to *"improve the standard of living and daily lives of those residents in County Durham who are currently experiencing poverty; and to help alleviate issues that can lead households on low incomes to experience poverty"*. To achieve the best possible outcomes for residents experiencing poverty, our strategic aims are:

- (a) to improve our understanding of the types of poverty and its impacts on County Durham residents;
- (b) to increase employability, personal wellbeing and sense of worth for residents;
- (c) that residents receive the best support and advice available concerning their financial situation; and
- (d) that children, young people and families have the resources to their basic needs including accessing opportunities to take part in society.

Revised action plan

- 121 The strategy is underpinned by a revised Poverty Action Plan which focuses on new actions and commitments which will enable us to deliver the key priorities we have identified as being most important for reducing poverty levels in County Durham and achieving our vision.
- 122 The revised plan is attached at Appendix 3. These new actions complement existing projects, initiatives and services and will be delivered alongside to further enhance and improve outcomes.
- 123 The existing relevant services, projects and initiatives from the first action plan will continue to be monitored and reported via the appropriate service reporting channels and also regular updates will be given to the PASG, which will be fed into updates for the poverty action strategy. Annual updates for the strategy will be provided for Cabinet, the County Durham Partnership, AAPs and other partners etc. The strategy will be reviewed in 2021.

Conclusion

- 124 As expected, the government intends to continue with its programme of welfare reform in order to tackle what has been described as a dependency culture and to reduce public spending on welfare.
- 125 Since the welfare reforms commenced in 2012, the council and its partners have experienced increases in demand for welfare-related services, including advice and assistance, applications for Discretionary Housing Payments and Welfare Assistance, foodbank and charity referrals and personal financial action planning. It is expected that this trend will continue.
- 126 The forthcoming migration of residents currently claiming the old style benefits to Universal Credit in the county will have a further impact on residents and communities in the county.

127 In such circumstances, it is vital that the council maintains its partnership-based approach in delivering its' Poverty Action Strategy and Action Plan to ensure we make it everyone's business to respond to poverty and the risk to financial exclusion and homelessness.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- [Cabinet report, Welfare reform and poverty issues, 13 September 2017](#)
- [Cabinet report, Welfare reform and poverty issues, 21 October 2015](#)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report, which is provided by way of update to Members. The UK's exit from the European Union will have significant legal implications. The nature and extent of these implications are dependent on whether we leave with or without a deal. Officers continue to monitor changes in primary legislation and Brexit proposals to assess the likely impact on the council and residents of the county.

Finance

The council supports welfare provision and poverty alleviation through a number of service budgets across the council, such as the Welfare Assistance Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) policy which are administered by the council's Revenues and Benefits Service. The council also offers discretionary County Tax relief to individuals and households in financial hardship and has protected residents from government reductions in Council Tax Benefit through the approach it has taken to local Council Tax Support.

Consultation

The review of the Poverty Action Plan was informed by feedback following consultation events at poverty conferences and the Health and Wellbeing Board's 'Big Tent Event'. Views of practitioners and partners were also taken into account during the review process.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The council's Welfare Assistance Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments policy and Local Council Tax Support Scheme have been subject to equality impact assessments where appropriate.

Climate Change

Not applicable.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable.

Staffing

There are no staffing implications.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

Not applicable.

Procurement

Not applicable.

Appendix 2: welfare reform and poverty impacts in County Durham

Welfare impacts

- 1 When the Welfare Reform Act 2012 was being introduced, the council evaluated the anticipated impact on residents and the local economy.

UC impact on individuals and families

- 2 Compared with our initial estimate, the overall number of households affected by the transition to Universal Credit has reduced over the last seven years, in part due to increases in employment but also due to the rollout of welfare reform changes introduced by the government.
- 3 Table 1 sets out the estimated number people affected by the transition to Universal Credit based on number of households claiming relevant DWP benefits and Tax Credits. In total we estimated that almost half all households in County Durham could be affected by the transition to UC. The latest estimate, largely based on 2018 data, shows this estimate has fallen by over a fifth to around 83,900 claimants.
- 4 Over this period there has been substantial increases in employment both nationally and locally as the country recovered from recession. For 2018 the employment rate in County Durham showed that almost three out of four people aged 16-64 were in employment (74.6 percent). This is a 9.8 percentage points higher than in 2012, narrowing the gap with national employment rates which have grown at half our pace. Locally this is the equivalent of an additional 35,000 people in employment.
- 5 Such a large increase in the employment could explain the fall in the number of out of work benefits claimants, which reduced by 9,000 claimants over the same period. However, the estimates below suggest that the largest driver of this reduction overall, is the drop in the number of families claiming in-work benefits (Tax Credits).

Table 1: Estimated number of families affected by UC

	2012	2018
Total Tax Credits families ⁷	53,200	34,000
UC claimants-in work ⁸	-	6,600
Total in-work benefits	45,500	29,600
UC claimants - out of work ⁴	-	15,600
JSA ⁹	11,700	2,300
ESA ¹⁰	4,300	23,500
Incapacity Benefits/SDA ⁶	24,100	600
Income Support ⁶	16,500	6,000
Out-of-work benefits claims	56,700	47,800
UC eligible Housing Benefit claims ¹¹ , of which;	32,500	23,300
Social Rented	19,400	14,000
Private Rented	13,100	9,300
Non-passported working age HB	7,300	6,500
UC Claims with a Housing ¹² Entitlement;	-	10,500
Of which;		
Social Rented		4,600
Private Rented		5,900
Estimated number of households affected by UC¹³	109,500	83,900

6 While this may seem counter-intuitive, given there are more people in work it should be noted that there have been significant policy changes to tax credit eligibility over this period. Most notably the removal of the

⁷ Personal tax credits: finalised award statistics - geographical statistics 2017 to 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-tax-credits-finalised-award-statistics-geographical-statistics-2017-to-2018>

⁸ People on Universal Credit estimate Nov 2018, <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/jsf/dataCatalogueExplorer.xhtml>

⁹ Jobseekers Allowance Nov 2018, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, Nov 2018

¹⁰ DWP Benefits, Aug 2018, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, Aug 2018

¹¹ Housing Benefits, Aug 2018, <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/jsf/dataCatalogueExplorer.xhtml>

¹² Household on Universal Credit, Aug 2018, <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/jsf/dataCatalogueExplorer.xhtml>

¹³ These estimates are not definitive and offer an indicative guide to the number of households affected

second income threshold¹⁴ from April 2012 onwards, meant that over a million 'middle income' families were no longer eligible for tax credits.

- 7 It should also be noted, that despite of the wider rollout of UC in the county over the previous 18 months, around three quarters of those eligible for Universal Credit have yet to migrate to the new benefit.
- 8 New claims to UC were supposed to begin from October 2013 onwards, with full migration to UC by October 2017. The rollout was however, delayed due to a number of policy and operational issues. Initially, UC roll out was limited to new claims from single claimants who were fit to work, without children, and who could claim UC with or without housing costs (not mortgages) and have savings under £6,000. This 'live service' was introduced to 10 jobcentre offices in the county in September 2015.
- 9 From May 2016, a national roll out of a 'full service' UC commenced. The roll out across County Durham was initially scheduled to take place in three tranches – East Durham, North/Central Durham and the rest of Durham (principally the A167 corridor) over a six month period starting in October 2017. However, the schedule was revised¹⁵ with rollout to the most populous area (rest of Durham) delayed until June 2018.

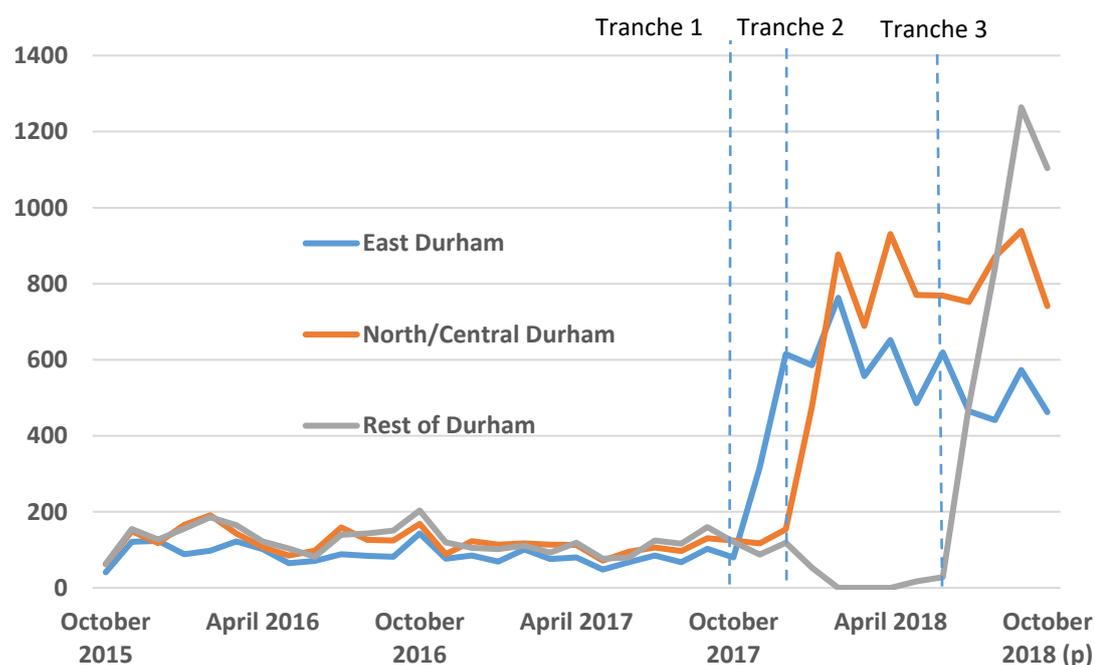
Universal Credit Starts

- 10 A 'starter' to Universal Credit is defined as an individual who has completed the Universal Credit claim process and accepted their UC claimant commitment.

¹⁴ The change in the rules from April 2012 means that the second income threshold (£40,000 in 2011/12), which protected the family element until income reached a certain level, has been scrapped.

¹⁵ The progress was scheduled to be complete in March 2018, however the third tranche was delayed to June 2018.

Chart 1: UC rollout in County Durham



- 11 From the introduction of UC in the county in September 2015 to the roll out of the first tranche of full service UC in October 2017, there were over 8,000 'starts' to UC. This number then increased to nearly 27,000 in the latest data, October 2018 (see Chart 1).
- 12 As part of the new benefits regime, the government strengthened the use of benefits sanctions to encourage compliance with its new policy. While the number of adverse sanctions rose to over 1,000 in February 2017, the rollout of UC has been associated with a fall in the number of adverse sanctions since then – for example, the number of sanctions applied in May 2018 stood at 363.

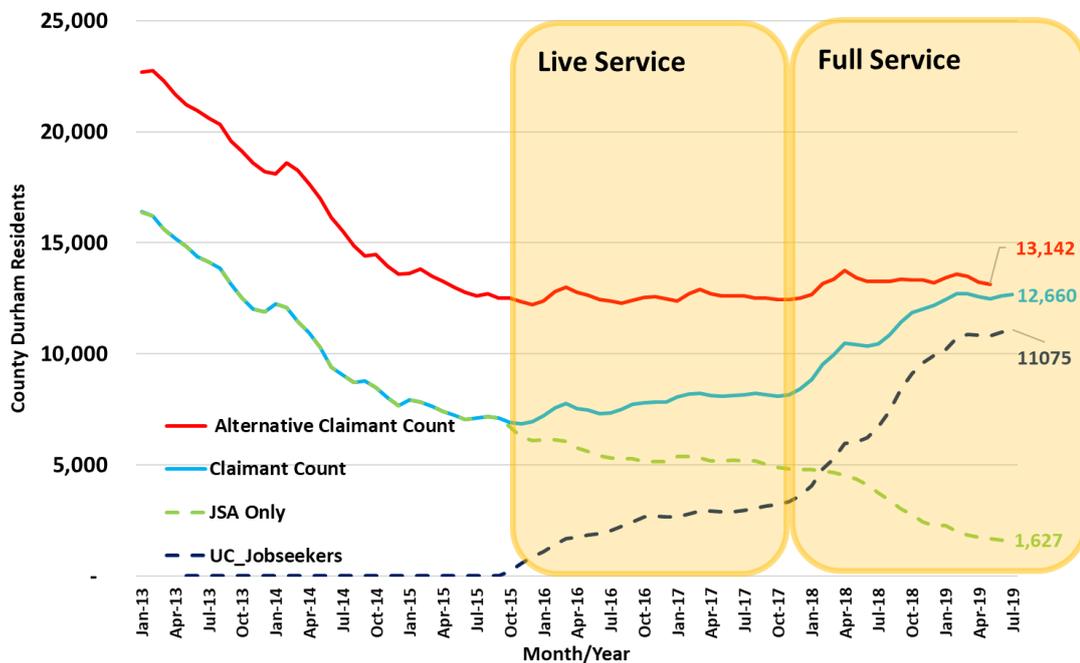
Impact of Universal Credit on Unemployment Statistics

- 13 Under Universal Credit, a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. This has the effect of increasing the Claimant Count and Office for National Statistics (ONS) have stated that the figures are no longer a reliable economic indicator.
- 14 To address this, the new recently released Alternative Claimant Count (ACC) statistics measure the number of people claiming unemployment benefits by modelling what the count would have been if Universal Credit had been in place since 2013 with the broader span of people this covers.
- 15 The statistics provide a consistent measure of local levels of unemployed claimants over time and across areas and a better indication of labour market change. These statistics do not replace the

Claimant Count but, given the implementation of Universal Credit and the natural increases to the Claimant Count that this brings, the statistics do provide a consistent unemployed claimant series and a better indicator of local labour market change over time, than the Claimant Count.

- 16 The Claimant Count is a measure of the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits. Before 2013 this was simply the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance.
- 17 Since the introduction of UC from April 2013, the Claimant Count is measured as the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and the number of UC claimants placed in the 'Searching for Work' conditionality group.
- 18 However, as more people were brought within the coverage of UC, the Claimant Count started to rise noticeably over time. This happened irrespective of how the economy has performed and is a feature of the design of Universal Credit which brings additional groups of people into 'Searching for Work' conditionality (for example partners of claimants, people who previously only claimed Housing Benefit or Child Tax Credits).
- 19 As a result, the ONS withdrew the Claimant Count from their national Labour Market Statistics Bulletin in March 2017, stating that the Claimant Count was no longer a reliable economic indicator. ONS stated that the change in composition of the count could leave users with a misleading representation of changes in the labour market. To address this, these new statistics show the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits comprising Jobseeker's Allowance; Universal Credit – Searching for Work conditionality (excluding those on the health journey pre-Work Capability Assessment); and estimates of those additional claimants who would have been Searching for Work under Universal Credit had it existed over the entire time period from 2013.

Chart 2: Alternative Claimant Count in County Durham



- 20 The impact of UC on local Claimant Count statistics in the county has been considerable. Chart 2 above sets out the modelled historical trend of the ACC plotted alongside the previous claimant count, the number of Jobseeker Allowance claimants and the subcategory of UC claimants who are searching for work.
- 21 As might be expected, when the rollout begins the number of JSA claims fall and the number of UC claims increase at a similar rate. The Claimant Count also increases sharply at full-service rollout reflecting ONS analysis about these trends.
- 22 There is also a notable that difference between the ACC and the official Claimant Count. At the time of the 'live service' rollout in the county in September 2015, the then official Claimant Count figures indicated that there were 6,920 residents in the county claiming JSA. Conversely, the ACC data series indicates that 12,510 people fitted the UC model criteria to count as an unemployment statistic: 81 percent higher than the official figure.
- 23 The implication of this is that under the new UC regime, vastly more people will be subject to job searching conditionality than under the previous DWP regime. More detailed breakdowns of the ACC data show that this group of additional job seekers has a different composition. In the two years prior to the 'live service' rollout, on average two-thirds of JSA claimants (67 percent) were male. The

gender balance of the additional claimants over the same period is almost reversed with 58 percent female.

Impact of uprating caps and freezes since 2010

24 In addition to changes in eligibility and the rollout of Universal Credit, various successive government budgets implemented various uprating caps and benefit freezes from 2010 onwards. These measures had the effect of restricting increases in many benefits, the consequence of which would have far reaching impacts for many people on working age benefits. Using analysis produced for the House of Commons Library¹⁶ Table 2 sets out changes in typical amounts paid for selected benefits and Tax Credits based on the following changes:

- Autumn Statement 2010: **Working Tax Credit: freeze in the basic and 30-hour elements for three years from 2011-12**
- Autumn Statement 2011: **Working Tax Credit: freeze in the couples and lone parent element for one year (2012-13)**
- Autumn Statement 2012: **Working age discretionary benefits and tax credits: increase by one percent for three years from 2013-14**
- Summer Budget 2015: **Uprating: freeze working-age benefits, tax credits and Local Housing Allowances for 4 years from 2016-17**

¹⁶Real value of working age benefits versus inflation and earnings, House of Commons Library, <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8458>

Table 2

Benefits (£ per week)	2011/12	2017/18	% change	Tax Credits (£ per year unless stated)	2011/12	2017/18	% change
Basic State Pension				Child Tax Credit			
Individual	£ 102	£ 122	19.7%	Family element	£ 545	£ 545	0.0%
Couple	£ 163	£ 196	19.7%	Child element	£ 2,555	£ 2,780	8.8%
Pension Credit				Disabled child element	£ 2,800	£ 3,175	13.4%
Individual	£ 137	£ 159	16.0%	Severely disabled child element	£ 1,130	£ 1,290	14.2%
Couple	£ 210	£ 243	16.0%				
ESA, Income Support, JSA				Working Tax Credit			
Personal allowances (selected rates):				Basic element	£ 1,920	£ 1,960	2.1%
Single under 25/lone parent under 18	£ 53	£ 58	8.3%	Couples and lone parent element	£ 1,950	£ 2,010	3.1%
Single 25+ / lone parent 18+	£ 68	£ 73	8.3%	30 hour element	£ 790	£ 810	2.5%
Couple (both over 18)	£ 106	£ 115	8.4%	Disabled worker element	£ 2,650	£ 3,000	13.2%
UC - Standard allowances				Severely disabled adult element	£ 1,130	£ 1,290	14.2%
Single under 25		£ 58		50+ return to work payment (16-29 hrs)	£ 1,365	..	
Single 25+		£ 73		50+ return to work payment (30+ hrs pw)	£ 2,030	..	
Couple, one or both over 25		£ 115		Childcare element (£ per week)			
Work-related activity group	£ 27	£ 29	8.6%	Maximum eligible costs allowed			
Support Group component	£ 32	£ 37	13.0%	Eligible costs incurred for 1 child	175	£ 175	0.0%
Incapacity Benefit				Eligible costs incurred for 2+ children	£ 300	£ 300	0.0%
Long-term	£ 94	£ 106	12.9%	Percentage of eligible costs covered	70%	70%	
Severe Disablement Allowance							
Basic rate + higher age-related	£ 77	£87	12.9%	Benchmark		% increase 2011/12 to 2017/18	
				CPI		12.2%	
				RPI		16.5%	
				Earnings		11.5%	

- 25 Generally, these trends show that many DWP benefits and Tax Credits paid to working age families have not kept pace with long term inflation and earnings increases. For example, in 2011/12 a single person aged over 25 (or a lone parent aged over 18) claiming Income Support was entitled to a weekly personal allowance of £68. By 2017/18 this allowance had increased by 8 percent to £73 (also the equivalent personal allowance under UC). However, when compared with inflation and earnings, which grew by 12.2 percent and 11.5 percent respectively over the same period, we can see benefits for this claimant group growing slower than cost of living measures.
- 26 Some on disability related out-of-work benefits did fair better, as benefits tended to grow at around the same rate as inflation. But this specifically applies to those in the Support Group component of ESA (and UC), and the small number of residual claimants on long-term Incapacity Benefits or Severe Disablement Allowance. Those people who have been assessed and judged capable of some work, as part of the Work Related Activity Group have seen their personal allowances grow at a rate similar to those on income support, which as outlined above has not kept pace with inflation and earnings growth.
- 27 Tax Credits have increased in a similar way. Those entitled to disability elements of Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits have seen around inflation level increases but non-disability elements have increased at much lower rates, particularly for Working Tax Credit.
- 28 By way of comparison, the basic state pension has grown by around almost 20 percent, well above inflation and earnings. This is because of the policy stance of successive governments to increase this allowance by the same rate as inflation, or earnings or by 2.5 percent whichever is greater (known as the ‘triple lock’).
- 29 In March 2019, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported in its briefing “end the benefit freeze to stop people being swept into poverty” that after three years of the freeze, “people in poverty are on average £340 a year worse off than they would have been had this support not been eroded by the freeze” and if the freeze does not end until April 2020 (as currently planned), people living in poverty will be on average £560 worse off, equivalent to around three months of food shopping for an average low-income family.

Employment Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefit (ESA/IB)

- 30 In February 2014 the number of County Durham residents claiming ESA/IB¹⁷ fell to 25,700 claimants, the lowest number claiming sickness

¹⁷ DWP Benefits, Working age client group – ESA/IB/Income Support, accessed via www.nomisweb.co.uk

related benefits since comparable records began. The number of claimants then increased to 28,300 in November 2015 but fell back to 24,700 claimants in May 2018 (the most recent data). This might indicate people returning to sickness-related benefits in due course after being moved onto ESA following their work capability assessment.

- 31 The number of people claiming ESA/IB has fallen by 1,900 or 7.2 percent since August 2017, to represent 7.6 percent of the working age population. These benefits have been subject to a long-term transition where claimants have moved from Incapacity Benefits or Severe Disablement Allowance to ESA which is almost complete.

Housing Benefit

- 32 The number of working age HB claims in County Durham has not varied greatly since 2011. Numbers peaked in April 2013 at around 50,300 claims (21.5 percent of dwellings). Since then the gap between local and national housing benefit claims has widened slightly. The number of claims in the county in February 2017 was 46,400; 20.8 percent of dwellings, but nationally the rate dropped by 1.1 percentage points to 17.7 percent of dwellings.
- 33 Since October 2017 the number of housing benefit claims has fallen from 30,900 to 25,600, a fall of nearly 5,300 claims or 17 percent. This fall is greater than the falls regionally (10 percent) and nationally (11 percent) which are still in the process of rolling out a full UC service.
- 34 It should be noted that anecdotally, social landlords are now starting to see an increase in rent arrears for those tenants who are claiming UC.

Other Welfare Reform Changes

Personal Independence Payments/Disability Living Allowance

- 35 Just before Personal independence Payments (PIP) were rolled out in 2013 there were around 23,100 people on Disability Living Allowance (DLA) aged 16-64. Since then, this number has fallen, but not by as much as PIP has increased. The DLA caseload fell by over 7,200 with the corresponding PIP figure rising to 14,700, (November 2016). However, the latest data shows 25,900 people are now claiming PIP (July 2018).
- 36 Since September 2015 onwards, DLA claimants living in DH (Durham) postcodes have been contacted by DWP to be invited to apply for PIP 20 weeks before the claimant DLA entitlement ends. These transitional arrangements were completed by 2017, but it is not yet clear when DLA claimants in other parts of the county will be invited to claim.

- 37 Overall this means around 16,000 residents in County Durham currently on the DLA caseload were likely to move over to PIP over the next two years. The first independent review of the PIP assessment published in December 2014¹⁸ noted that the PIP assessment process “gives a disjointed experience for claimants” and that improvements are required in the short-term. As part of their evidence to the Independent Review, the Citizens Advice Bureau¹⁹ (CAB) reported serious delays in the end to end process with PIP, from making a claim to getting a decision.
- 38 Ministry of Justice statistics for tribunal appeals from October to December 2016²⁰, identify that PIP accounted for 85 percent of all Social Security and Child Support (SSCS) appeals during the period. In October to December 2016, 46,230 SSCS appeal cases were disposed, up 24 percent when compared with the same period in 2015. Of these disposals, 39,696 (86 percent) were cleared at hearing and of these 63 percent were found in favour of the customer. The overturn rate varied by benefit type, with PIP having 65 percent in favour of the customer and DLA having 56 percent.

Spare Room Subsidy

- 39 The total number of tenants under occupying as at April 2013 was 8,001. Over the years, this has decreased significantly to 5,971 in April 2018, a reduction over five years of 2,030 households. As at April 2018, the number of under-occupiers (5,971) has reduced by 505 since April 2017.

Benefit cap

- 40 The government announced further reductions to the Benefit Cap and these changes took effect from 7 November 2016, when the total amount a household could claim in benefits (outside London) would be capped at:

¹⁸ Gray, Paul, An Independent Review of the Personal Independence Payment Assessment, December 2014, https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/Migrated_Documents/corporate/citizens-advice-pip-first-independent-review-response.pdf

¹⁹ CAB, Response to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Assessment – first Independent Review, September 2014, https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/Migrated_Documents/corporate/citizens-advice-pip-first-independent-review-response.pdf

²⁰ Ministry of Justice, 9 March 2017, ‘Tribunals and Gender Recognition Statistics Quarterly, October to December 2016 (provisional)’, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/597905/tribunal-grc-statistics-q3-2016-2017.pdf

- £384.62 a week for couples (with or without children living with them). This equates to £20,000 per annum, a £6,000 reduction per annum or £115.38 per week on the previous Cap level;
- £257.69 a week for single people, which equates to £13,400 per annum, a £4,800 reduction per annum or £92.31 per week on the previous Cap level.

41 Initial indications from DWP last year stated approximately 620 families may be affected in the county. The reduced cap came into effect on 9 January 2017 in County Durham and as at 3 July 2017 there were 424 active claims with a cap applied. The average amount benefits were capped by was £37.62.

Economic trends

Gross Disposable Income and Earnings

42 Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head of population in County Durham stood at £15,445 in 2017 – 79.1 percent of the UK average of £19,514. GDHI has grown in the county by 13.5 percent since 2011, almost the same rate as for the North East region (13.6 percent) but at a slower growth rate than the UK (17.8 percent growth).

43 Further information can be found in the Gross Domestic Household Income factsheet on www.durhaminsight.info.

Earnings from Employment²¹

44 The average full-time weekly wage for County Durham residents in 2018 was £503. This was slightly lower than the regional average (£507), but much lower than the national average which stood at £575.

45 Local full-time wages have however, increased at a faster rate than the regional and national averages and at a rate above growth in inflation. Wages in the county have increased by 20.7 percent since 2011, compared with around 13 percent for the North East and the UK. Over the period, inflation increased by around 14 percent.

46 The average part-time weekly wage for County Durham residents in 2018 was £194, slightly higher than regional average (£187) and higher than the national average of £188.

47 Local part time wages have increased by 28.9 percent since 2011, higher than the North East region at 25.4 percent growth and higher than the UK increase at 22.4 percent.

²¹ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Median Wage

- 48 Further information can be found in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earning factsheet on www.durhaminsight.info

Poverty trends

- 49 For children and working age people relative poverty is high in the north east. Relative poverty has been a key measure produced by DWP for a number of years and is defined as those in households living on an income of less than 60 percent of median income²². For 2017/18 the poverty line was set at a household income of £304 per week and if housing costs are taken into account, £262 per week.
- 50 In the North East one in four children (25 percent) live in a household in relative poverty, i.e. with a weekly household income of £304 per week or less. This is five percentage points higher than the national average at 20 percent. If housing costs are considered, the proportion rises to more than one in three: 35 percent, which is four percentage points higher than the national average of 30 percent.
- 51 In the region, just under a fifth of working age people (18 percent) live in a household in relative poverty, higher than the national average of 15 percent. If housing costs are taken into account, the proportion rises to around one in four, or 23 percent, which again is higher than the national average of 21 percent.
- 52 In the North East just under a sixth of pensioners, or 16 percent live in a household in relative poverty compared with the national average of 17 percent. Taking into account housing costs, the proportion decreases to 15 percent compared with 16 percent nationally.
- 53 In 2018, new Minimum Income Standard (MIS) research²³ took an alternative approach to measuring poverty has recalculated from scratch the minimum budgets for pensioner and working-age households without children, while reviewing the budgets set in 2016 for families with children.
- 54 MIS is based on the items that members of the public think UK households need to be able to afford in order to meet material needs such as food, clothing and shelter, as well as to have the opportunities and choices required to participate in society.

²² Households Below Average Income Series, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201718>

²³ Joseph Rowntree Foundation 'A Minimum Income Standard for the UK in 2018'. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/minimum-income-standard-uk-2018>

- 55 A single person must earn £18,400 a year to reach MIS; each parent in a working couple with two children must earn £20,000. The minimum wage remains too low to reach MIS, with widening shortfalls for some groups. A lone parent with two children, working full-time, had disposable income 4 percent below MIS in 2008 but 20 percent below today.
- 56 Benefit levels and incomes available to lower-earning working households have not kept up with rising costs, and these barriers are preventing people from reaching a decent standard of living. In 2018, benefits provide only a third of what working-age adults without children need, down from 42 percent in 2008.
- 57 Despite tough economic times, the minimum household requirements identified by members of the public have remained mainly similar over the past decade.

Employment trends

- 58 Overall, the employment rate has been improving steadily in County Durham but remains significantly below national levels. However, latest data show just under three in four of the 16-64 population are in employment in County Durham (74.2 percent) compared to just over three-quarters nationally (75.5 percent):

	Employment rate April 2018 to March 2019	Change in employment rate since 2012	More people in employment since 2012
County Durham	74.2%	8.6	25,900
North East	71.1%	4.8	67,200
UK	75.2%	4.5	2,434,400

- 59 With regards to long term employment trends, the position in the county has improved at a faster rate than the region and the country as a whole since 2012, latest figures (April 2018 to March 2019) estimate that 74.2 percent (239,900 people) of the county's 16 to 64 population are employed. This is higher than the regional level of 71.1 percent but lower than national level of 75.2 percent.

- 60 Male employment is at a high of 78.9 percent (125,400 people) and higher than the pre-recession peak of 77.6 percent almost 10 years ago, (124,000 people, April 2007 to March 2008). The county rate is similar to the national average at 79.8 percent.
- 61 Female employment is also at a high of 69.7 percent (114,500 people), higher than the regional average at 68 percent but lower than the national average at 70.7 percent.
- 62 The employment rate of younger people (16-24 age group) is 57.3 percent (31,100 young people), an increase from a 2012 low of 38.3 percent. Levels have remained stable over 2015 and 2018 after years of post-recession volatility. This rate in the county is now above the regional average of 50.3 percent and the national average of 53.7 percent
- 63 Employment levels in the 25 to 49 age group are the highest out of all the age groups, currently standing at 83.7 percent (137,300 people). This is one of the highest levels recorded over the last 12 years.
- 64 68.1 percent of people aged 50 to 64 (71,400 people) were in employment in the period April 2018 to March 2019, which was similar to the regional level (67.5 percent) but lower than the national level at 72.0 percent.
- 65 Employment in the 65 plus age group has traditionally been low, but has steadily increased since 2004 from 3.0 percent to 9.1 percent. However it is still lower than national levels and is currently 1.6 percentage points behind the England & Wales level of 10.7 percent.
- 66 Between 2013 and 2016, part-time employment in the county grew, peaking at 28 percent during the period July 2015 to June 2016, of all resident based employment in the county. It has since fallen to 24.4 percent more recently.
- 67 The change in part-time employment has meant that the proportion of employed residents in full-time employment in the county has risen to a post-recession high of 75.6 percent from a low of 71.2 percent in 2016 and is now above both the regional (74.3 percent) and national (75.3 percent) averages.
- 68 Currently 75.6 percent of employed residents in the county (187,900 people) work in the private sector, which is a slightly higher proportion than the region (75.4 percent) but lower than the national average (79.0 percent).
- 69 The employment rate in County Durham for those with an Equality Act (EA) core or work limiting disability is 47.7 percent, much lower than the

rate for those without a disability (83.7 percent). Locally, for those with no disability, the employment rate in the county is slightly higher than the equivalent national average of 81.1 percent, however the employment rate for disabled residents in the county is 6.5 percentage points lower than in England & Wales where over half of those with an EA core or work-limiting disability are employed (54.2percent). Since 2014, the local gap increased from 37 percentage points to 46.6 percentage points in 2016, but has now fallen to 36 points, while the national gap has remained stable at around 27 percentage points.

- 70 Further information can be found in the Employment Factsheet on www.durhaminsight.info.

Unemployment trends²⁴

- 71 Unemployment levels have improved over the last three years. Latest data²⁵ show 10,500 people were unemployed in the period between April 2018 to March 2019. This is equivalent to 4.2 percent of the 16-64 population, lower than the regional rate of 5.8 percent and the same as the national rate of 4.2 percent. It should also be noted that unemployment is now lower than pre-recession levels (which averaged around 5.4 percent between 2004 and 2007). Further information can be found in the Economic Inactivity Factsheet on www.durhaminsight.info.

Economic inactivity

- 72 Since 2004, levels of economic inactivity have been greater in County Durham than in England and Wales, with a slight downward trend over this period. Economically inactive people are defined as being outside of the labour market, as they are either not actively seeking work or are not currently available for work. This could be for a variety of reasons, commonly including being a full-time student, retired from work (but not yet reached state pension age), looking after a family and being unable to work because of sickness or disability.
- 73 The latest data (Annual Population Survey extracted from NOMIS April 2018 to March 2019) show that the level of economic inactivity in the 16 to 64 population had fallen to 22.6 percent (72,900 people) from a 12 year peak in the mid-recession period of 29.5 percent (96,500 people, April 2009 to March 2010). Corresponding figures for the North East

²⁴ ONS Employment Rate aged 16-64, Annual Population Survey extracted from NOMIS, for the latest period April 2018 to March 2019. The unemployment rate differs in its calculation from Employment rate as the denominator used is the economically active population rather than the 16-64 population.

²⁵ ONS, Annual Population Survey extracted from NOMIS, for the latest period April 2018 to March 2019

and England and Wales were 24.5 percent/27 percent and 21.2 percent/23.6 percent respectively.

- 74 Another aspect of this dataset is the difference between those people economically inactive who want a job and those who do not. In County Durham, nearly four fifths of the economically inactive, (79.2 percent or 57,800 people) do not want a job. Although this is a fall from 84.9 percent in April 2004-March 2005 it is now similar to the share across the region (80.7 percent) and lower than nationally (79.5 percent). Further information can be found in the Economic Inactivity Factsheet on www.durhaminsight.info.

Zero hours contracts

- 75 There is no single agreed definition of 'zero-hours contracts'. While some contracts are explicitly called zero-hours contracts, there are other definitions available and used in published statistics. The common element to the definitions is the lack of a guaranteed minimum number of hours. This common element is used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in their business survey to estimate the number of 'zero hours' contracts in use with data being available from the national level down to the regional level.
- 76 The latest data from this survey covers the period April to June 2018 with comparison data from the previous year²⁶. During this period 2.2 percent of people in employment in the North East were on 'zero hour' contracts totalling 26,300 contracts - a fall from 3.7 percent (44,600 contracts) from the previous year.
- 77 This data gives the North East the second lowest rate out of all English regions in April to June 2018 and is lower than the England rate of 2.5 percent (671,400 contracts) and the UK rate of 2.4 percent (779,600 contracts). However, nationally the percentage and number has fallen from 2.8 percent (757,800 contracts) in England and 2.8 percent (883,500 contracts) in the UK in the period April to June 2017.

Wider poverty and social impacts

Shoplifting

- 78 It is difficult to identify whether there is a link between trends in shoplifting and rollout of Universal Credit without DWP data. However, working with Durham Constabulary, on an area by area basis, we have examined localised crime data in relation to shoplifting, compared with

26 ONS - People in employment on a zero-hours contract:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/emp17peopleinemploymentonzerohourscontracts>

the phased roll out of Universal Credit. Although there were increases within a number of areas coinciding with the roll out of UC, in the main they were either not significant or after initial increases, returned to normal levels of variance. Two areas demonstrated significantly higher levels of shoplifting compared with previous years and continuing increasing trends as opposed to initial spikes: Crook and Spennymoor.

Public Health funerals

- 79 Under the National Assistance Act 1948 and the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act of the same year, the council has a duty to dispose of a deceased body, if the person who died has no assets or if there are no relatives who can make funeral arrangements.
- 80 Where no one is prepared to accept responsibility for the funeral or estate, the council deals with the matters and seeks to recover the costs if there are sufficient funds available.
- 81 Table 2 shows the number of such 'public health funerals' and the number where costs were not recovered.
- 82 Since the roll out of Universal Credit in 2017 and 2018 the number of unrecovered public health funerals has remained relatively static, compared with previous years. However, because the numbers are so low, it is not possible to draw any correlation between the incidence of such funerals and the introduction of UC.

Table 2: Public health funerals in 2013-2019

Year	No. of public health funerals	No. unrecovered
2013	14	11
2014	15	12
2015	18	11
2016	11	7
2017	23	13
2018	25	12
2019	3	3

Appendix 3: Key achievements against the poverty action plan

Attitudes to poverty and raising its profile through partnership with agencies and individuals with direct involvement in poverty

- 1 The Council's response to the welfare changes and poverty issues across the county has been shared widely with the County Durham Partnership and has involved working closely with many key partners.
- 2 A communications programme has been delivered to ensure that claimants understand proposed changes and are signposted to the most appropriate sources of advice, help and support when new changes were implemented e.g. the reduction in the benefit cap in 2016 and the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) from 2015.
- 3 Council employees, particularly those in customer-facing roles, have received information and training to help them understand the changes and how the council and partners can help, and sessions such as the 'Routes out of Poverty' events continue to be delivered to continue to raise the awareness and understanding of frontline staff on welfare and poverty issues.

County Durham Partnership

- 4 The council and the County Durham Partnership held four conferences themed around welfare reform and poverty issues in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2016.
- 5 All conferences include market places for display stands highlighting the work of over 25 organisations and schemes across the county already helping residents. Representatives from these organisations were also available to talk about their innovative work and the impact on local communities.
- 6 The conferences focused on:
 - (a) issues faced by communities managing the impacts of welfare reform;
 - (b) examples of good practice from around the county;
 - (c) identifying gaps and building on partnership working; and
 - (d) issues around changing employment opportunities.
- 7 Approximately 400 delegates from over 50 organisations attended the four conferences in total.

- 8 All events were well received and feedback was presented to the County Durham Partnership and comments and suggestions relating to the Poverty Action Plan were captured and fed into the plan where appropriate/practical.

Advice in County Durham Partnership

- 9 The partnership seeks to bring together statutory and community and voluntary sector organisations under a 'no wrong door' approach, to improve the co-ordination of advice services and ensure agencies work together to support the needs of our communities.
- 10 To help co-ordinate and develop capacity to provide welfare and poverty advice in the county, the council has worked with partners to support the Advice in County Durham Partnership (AiCD).
- 11 In 2014 the council initially agreed to allocate £70,000 over two years to fund a partnership co-ordinator and take a more active role in the Advice in County Durham Partnership. Following this initial period, this role has now been included into the council's permanent staffing structure and the council has granted additional funding of £90,000 over two years to fund a Partnership/Network Development Officer, employed by Citizens Advice County Durham, to help develop the partnership further. This has allowed the partnership to grow considerably.
- 12 There are now 180 members of the AiCD partnership, and there have been over 11,500 referrals via the AiCD partnership to date.
- 13 In January 2019 the AiCD were successful in securing £43,195 from the Big Lottery's Reaching Communities Fund to develop a new portal and updated website.
- 14 The AiCD regularly facilitate network meetings, training courses and held a conference on UC in 2018. Sessions such as the 'Routes out of Poverty' sessions, delivered in partnership with the council's Housing Solutions team, and designed to highlight the work of different organisations and services in a table talk format are always well received with positive feedback from all attendees.
- 15 Demand continues to be high for all events with nearly 700 attendees to the 29 events delivered in 2018-19, including representatives from Durham Constabulary, MP Offices, NHS, social housing landlords, and the voluntary and community sector.

Citizens Advice

- 16 The council currently commissions advice services from Citizens Advice County Durham. The Service Level Agreement covers the core advice services provision, plus three specific commissions from: Housing Solutions; One Point; and Public Health. Monthly liaison meetings take place with CACD and quarterly reports are presented to the council and summarised in reports to the PASG.

- 17 Generally there continues to be good outcomes being achieved across all these areas, with significant financial outcomes being secured through additional income and through management/write off of debt.

Area Action Partnerships

- 18 Many of the council's 14 Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) had previously identified welfare reform and/or poverty as one of their key priorities and had already supported various projects in their areas, focussing on the issues which are particularly relevant to each local community.
- 19 The council has provided to date £840,000 of additional funding to each of the 14 AAPs from the Welfare Assistance Scheme in the form of an annual grant of £10,000 since 2014.
- 20 This has helped to ensure a vast range of varied interventions across the county, including projects linked to employability, training, helping residents with transport for work, and helping residents cope with welfare changes or poverty, such as access to guidance on benefits, foodbank projects and food provision for children during school holidays.
- 21 To date the AAPs have delivered 86 projects reflecting the diverse needs of the county's residents and have attracted £1,381,000 of match funding. These projects have supported over 21,000 beneficiaries.
- 22 These projects are designed to tackle issues at a local level such as employability, food poverty, fuel poverty, housing and isolation etc. Projects included:
- Derwent Valley AAP – financial support to the foodbank provision in Consett to provide additional advice for clients attending the foodbank on money and budgeting;
 - Weardale AAP – financial support to fund a rural advice worker to provide home visits to help residents check benefit entitlement and make claims;
 - Bishop Auckland and Shildon, and Spennymoor AAPs – financial support to employability skills projects to assist unemployed individuals on the road to future employment;
 - Great Aycliffe and Middridge Partnership AAP – financial support to the Pioneering Care Trust to deliver a series of community roadshows in partnership with statutory and voluntary partners which aim to support local people affected by welfare reform and the associated issues; and
 - East Durham AAP – funding to provide activities and meals for families with children during the school summer holiday period.

Social justice pilots

- 23 During 2014-16, partnership work in the Crook area and East Durham area improved understanding of how the new benefits regime was affecting individuals. Through a greater awareness of how benefits are processed and the requirement to avoid sanctions, support agencies are better informed and are helping to improve welfare and wellbeing outcomes for customers receiving DWP benefits and ensure that clients do not lose their entitlement, particularly those who are vulnerable and/or have particularly challenging circumstances.
- 24 The approach took a 'customer centric' view of the support that customers may receive at the same time from different organisations and considers whether relevant agencies can improve the effectiveness of this support for individual customers. This helped identify the impact on individuals with mental health issues, drug and alcohol dependency and recent offending.
- 25 Participants in the project included the DWP Regional Office, local Jobcentre Plus, Probation Service, NHS, Salvation Army, Citizens Advice Bureau, and council service teams including the area action partnership, Housing Solutions, Revenues and Benefits, Stronger Families and Welfare Rights.
- 26 A number of issues were identified by partner agencies including a lack of basic skills within some customer groups, increasing numbers of people with financial difficulties and debt problems, travel and transport difficulties for customers in attending venues where support is available, the impact of benefit sanctions and the difficulties some customers with chaotic lifestyles experience in prioritising appointments.
- 27 The project raised awareness amongst partner agencies of the support available locally. This included Jobcentre Plus briefings, a Jobcentre Plus open day, a benefit sanctions workshop and mapping of local resources.
- 28 Building on the work undertaken, formal complaints to the Department for Work and Pensions concerning clients in the area decreased and there was now a sense of shared responsibility amongst the organisations involved to work together, particularly between the voluntary and public sectors.

Housing providers

- 29 The Housing Welfare Reform Group was established in 2012 and has worked successfully to understand and plan for the changes brought about by welfare reform and to monitor the impact. It provides an opportunity for the larger social landlords in County Durham to come together and share best practice, coordinate their work, monitor the impact and plan for the future, and is facilitated by the council's Housing Solutions and Revenues and Benefits teams.
- 30 The group continues to work together in relation to the poverty agenda and the impact on housing in County Durham, and it supports the delivery of the Poverty Action Plan through activities such as the 'triage' process which was

adopted in 2012 and is still delivered by the group to help advise and support tenants in achieving positive outcomes for their personal circumstances. The outcomes can include maximising income, addressing and resolving debt, and gaining employment.

- 31 As a result of this partnership working, the expected rise in rent arrears has generally been prevented and there have been no evictions where the arrears were as a result of the under-occupancy charge only.

Focus on child poverty

Child poverty workshop at ‘Big Tent Event’

- 32 The Health and Wellbeing Board hosted a Big Tent Engagement Event in 2016 to gather the views of stakeholders.
- 33 The event was well attended by stakeholders ranging from service users, patients, carers, representatives from the voluntary and community sector and other NHS and local authority partners.
- 34 The PASG facilitated a workshop at the event on child poverty. This workshop looked to share information and gather views from participants in relation to the partnership actions to reduce child poverty, with a particular focus on health.
- 35 Feedback from this event was extremely positive and captured and fed into the Poverty Action Plan where appropriate/practical.

‘Cutting the cost of the school day’

- 36 This group is currently delivering the ‘Cutting the cost of the school day’ programme which aims to: raise awareness of child poverty within schools and educational establishments in County Durham; identify where costs are negatively affecting low income families and increasing financial pressure; and provide guidance and suggestions to how to reduce all costs associated with sending a child to school.
- 37 The original target was to deliver this training to 100 schools during the 2018/19 academic year, however it is expected that approximately 140 will have accessed training by end of July 2019. Feedback to date is very positive.

Child Poverty Charter

- 38 A ‘Child Poverty Charter’ has been developed by the Child Poverty Working Group in consultation with partners and young people, and will be rolled out from September 2019. We will be asking all partners across County Durham to join together to mitigate the effects of poverty on children and young people by signing this charter, and committing to a series of actions to help ensure we meet our aim *“children, young people and families have the resources to their basic needs including accessing opportunities to take part in society”*.

Family Centre offer

- 39 The council's family centres have increased their offer to help cater for the more practical needs of their residents who may be experiencing poverty issues. For example, all 15 Family Centres now provide:
- access to a community pantry with free non-perishable foods;
 - signposting and awareness raising of community fridges and food banks;
 - clothes rails including winter coats, smart clothes suitable for interviews etc;
 - personal hygiene packs, including Red Box period poverty packs; and
 - access to Citizen Advice Bureau, Credit Unions and budgeting training programmes.

Head teachers conference

- 40 The council's Education Development Service held a conference in 2016 for County Durham head teachers and other school staff on child poverty and transforming the lives of vulnerable children.
- 41 The event focussed on poverty-proofing the school day and ensuring best effective use of the pupil premium.

Review of take-up of Free School Meals

- 42 The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee conducted a review of the take-up of free school meals (FSM) during 2016-17.
- 43 Take-up in primary schools remains consistently high and there is universal provision of free school meals in key stage one (reception, year one and year two). However, in secondary schools there has been a decreasing roll number and academies are not required to report their meal figures to the local authority. Information presented to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2016 suggests that there is a lower take up of free school meals by secondary school pupils.
- 44 Feedback on the FSM checking system operated by the authority was sought from schools to identify benefits and where improvements may be needed, and a campaign was delivered to schools, parents, carers and frontline staff to promote the council's eligibility checking system to help increase the take-up of free school meals and remove the stigma associated with FSM.
- 45 Since 2013, children in all families moving to Universal Credit have been eligible for free school meals. The government introduced this as a temporary

measure, which expanded eligibility, and in April 2018 introduced a new income threshold to replace this.

- 46 Government guidance for schools is clear that during the roll-out of UC, once a child is eligible they do not lose entitlement to free school meals and no further eligibility checks will be required. Therefore during the run up to this change, colleagues in Children and Young People's Service targeted schools and families to ensure that residents applied for free school meals, even during a short period of eligibility, as this will give their child ongoing entitlement for the next four years or more.

Free 30 hours' Early Years places

- 47 In September 2017, the government introduced 30 hours a week free child care for three and four year olds to support working parents, with childcare being available anytime between 6.00am and 8.00 pm, seven days per week (to support shift workers).
- 48 In September 2019 the take up figure of children accessing a 30 hour place is 3,735 which represents an increase of 11.13 percent term on term.
- 49 Initial concerns that the provision of additional 30 hour places would potentially negatively impact on the availability and take up of places for disadvantaged two year olds has not happened, with the number of two year olds accessing a place for September 2019 coming in at 1,982 which is only slightly down on the 1,993 accessing in September last year. In fact the numbers of eligible children provided by the DWP has gone down recently so we have done very well to maintain the numbers accessing, and on the basis of the most recent list for June 2019 we are showing an up take of 96 percent.

Early Years Pupil Premium

- 50 Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is a grant that gives providers of early years education extra funding to support disadvantaged three and four year olds. Early years providers use this extra funding to improve the quality of education for disadvantaged children and it is the equivalent of an extra 53p per hour on the funding rate or £302 per year for each qualifying child.
- 51 Providers have been encouraged to ensure that they claim the grant on behalf of parents with eligible children. and the take up for this additional grant has increased from 1,462 children claiming in September 2018, to 1,665 children claiming in September 2019.

Financial awareness in schools

- 52 Staff in Regeneration and Local Services are also currently working with schools to establish 'financial literacy champions' to raise financial awareness and promote a savings culture in conjunction with work already being delivered around credit unions. Over 2,500 children have started saving with credit unions and staff are also working with Durham Housing Group and Leisureworks to engage with any schools which they work with.

Holiday Hunger

- 53 The Child Poverty Working Group has been looking at the issue of holiday hunger. Its sub-group, the Holiday Activities with Food Group's work has included: capturing and publicising holiday activity provision (with or without food); joining up and co-ordinating activities within local areas; and delivering a programme of activities and healthy food provision for some of our most vulnerable children and young people during 2018's six week summer school holiday and October half term.
- 54 Whilst the focus has been on holiday hunger there are additional benefits of doing this work around promoting healthy activity and encouraging children to get involved in group/social activities.
- 55 In 2018 we: gave out 76,800 healthy snacks to children and young people using our leisure centres and libraries; provided week long activities and lunches for 74 young people; provided 369 complimentary swim sessions for children and young people; and 260 children and young people benefitted from free healthy lunches whilst they attended our week long FISCH programme (Family initiative supporting children's health).
- 56 Despite being unsuccessful with a recent bid for Department for Education funding to co-ordinate the delivery of summer 2019 holiday activities with food, the council has continued to support and develop work with providers across County Durham for the 2019 summer holidays, focussing mainly on co-ordination and support. The group has also secured £150,000 from the PASG to support and enhance the co-ordination, delivery and evaluation of sustainable, universal, food and holiday activity provision across County Durham for the period July 2019 to September 2020.

Credit and Debt

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- 57 Through our Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, the council continues to protect economically vulnerable working age people from the 10 percent national cut which was made to Council Tax Support. This scheme has been extended for a further year into 2019/20 in order to maintain the same level of benefit support provided before the scheme was changed in 2013, providing valuable support to many in need. Durham County Council is now the only local authority in the North East to provide residents with this same level of support.
- 58 The policy has protected vulnerable residents at a time when welfare reform changes have had a significant adverse impact with over 27,000 of all claimants currently receiving 100 percent council tax discount. Since 2013, the following levels of financial support have been offered through council tax reductions:

Year	Amount awarded	No. of claims
2013	£52,420,852.28	77962
2014	£52,220,575.09	75938
2015	£51,571,814.20	73583
2016	£51,739,546.83	71981
2017	£52,899,286.12	70034
2018	£54,639,371.30	69277
2019	£57,435,186.15	62972

- 59 In 2017 Cabinet agreed the introduction of a care leavers' Council Tax reduction scheme, aimed at helping young people adjust to living on their own. This policy means that anyone aged under 25 and leaving care will not have to pay council tax if they are the only person paying the bill. Additionally, any care leaver who moves into another household will see the bill reduced by 50 per cent. Since 2017, Since 2013, the following levels of financial support have been offered to care leavers through council tax reductions:

Year	Amount awarded	No. of records
2017	£55,268.37	129
2018	£102,837.97	219
2018	£138,181.98	200

'Triage'

- 60 A 'triage' process was adopted in 2012 and is still delivered by the group to help advise and support customers in achieving positive outcomes for their personal circumstances. These outcomes can include maximising income, addressing and resolving debt, gaining employment and finding affordable alternative accommodation. Since the triage process was introduced almost 12,000 tenants and residents in poverty have been assisted and supported by housing providers and staff within Housing Solutions.

Private rented tenants

- 61 There are currently four posts within the council's Housing Solutions service whose role is to support tenants affected by welfare reform and poverty issues. These posts are funded up until March 2020 and the staff are mainly engaging and working with tenants in the private rented sector. The staff support approximately 1,000 clients per year who contact Housing Solutions stating they are in financial difficulty.
- 62 From April 2018 to June 2019 over 357 cases dealt with by Housing Solutions have resulted in positive outcomes, in addition to the 220 cases which are either ongoing or require advice only.

Discretionary Housing Payments

- 63 Through its Discretionary Housing Payments policy, the council has made awards to over 8,400 tenants, which has helped towards meeting their housing costs during the period 1 April 2013 and 7 July 2019.
- 64 The policy has been monitored closely and detailed regular forecasts presented to the PASG to assess levels of expenditure and demand on budget. Where necessary the policy has been reviewed and revised to ensure it reaches those most in need.
- 65 Since 2013 the council has overspent its government grant and topped up from council funding such as the Welfare Assistance Scheme to ensure that no residents are turned down due to lack of budget. To date we have added circa £544,000 to the DHP budget from council funding, and in total will have spent over £8.6 million helping tenants who have a shortfall in their housing benefit by the end of this financial year.

Welfare Assistance Scheme

- 66 The council continues to provide its Welfare Assistance Scheme, which provides emergency and crisis support to fill the gap left by the termination of the government's Social Fund and Crisis Loans. In April 2015, the scheme was brought in-house and is now being delivered directly by the council, using existing service teams in Revenues and Benefits, with a £1 million budget (including administrative costs).
- 67 Since April 2013, the council has awarded over 5,920 daily living expenses to residents to help with their daily living costs, and over 3,920 settlement grants to help residents settle or remain in the community. This equals nearly £3.4 million of awards made to County Durham residents.
- 68 The scheme is kept under review to ensure it as accessible as possible for those who need it. Recent changes have been made to provide additional support for those affected by UC and to include items such as baby milk, nappies and hygiene products with the daily living expenses element.

- 69 Research released in September 2018 by Greater Manchester Poverty Group Action shows there has been a collapse in crisis support in some parts of the country and that local authorities across England are struggling to maintain well-funded effective Welfare Assistance Schemes. This research recognised that Durham County Council's scheme is one of a few across the country to be still in operation and providing a similar level and type of support to the government's Social Fund and Crisis Loans.
- 70 This research commented *"funding for Durham County Council's scheme has been held constant in each of the last three financial years and the number of applications for support has remained steady."*

Benefit take-up and income maximisation initiatives

- 71 The council's Welfare Rights Campaigns Team has been and continues to run a core take-up campaign aimed at County Durham residents aged 75 or over. The goal is to reach out to potential claimants in that age group to ensure that they are in receipt of all benefits which they are eligible for, and to aid with any appropriate claims identified.
- 72 In the 2018/2019 financial year, the team raised £1,012,400, including arrears or £848,050 excluding arrears. In April 2019, the team have recorded gains of £241,603 including arrears, or £217,157 excluding arrears in relation to the same.
- 73 In addition to this team, a further Welfare Rights post has been funded, from PASG reserves, to work with Children and Young People's Services to support care leavers. During the last quarter appointments have taken place with 82 young people. The outcomes from this work have resulted in a total value of awards for care leavers amounting to £28,187, bringing the total value of awards secured to date for care leavers to £160,977.
- 74 Overall, the council's Welfare Rights service and Citizens Advice County Durham have assisted claimants to secure over £25.66 million of benefits claims in 2018/19.

Fuel poverty

- 75 The County Durham Fuel Poverty Strategy and Action Plan co-ordinates actions with partner organisations to reduce levels of fuel poverty in County Durham and is co-ordinated by the County Durham Energy and Fuel Poverty Partnership.
- 76 As well as the promotion of government initiatives, included in the action plan are a number of projects delivered by the council to help address fuel poverty by: providing energy switching guidance; energy debt advice and support; and fuel poverty grant application process support etc.
- 77 Since 2013, the County Durham Energy and Fuel Poverty Partnership has assisted over 9,100 residents with over £13.4million worth of energy saving solutions.

- 78 Included in this figure is the council's Managing Money Better project which commenced in 2017 and in the first two years the Energy Advisor has carried out over 1,000 home visits to residents and achieved over £132,500 savings on energy bills, fuel debt write-off and Warm Homes Discount grants.
- 79 This project also received national recognition when Lynne Grange, Managing Money Better Energy Advisor was presented with a Heat Hero award at Westminster by NEA, the national fuel poverty charity, for helping residents reduce their home energy bills and writing off fuel debts for vulnerable households.

Financial Inclusion

- 80 The Durham Savers project continues to raise the profile of the credit unions, and staff savings with the credit unions are over £1,770,000. The project also continues to work with local business and so far 30 businesses are engaging with the project, most recently Banks Group, Learning Curve and Taylor Made Timber.
- 81 The council continues to work closely with the local credit unions and training around financial awareness, dangers of using doorstep and payday lenders and credit union promotion has been delivered to frontline staff in the council's Housing Solutions, Public Health, Customer Services and Think Family teams. A new training programme for the council's People and Talent Management teams rolls out in September 2019.
- 82 Following the review of the Welfare Assistance Scheme in 2017/18 Cabinet agreed to allocate £10,000 to the NE First Credit Union to augment the settlement grant element of the Welfare Assistance Scheme and to help prevent residents turning to payday lenders etc. The £10,000 was provided to under-write the provision of low-cost loans for replacement white goods and furniture. The Council effectively acts as guarantor for the loan to the applicant for the purchase of the goods from a nominated supplier.

Adult learning and skills/community learning provision

- 83 The council's Adult Learning and Skills Service uses its community learning grant to support learners to develop new skills, increase their confidence, and improve their health and well-being. During 2018/19 the service delivered learning through 31 sub-contractors, the majority of which are small VCS providers, to almost 7,000 learners. The service prioritises individuals who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate in learning, including those who are unemployed; have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; have mental health issues; are experiencing poverty; do not have English as first language; are Care Leavers; are recovering from substance misuse; and are experiencing domestic violence.
- 84 For the first time in 2018/19 the service commissioned holiday activities to support the delivery of the Child Poverty Action Plan. Activities, which focus on healthy lifestyles and include the provision of food, supported approximately 800 adults and over 1,000 children this summer just gone.

Foodbanks

- 85 The provision of support to foodbanks has been an element in a significant number of AAP projects since 2014, both in providing foodbank assistance, but also in building on the delivery of food assistance to offer vulnerable clients additional services.
- 86 The Durham Foodbank report they have provided enough food to feed 16,004 people (10,432 adults and 5,572 children) in the 10 month period to 31 January 2019. Based on the average use of the foodbank being 1.6 times, this would give a total of 10,000 unique individuals receiving food parcels in the first 10 months on this year. This is a 10 percent increase year on year.
- 87 The FEED project has distributed 1,375 food parcels in the 10 month period to 31 January 2019, which is a 44 percent increase year on year.
- 88 In 2018 Cabinet also agreed to provide financial support to the foodbanks, for example:
- The Durham Foodbank – £50,000 annual grant to fund part of their core countywide infrastructure, on the basis that this complements and augmented the Daily Living expenses provided under the Welfare Assistance Scheme;
 - FEED Project (East Durham Trust) – £2,700 annual contribution to increase capacity/ability to support residents in East Durham, on the basis that this complements and augmented the Daily Living expenses provided under the Welfare Assistance Scheme and via the Foodbank coverage in this area.
- 89 Staff at the council tirelessly support many good causes year after year, and beneficiaries include some of the organisations which are helping those residents impacted by the government’s changes to welfare and austerity. This includes providing much needed donations of basic food items and Christmas treats to the Durham Foodbank.

Further Welfare Reform and Benefit Changes

- 90 The Poverty Action Steering Group is overseeing the council’s response to the change and where possible we work closely with our partners including the DWP to understand who is affected, the level of impact and the dates when the changes will be introduced.
- 91 This has helped us deliver targeted work with partners to ensure that we support those residents affected, through our ‘triage’ process and the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to provide short term financial support, where required etc.

Under Occupancy

- 92 While the total number of tenants under occupying as at April 2013 was 8,001, there have been no evictions where the rent arrears were as a result of the under-occupancy charge only. In part this is due to the targeted proactive support and intervention the council and its partners delivered prior to April 2013, and the introduction of new protocols including 'triage' which still remain in place to intervene and assist tenants to prevent eviction. The total number of tenants under-occupying was decreasing slowly and in May 2016 stood at 6,733 however we are now unable at the moment to track those tenants who are claiming UC as this data is now held by DWP.

Benefit Cap

- 93 Residents impacted by the benefit cap, and the reduced cap were also targeted in advance of implementation to offer advice and support from the council's Welfare Rights team for benefit maximisation purposes and the Housing Solution team visited affected household to discuss the changes and to offer help and support such as advice on more affordable housing, budgeting to help tenants manage their household income, and employment and training advice. No County Durham residents have been evicted solely due to the benefit cap.

Independent Living Fund

- 94 In County Durham, it was agreed that all council service users receiving ILF (114 people) would have a social work review prior to the end of June 2015 and that the same level of service currently being received via ILF and the council would continue until a full review has been undertaken later in 2015/16.
- 95 All service users with ILF have been reviewed and these services have been incorporated into individual care plans.
- 96 All funding has been ring-fenced to those individuals already accessing it, but all services will be subject to review in the future in line with the Care Act and eligibility criteria.

Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payments

- 97 The Welfare Rights Service undertook a campaign to assist people with learning disabilities with their transition from DLA to PIP. They identified people living in Shared Lives Placements and Supported Accommodation who would be financially better off by electing to claim PIP and completed the work with Shared Lives placements. Any new placements coming forward are checked and migrated over if appropriate. All those migrated received an increase in their Daily Living component and the majority have received an increase in the mobility component payable.

Universal Credit

- 98 The strong collaboration and partnership both internally within Durham County Council and with key stakeholders including the DWP, local housing providers, Citizens Advice County Durham and Advice in County Durham Partnership has led to the council's approach in planning for the roll out to UC in County Durham being identified as a best practice model by the DWP.
- 99 As a result of the adopted approach of delivering a comprehensive action plan, complimented by a comprehensive communications and engagement plan and a separate training plan we were able to ensure that:
- (a) all UC claimants entitle to Council Tax Reduction were made aware and have reclaimed - we have not seen a reduction in our Council Tax Reduction caseload as many authorities have;
 - (b) process maps were developed to illustrate how we closed the Gateway for Housing Benefit claims. These processes have been used by both the Customer Services and Assessment teams to successfully support claimants and mitigate the impact of incorrect applications;
 - (c) to mitigate the impact of the Council Office closures over the Christmas period, 25 December 2017 to 2 January 2018 and in light of the fact that Jobcentres were open during this period. Pre-emptive action was taken to mitigate delays;
 - (d) since the roll out of Universal credit, we provided support for claimants across the County. With funding provided through the DWP we provided vital face to face and telephone support for over 6,000 claimants. We assisted 2,060 people in making their online claim; given general advice to 3,529; dealt with 406 change of circumstances; signposted 41 to foodbanks; helped 29 to get advice on debt management; advised 162 on information relating to the services of the DWP; and offered personal budgeting support to 75;
 - (e) we deployed skilled and well-trained Digital Assistants into communities through our libraries, leisure centres and customer access points as well as working with partners including housing provider's jobcentres and Citizens Advice Bureaus (CAB);
 - (f) a conference on Universal Credit in September 2017 was organised and hosted by the Advice Partnership prior to roll out which emphasised the Council's commitment to partnership working, and it made it clear that Universal Credit was a multi-agency issue and that every organisation was part of the delivery solution; and
 - (g) the training and development strategy was delivered and proved to be both successful and well received by colleagues in all service areas and partnership organisations.

Work, increasing employability, personal wellbeing and sense of worth

Employment and Employability Initiatives

- 100 Using employment initiatives as a way of responding to the changes to the welfare system, the PASG set up to £1.65 million from the Welfare Assistance Scheme budget to develop a specific employability and wage subsidy scheme to help disadvantaged people into work. The overall aim of the project was to support individuals affected by welfare reform and either support them in becoming closer to the employment market or to assist those who would like to explore self-employment as a route to improving their life chances and achieving a positive outcome.
- 101 The scheme provides access to training and work-based learning, skills provision, financial support, wage subsidies for employers and targeted discretionary support where required. To July 2019, the scheme has provided skills training to 920 individuals, assisted 1010 individuals into employment and supported 70 people into self-employment.
- 102 Some examples of the skills training provided include: HETAS 03 (Registered installer of solid fuel, wood and biomass heating solutions); CPCS Dumper Truck; 17th Edition Electrical Installation; LGV Class 2; Gym Instruction; CPCS Crane Supervisor; Slinger and Signalling; Site Management; Level 3 Education and Training; Cytech Bicycle Mechanics; and ADR Transporting Hazardous Goods.
- 103 Examples where the discretionary spending has been used include licences, food and fuel subsistence until salary payments begin, rent and council tax payments, DBS applications, personal protection equipment, tools, a moped to support travel to employment in a rural area with poor transport links and travel to work.
- 104 The self-employment strand of the programme was managed by Business Durham but delivered through County Durham Enterprise Agencies: Derwentside; Chester-le-Street; South Durham; and East Durham. The key elements of the project were an initial diagnostic to assess eligibility and the type of support needed, vouchers to buy one-to-one personalised support and advice (which can be used pre and post start) and access to a small start-up grant if needed.

The County Durham Apprenticeship programme

- 105 The County Durham Apprenticeship programme was funded from November 2011 to January 2017 and provided comprehensive support to help young people progress into apprenticeships and to ensure that young people had the skills that local businesses needed. The initiative supported 1,073 young people into apprenticeships.

DurhamWorks

- 106 The DurhamWorks Programme has been led by Progression and Learning team with the Children and Young People's Services working with a number of delivery partners including the Economic Development (Employability) team. The programme is aimed at the progression of young people (16-24 years old) into employment, education and training. DurhamWorks has grown into a £29 million programme which is seeking to support almost 10,000 unemployed 16-24 year olds by summer 2021. To date, it has engaged with 6,072 participants of which 3,166 have completed the programme. Of those who have completed, 88.1 percent have progressed, the majority into employment. The success of the programme was recognised when it was granted an extension and a further £12 million of funding last year. Further programme funding applications are in hand, which if successful, would enable the scheme to continue to support unemployed young people in the county through to the end of 2023.

Durham Advance

- 107 The Durham Advance initiative was launched in July 2018 and provides support to unemployed residents (25 years and older) who have health conditions and specifically to over 50s with other barriers to employment. To date, 396 participants have been registered to the programme and 108 have moved into employment or self-employment. The programme is funded until March 2021.

Community Led Local Development

- 108 The Community Led Local Development (CLLD) programmes – North Durham Assist and Employability Mentoring were approved in October 2018 and support unemployed residents (25 years and older) in the specific areas of Spennymoor, Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street and Stanley. To date, 175 participants have registered with the programme and 69 have moved into employment, training or job search activities. The CLLD initiatives are approved until September 2021.

LINKCD

- 109 The LINKCD initiative has been approved from 1 July 2019 until 30 June 2022. This is a £3.3million programme to support unemployed housing tenants, ex-offenders, homeless and members of the Gypsy Roma Traveller community. The project is delivered through internal and external partners: LIVIN Housing; Karbon Homes; Changing Lives; and Housing Solutions. The aim of the programme is to support individuals into employment, training, education or volunteering and will support over 1,200 participants.

Appendix 4: Durham County Council – Poverty Action Steering Group

Poverty Action Strategy 2019-21 v1.1

Purpose

This is our Poverty Action Strategy (PAS) which aims to provide focus and direction on the priorities for improving services and opportunities for residents in County Durham who are experiencing poverty. This strategy covers a two-year period to September 2021.

For those responsible for delivering services, any future work programmes should contribute to achieving the aims set out in this strategy.

Introduction

The Council has worked closely with many key partners since 2011 to help County Durham residents cope with the changes to welfare introduced by the Welfare Reform Act 2012. In recognition of the wider impact of the changes on the County, the scope was broadened in 2015 to take a more comprehensive overview of poverty issues.

The council's Poverty Action Steering Group (PASG) co-ordinates the delivery of a range of new and existing policy work which seeks to achieve a much broader understanding of the issues affecting residents, resulting from continuing changes to welfare and other issues which mean that residents can experience poverty. Building on this understanding, the group seeks to identify actions to support residents and help address identified inequalities through our Poverty Action Plan (PAP).

The PAP was approved by Cabinet in October 2015 and progress on delivery has regularly been reported to Cabinet and to our partners via the County Durham Partnership and our 14 Area Action Partnerships (AAPs).

Following regular progress updates to the council's Cabinet and partners, we have recently revised this PAP. This provided us with the opportunity to consider whether our current approach is the right one, and whether the strategic aims we had in place enabled us to deliver our goal of working with our partners to reduce and address poverty as far as possible across County Durham.

We know there are considerable challenges ahead if we are to deliver on our vision. In order to overcome these challenges, we have introduced a new Poverty Action Strategy which includes the revised Poverty Action Plan (PAP) and sets out what needs to be achieved in the next two years, in relation to each of our key priorities. The PAP includes a renewed focus on ensuring our strategies, policies, plans and programmes all link together to ensure a consistent and ongoing focus on our residents who are experiencing poverty. It includes new actions and commitments which will enable us to deliver the key priorities we have identified as being most important for reducing poverty levels in County Durham.

Vision

Our vision is *to improve the standard of living and daily lives of those residents in County Durham who are currently experiencing poverty; and to help alleviate issues that can lead households on low incomes to experience financial pressures.*

Strategic Aims

The reduction in local authority funding is set to continue and over the next few years will inevitably impact further on frontline services. We therefore need to continue to increase our understanding of the local impacts of change, so that when we have to reduce spending and service delivery, we can continue to mitigate the impacts where we can, through well thought-out and targeted approaches. To achieve the best possible outcomes of our vision for residents experiencing poverty, our strategic aims are:

- *To improve our understanding of the types of poverty and its impacts on County Durham residents;*
- *To increase employability, personal wellbeing and sense of worth of residents;*
- *Residents receive the best support and advice available concerning their financial situation; and*
- *Children, young people and families have the resources to meet their basic needs including accessing opportunities to take part in society.*

Key Priorities

Underpinning our strategic aims are the key priorities and detailed actions in our revised Poverty Action Plan 2019-2021. This plan ensures we build on improvements already made and deliver new initiatives required to support our residents experiencing the various types and levels of poverty.

Resources

New working groups will be established to deliver some of the actions where necessary, although it is expected a lot of the activity can be delivered through existing resources and organisations. Working with partners from across the public, private and third sector will continue to underpin our approach. The council has consistently recognised we cannot reduce poverty on our own: collaboration and a focus on delivering common outcomes remains a top priority.

Governance

The council's Poverty Action Steering Group will continue to provide leadership and direction in delivering against the PAP.

The PASG will:

- Monitor the situation across the County;
- Make practical recommendations for policy and action to address the issues identified;
- Improve co-ordination and co-operation between service groupings and organisations working to address poverty at a local level; and
- Monitor the delivery of the PAP established to respond to the issues identified.

Monitoring and Review

Annual reports will be provided to the council's Cabinet and the County Durham Partnership, as well as updates to partners and other organisations.

The PAS will be subject to review every two years when the aims and priorities are revisited, and the strategy and action plan will be revised to ensure that it is current and reflects the communities in County Durham and what our residents are telling us.



Poverty Action Steering Group

Poverty Action Strategy Plan on a Page 2019-2021

Vision: *to improve the standard of living and daily lives of those residents in County Durham who are currently experiencing poverty; and to help alleviate issues that can lead households on low incomes to experience financial pressures.*

Strategic Aims

1. To improve our understanding of the types of poverty and its impacts on County Durham residents

2. To increase employability, personal wellbeing and sense of worth of residents

3. Residents receive the best support and advice available concerning their financial situation

4. Children, young people and families have the resources to meet their basic need, including accessing opportunities to take part in society

Key Priorities

1.1. Have a greater understanding of population needs, pooling all data/intelligence across a broad range of services/partners and analysing data to inform practice and use of resources.
 1.2. All staff providing frontline services and Members understand poverty and how it affects communities and families within County Durham and information is easily available to help residents.
 1.3. All partners work collectively and think about how their work can help address the issues associated with poverty.

2.1. Have a greater understanding of inequalities in employment and analyse data to identify increased opportunities to support residents into training and/or work.
 2.2. Residents who experience health/mental health issues and are affected by poverty/changes to welfare receive the most appropriate advice and support from DCC.

3.1. Durham County Council continues to provide financial support for residents affected by poverty and/or changes to welfare where it can.
 3.2. Residents receive the financial support which they are entitled to (i.e. non DCC financial support).
 3.3. Young people in County Durham have a high level of knowledge for basic personal finance.
 3.4. Residents are aware of the dangers of using pay day and doorstep lenders and have access to alternative means of support.

4.1. Narrow the gap in access to culture, leisure, sport and health for children and young people.
 4.2. Raise aspirations and resilience of children and young people in County Durham making the move into work easier so they reach their full potential.

2019-2021 Poverty Plan v1.1

Aim	Key priorities	Actions	Due date	Owner
<p>1. To improve our understanding of the types of poverty and its impact on County Durham residents</p>	<p>1.1. Have a greater understanding of population needs, pooling all data/intelligence across a broad range of services/partners and analysing data to inform practice and use of resources.</p>	<p>1.1.a. Produce Joint Service Needs Assessment (JSNA) factsheets on poverty and share via Durham Insights to help inform practice/service development/partnership working etc.</p> <p>1.1.b Use internal and where available external data to develop insight and profiles of groups (including housing data), likely to be impacted by poverty in order to improve communications and engagement with target groups.</p>	<p>Refreshed six monthly: March 2020 September 2020 Full programme completed by March 2021</p>	<p>Michael Fleming Paul Darby</p>

Aim	Key priorities	Actions	Due date	Owner
	<p>1.2. All staff providing frontline services and Members understand poverty and how it affects communities and families within County Durham and information is easily available to help residents.</p>	<p>1.2.a. Develop content for induction programme and existing employees and Member communications covering poverty in the county, impacts on residents, alleviation measures and signposting to advice and support, so that staff are able to spot poverty and know what to do to help</p> <p>1.2.b. Include financial wellbeing in the council's Better Health at Work Award programme</p> <p>1.2.c. Review and revise information and correspondence on council tax, benefits and concessionary support to reduce jargon, simplify and make more customer friendly (in line with the council's 'outside-in' principle).</p> <p>1.2.d Review and revise customer service procedures and processes in order to join-up welfare advice and support at the first point of contact with a resident. To provide a holistic support offer for residents</p>	<p>December 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p>	<p>Emma Gardner/Alison Lazazzera/Michelle Atkinson</p> <p>Amanda Healy</p> <p>Michelle Atkinson</p> <p>Victoria Murray</p>
	<p>1.3. All partners work collectively and think about how their work can help address the issues associated with poverty.</p>	<p>1.3.a. Research and develop poverty alleviation measures including the Durham Living Wage through social value provisions in procurement contracts. Promote through procurement processes and Business Durham business liaison.</p> <p>1.3.b. Develop toolkit for local organisations to help their employees, for example signposting information, promotion of salary savings schemes with local credit unions, access to ICT to make online claims.</p> <p>1.3.c. Promote and increase Durham Living Wage accreditation among employers in County Durham.</p> <p>1.3.d. Coordinate a partnership with landlords to share best practice and understand the impacts of poverty.</p>	<p>March 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p>	<p>Darren Knowd</p> <p>Graham Wood/Brian Archer</p> <p>Brian Archer</p> <p>Marie Smith</p>

Aim	Key priorities	Actions	Due date	Owner
2. To increase employability, personal wellbeing and sense of worth of residents	2.1. Have a greater understanding of inequalities in employment and analyse data to identify increased opportunities to support residents into training and/or work.	<p>2.1.a. Undertake a health and social needs analysis including case studies of people not in or at risk of not being in education, employment or training to overcome barriers to work and improve employability.</p> <p>2.1.b. Review baseline mapping exercise to identify holistic support available for basic skills and employability. Refresh programme of support, in the light of findings of the mapping exercise.</p>	<p>March 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p>	<p>Graham Wood/Michael Fleming/Michelle Baldwin</p> <p>Graham Wood</p>
	2.2. Residents who experience health/mental health issues and are affected by poverty/changes to welfare receive the most appropriate advice and support from DCC.	<p>2.2.a. Include specific objectives and actions on poverty alleviation in the reviewed Health and Wellbeing Strategy.</p> <p>2.2.b. scope which appropriate frontline health and social care staff, housing staff could provide welfare advice and signposting as part of their core remit e.g. primary care, health visitors. Develop workforce training sessions to increase skills and competence to do the brief intervention.</p> <p>2.2.c. Understand the needs and assets of older people and the impact poverty has. Develop actions from identified needs and assets.</p> <p>2.2d. Develop joint working practices between housing and health team to assist homeless people and those threatened with homelessness where people experience mental health issues.</p>	<p>March 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p>	<p>Amanda Healy</p> <p>Gill O'Neill/Michelle Baldwin</p> <p>Michael Fleming/ Jane Sunter</p> <p>Marie Smith</p>

Aim	Key priorities	Actions	Due date	Owner
3. Residents receive the best support and advice available concerning their financial situation.	3.1. Durham County Council continues to provide financial support for residents affected by poverty and/or changes to welfare where it can.	3.1.a. Develop an early identification and support programme to prevent residents falling into financial hardship. See also: 1.1.b. 1.2.c.	June 2020	Graham Wood/Paul Darby/Lynn Hall
	3.2. Residents receive the financial support which they are entitled to (i.e. non DCC financial support).	3.2.a. Research feasibility of a multi-agency advice/support service to work generically with family. 3.2.a. Continue to train frontline staff across DCC and partners to use AiCD portal. 3.2.c. Undertake feasibility study of using AiCD portal for all poverty-related referrals. See also: 1.1.b. 1.2.d.	March 2020 June 2020 March 2020	Martyn Stenton Paul Darby Paul Darby
	3.3. Young people in County Durham have a high level of knowledge for basic personal finance.	3.3.a. Produce a baseline of financial literacy training available to primary and secondary schools and the FE sector. 3.3.b. Develop a coordinated programme of financial literacy and personal finance training to the above. 3.3.c. Develop learning materials for primary and secondary schools to improve financial literacy and personal finance.	March 2020 June 2020 June 2020 June 2020	Graham Wood/Richard Crane Graham Wood Graham Wood/Richard Crane

Aim	Key priorities	Actions	Due date	Owner
		<p>3.3.d. Develop a financial literacy and personal finance module for inclusion in the DCC apprenticeship programme, with a view to rolling out to other employers.</p> <p>3.3.e. Explore feasibility of DCC providing Looked After Children with a credit union account and a nominal annual payment.</p> <p>3.3.f. Working with training providers to build personal resilience amongst trainees.</p>	<p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p>	<p>Graham Wood/Alison Lazazzera</p> <p>Karen Robb/David Tinmouth</p> <p>Graham Wood</p>
	<p>3.4. Residents are aware of the dangers of using pay day and doorstep lenders and have access to alternative means of support.</p>	<p>3.4.a. To work with partner agencies to deliver a programme of multi-agency community roadshows across the county (six per year).</p> <p>3.4.b. Explore feasibility of restricting access to payday lender webpages from DCC public access computers, linking instead to credit union lenders.</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>December 2019</p>	<p>Joanne Waller/Graham Wood</p> <p>Alan Patrickson</p>

Aim	Key priorities	Actions	Due date	Owner
<p>4. Children, young people and families have the resources to meet their basic needs, including accessing opportunities to take part in society.</p>	<p>4.1. Narrow the gap in access to culture, leisure, sport and health for children and young people.</p>	<p>4.1.a. Undertake a health equity audit of who is currently accessing council leisure facilities to understand how we target our offer better to reduce inequality of access and opportunity.</p> <p>4.1.b. Undertake a feasibility study of establishing a budget to support improving access to leisure facilities (e.g. discounts, promotion and transport) for children and families referred by social care and health agencies</p> <p>4.1.c. Explore the funding options for the provision of personal male and female hygiene products to young people through primary, secondary schools, One Point centres and family centres etc.</p> <p>4.1.d. Review and evaluate pilot of family centres providing food, clothing, personal hygiene products etc.</p> <p>4.1.e. Review and evaluate pilot of free activities with food provision during 2019/2020 school holidays and undertake a feasibility study of establishing a budget for future provision.</p> <p>4.1.f. Explore linkages with 'Cutting the cost of the school day' project.</p> <p>See also:</p> <p>1.1.a.</p> <p>1.1.b.</p>	<p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p>	<p>Karen McCabe</p> <p>Helen Fergusson, Martyn Stenton and Steve Howell</p> <p>Michelle Baldwin</p> <p>Karen Davison</p> <p>Karen Davison</p> <p>Richard Crane</p>

Aim	Key priorities	Actions	Due date	Owner
	4.2. Raise aspirations and resilience of children and young people in County Durham making the move into work easier so they reach their full potential.	<p>4.2.a. Develop 'My Future is Durham' initiative into a wider programme for schools and colleges.</p> <p>4.2.b. Explore the development of specialist careers advice and pathways for Looked after Children, Care Leavers and SEND to enable young people to realise their aspirations.</p> <p>4.2.c. Explore future funding options to further develop DurhamWorks programme.</p> <p>4.2.d. Review options to encourage career development and aspirations through DCC's apprenticeship programme for 2020/21.</p>	<p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p>	<p>Michelle Atkinson</p> <p>Helen Fergusson</p> <p>Stuart Timmiss</p> <p>Alison Lazazzera</p>

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

22 October 2019

Quarter One 2019/20

Customer Feedback Report



Report of Corporate Management Team

John Hewitt, Corporate Director of Resources

Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships

Councillor Joy Allen, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transformation

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present to members the Customer Feedback Report for quarter one, 2019/20 (full report attached at Appendix 2).

Executive Summary

- 2 This report brings together a range of information collected from our customers which highlights their experiences of using our services. Unless otherwise stated, all information relates to the 12 months ending 30 June 2019, compared to the same period last year.
- 3 The report includes; an overview of customer contact; recent customer developments; a summary of customer satisfaction through surveys and compliments; a selection of customer suggestions and their outcomes; an overview of comments relating to our policies, procedures and decision-making and our performance in dealing with complaints (both statutory and corporate). The report also highlights recent developments that enhance the customer experience.
- 4 We will use this information to further develop our services, inform policy decisions and our transformation programme, and support the use of digital tools, techniques and processes to improve the customer experience.

- 5 We will continue to work, throughout 2019/20, to improve the consistency and quality of the data in this report, as well as the range of customer feedback.
- 6 Much of the information contained within this report is extracted from our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and in most cases relates to our Customer Services Team. Over the coming months, we will be working with teams across the authority to expand the report to better reflect the entire council.

Recommendation

- 7 Members are recommended to note the information in the report.

Background

- 8 Successful organisations understand their customers and one way to gain this valuable insight is by gathering and utilising customer feedback. This information, provided by customers as to whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied with our services and about their general experience, is a resource for improving customer experience and determining our actions in line with our customers' needs.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- Previous Customer Feedback reports

Contact: Victoria Murray	Tel: 03000 267 707
Customer Relations Team Manager	
Tom Gorman	Tel: 03000 268 027
Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager	

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

Information on financial remedies in relation to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is included within the report

Consultation

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Complaints regarding any equality and diversity aspect are handled in consultation with the Council's Equality Team.

Climate Change

We have declared a climate change emergency and consider the implications of climate change in our reports and decision-making.

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

None

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Customer Feedback Report

Quarter one,
2019/20

REVIEW OF CUSTOMER CONTACT

- 573,921 calls
- 98% answered

Customer Services (ACD)



- 335,185 calls
- 93% answered

Other ACD lines



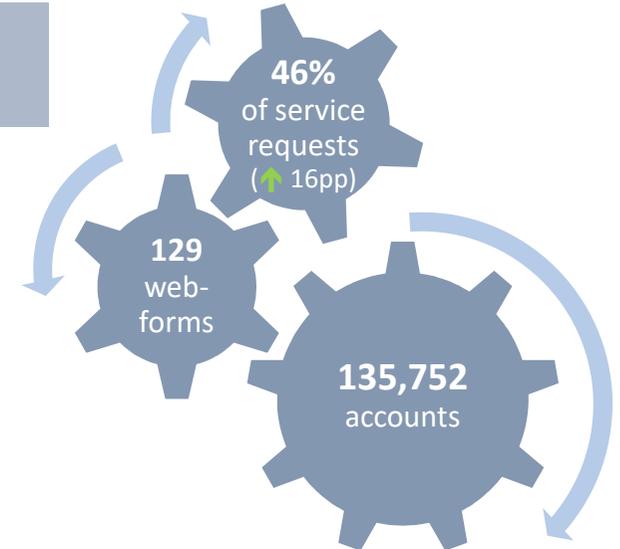
'Do it online' self-serve requests

164,000 self-serve requests logged

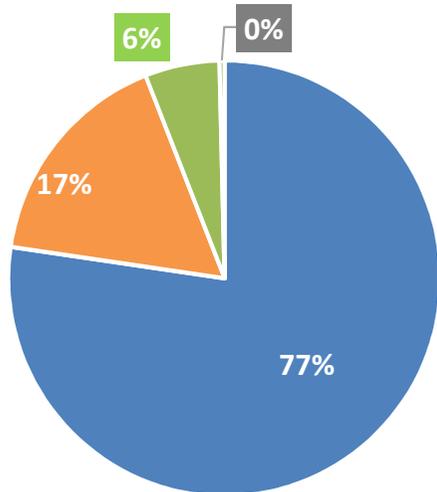
73% of waste permits

92% of garden waste joins

34% of bulky waste collections



Contact through customer services



social media: 2,898	↓ 34%
email: 41,373	↓ 15%
face to face: 124,062	↓ 17%
telephone: 573,921	↓ 10%

e.g. cultural events: timings, ticket availability, prices / recycling: what can be recycled, what can be taken to HWRC / costs & prices: bulky waste, pest control

e.g. new claims, change of circumstances, discounts

e.g. bills / payments / unclear correspondence / arrears

Customer services: top actions

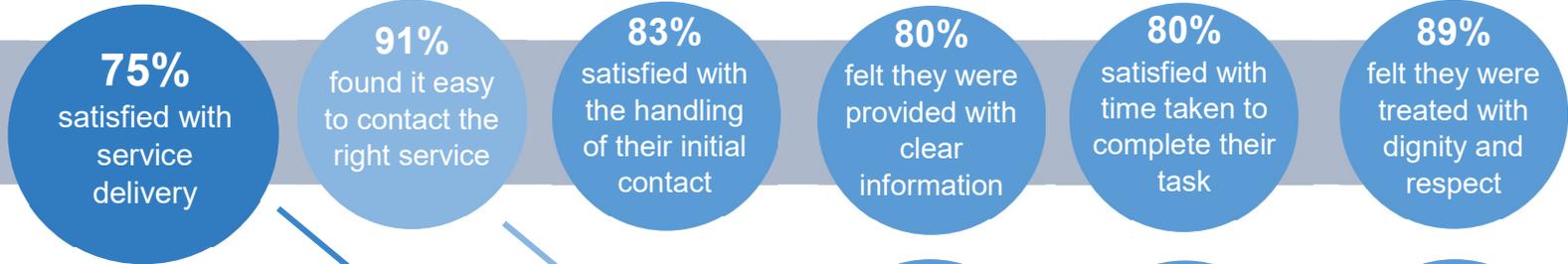
logging service requests	transferring calls	providing information	actioning CT requests	answering queries	providing progress updates	booking appointments
193,000	130,000	120,000	100,000	80,000	21,000	17,500

Recent Customer Developments

- 1 Through our transformation programme, we are aiming to improve our understanding of the needs of our customers through improved use of Business Intelligence and integrated methods of assessment to focus the council's resources in the most effective way whilst improving the journey of vulnerable clients through our processes and systems.
- 2 We are also continuing to use digital tools, techniques and processes that make our internal procedures more efficient and effective, and our integrated customer services initiative, to develop a customer-focused, one-council approach to service delivery, is underway.
- 3 Having fully mapped our First Point of Contact (FPOC) telephony offer, we are now widening our use of Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) technologies. This will standardise our telephony channel (including messaging and call routing), provide a strong foundation for the implementation of new technologies, and enhance reporting enabling us to develop a deeper understanding of customer demand and service performance.
- 4 We will launch our new digital strategy, which sets out how we will use digital technology and the areas we will develop, in the autumn.
- 5 We held our first Digital Customer Feedback event in June 2019. A small focus group of six residents, who had all volunteered, provided some very insightful feedback that mirrors that gained from our satisfaction surveys and star rating. We are using feedback such as this to develop our website's home page and online forms. We are currently working on online forms in a pilot area (street lighting) and will provide a further update once completed, which is expected to be in September. Key milestones relating to the home page of the website will be provided in the quarter two report.
- 6 We have also enhanced the updates customers receive at the different stages of their service request. Most online forms now generate automatic summary e-mails or text messages which detail the action we are planning to take, the team responsible and an estimated timescale. In some instances, we also send reminders to customers who have appointments booked, need to provide information or renew applications. These features are now standard on any new forms created and should help to improve customer satisfaction.
- 7 We are working with the Institute of Customer Service, of which we are a member, to develop our Customer Strategy. We have also recently developed a fresh approach to customer service training that will equip staff with the skills and tools to put the customer at the heart of everything we do. Initially, this will be trialled with the new intake of apprentices in September 2019, before it is rolled out across the organisation.

SUMMARY

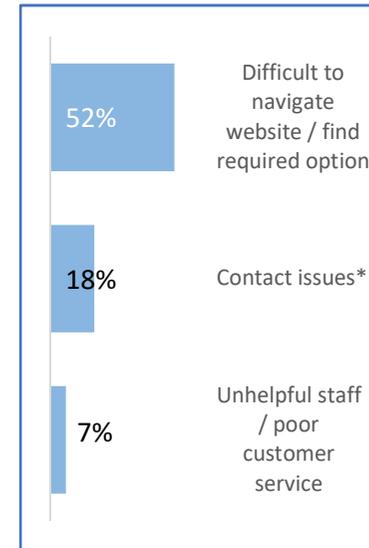
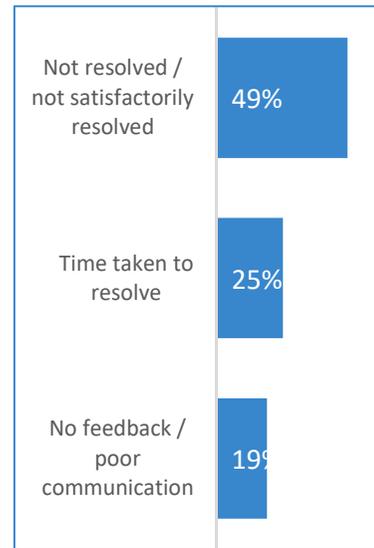
Customer Satisfaction:
from the CRM closure process
(based on 4,093 responses)



Customer Feedback: from the CRM including compliments, suggestions and complaints

915 compliments (-116)	488 suggestions (-17)	177 comments about policies and procedures (-138)
182 objections to our decisions (-103)	123 dissatisfied with fees and charges (+76)	3,048 corporate complaints (+236) 3,018 investigated & 69% upheld*
220 statutory complaints (+17) 140 CYPs: 37% upheld 80 AHS: 54% upheld	177 independent investigation requests	84 decisions from the Ombudsman 13 complaints upheld (15%)

Reasons for dissatisfaction



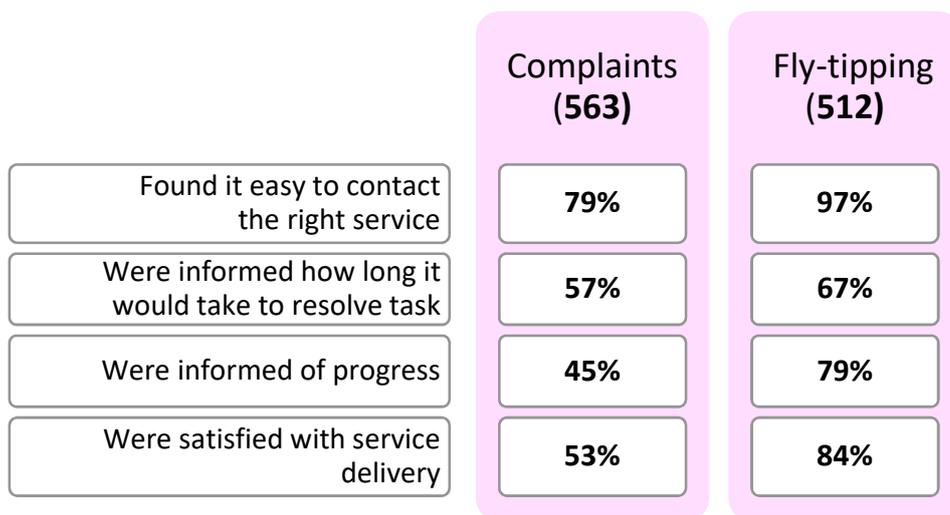
Customer experience of completing online request
(based on 25,797 customers)

☆☆☆☆☆ - 61%
 ☆☆☆☆ - 21%
 ☆☆☆ - 10%
 ☆☆ - 3%
 ☆ - 5%

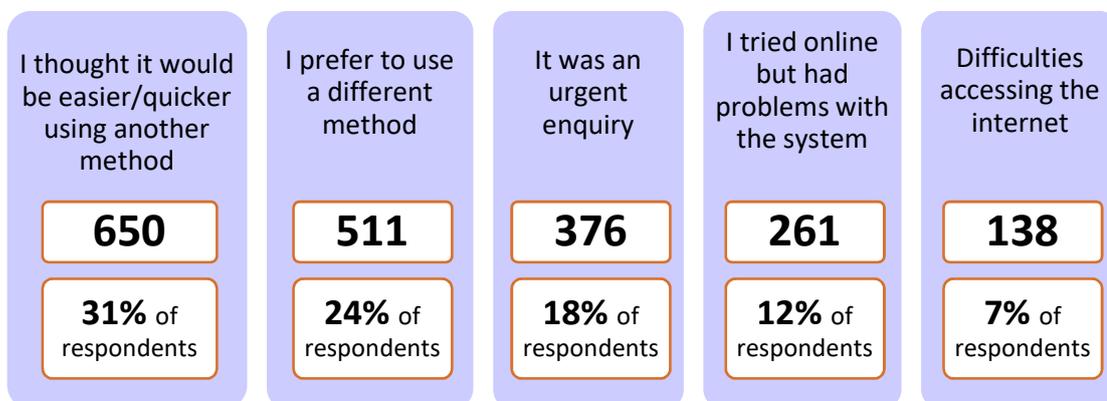
*including; being unable to contact department direct; being transferred between departments; not receiving a promised call back; being unable to speak to person required

Customer Satisfaction

- 8 Customers can now provide feedback relating to their experience for 73 different service requests (listed at Appendix 3). This is eight more than at quarter four, 2018/19.
- 9 Of 4,093 responses received, more than a quarter related to two specific service areas;



- 10 We believe this is because some requests are more emotive than others and this encourages greater participation. However, to increase feedback across all request types we are working to understand the reasons why customers engage with us and what stops them providing feedback.
- 11 To further engage with customers over their appetite for online transactions, we asked customers who did not request services through our website the reason why. 92% of the 2,094 replies fit into one of five key categories, listed below:



Customer Compliments

- 12 Most of the 915 compliments received related to satisfaction with service provision, but others related to specific individuals.
- 13 A small sample of compliments from quarter one, 2019/20 is attached at Appendix 1.

Customer Suggestions

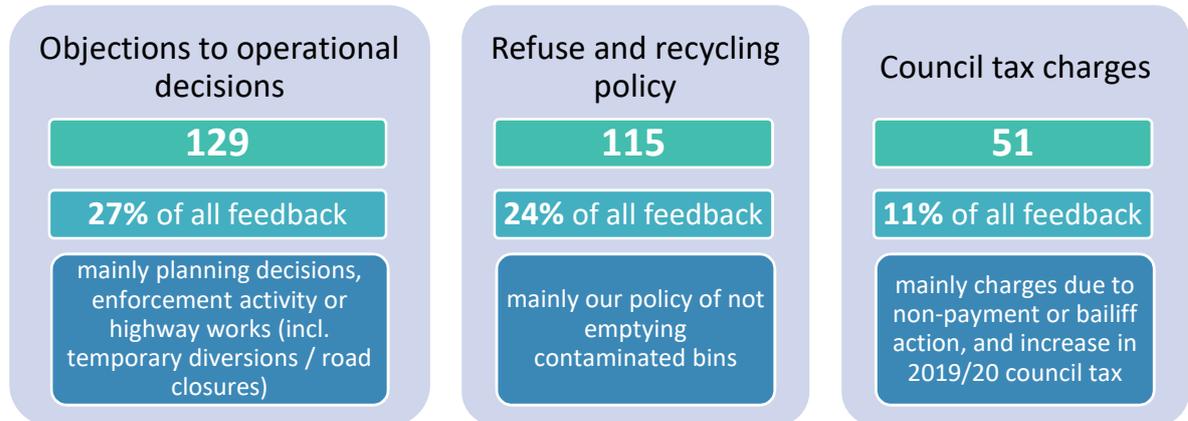
- 14 Of the 488 suggestions received, almost two fifths related to our household waste collection service. However, the majority of those submitted have been addressed previously and/or considered as part of service development, for example;

Proposal	Our response
Smaller bins be made available for smaller households.	Considered on an individual basis (where for example there are access issues) but we would not simply swap a bin for reasons of size due to the associated cost.
Bins have locks to keep bins closed on windy days.	There are operational issues if locks are put on bins. These include the increased time it would take to unlock and relock the bin which would impact on the collection crew and round finish time. The cost of fitting locks is also cost prohibitive.
Rather than a separate container to collect glass, can bins be fitted with an insert.	Different options for collection containers were looked at prior to alternate weekly collections being introduced. This was one of them, however it was calculated that a caddy, (or insert) would reduce the capacity in the blue-lidded recycling bin when we needed extra capacity to cater for the average household's recycling.

- 15 A sample of new suggestions received during quarter one and our response is attached at Appendix 2.

Comments about our policies and procedures, objections to our decision making and dissatisfaction with fees and charges

16 Almost two thirds of this feedback related to one of the following three areas:



Customer complaints

17 Within this document each of the complaint types (statutory complaints that arise from our duties as a local social services authority and corporate complaints that cover all other complaints) is subject to its own processes and policy, so is reported separately.

Statutory complaints

18 Over the last 12 months approximately **18,500** people received an Adult Health Service care package and, at any one time, our statutory social care teams support approximately **3,800** children and young people.

Children and Young People's Services

19 The majority of these complaints (75%) related to Families First teams (105).

20 During quarter one, in response to complaints received, we:

- reminded staff that, in cases going to court for Child Arrangement or Special Guardianship Orders, documents must be shared in a timely manner to allow potential carers as much opportunity as possible to understand the decisions they are making.
- reviewed our policy relating to mileage payments for parents and carers attending contact.
- reviewed our procedures in relation to trafficked young people.

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

STATUTORY COMPLAINTS

Children and Young People's Services

140

+ 25 (↑ 22%)

79% completed within timescale

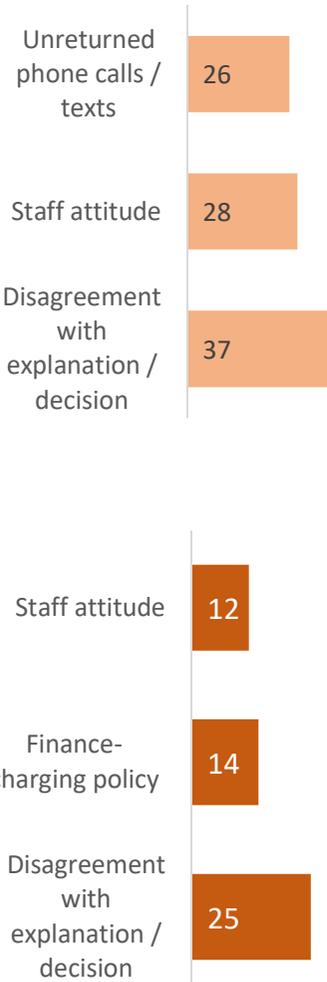
Adult and Health Services

80

- 11 (↓ 12%)

98.8% completed within timescale

Reasons for complaint

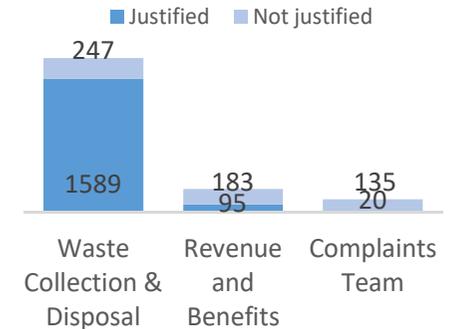


CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

Corporate Complaints (12 months ending...)



Top 3 Complaint Service Areas



52% of complaints relate to 3 issues:

Missed collections

- 938
- 84% upheld (↓ 1pp)
- 31% of all complaints

Correspondence issues

- 476
- 92% upheld (↓ 5pp)
- 16% of all complaints

Staff practices

- 172
- 85% upheld (no change)
- 6% of all complaints

10.5 days average time to respond to complaints

49 independent investigations requested (quarter one)

5 Ombudsman complaints upheld (quarter one)

Missed collections



Adult and Health Services

- 21 Almost half (45%) of these complaints related to Older People / Physical Disabilities / Sensory Impairment (36) and a further 26% to Learning Disabilities / Mental Health / Substance Misuse (17). Nine complaints (11%) related to external providers.
- 22 During quarter one, in response to complaints received, we:
- (a) carried out an audit to ensure a care home provider complied with its falls policy.
 - (b) consulted domiciliary care providers on the most appropriate way to report concerns about service users, and how to communicate these consistently to family and the council (social worker).
 - (c) changed our procedure for 'ended' cases so they are now picked up by the whole team rather than one individual.
 - (d) reminded social workers about the importance of regular communication with service users and family members, including planning for occasions when an allocated worker is away from the office.

Corporate Complaints

- 23 Although 60% of complaints related to our waste collection service, with missed collections continuing to be the most frequent cause of complaint, it should be noted that this highly visible frontline service completes more than 12 million refuse and recycling collections, almost a million garden waste collections and 32,000 bulky collections annually.
- 24 During 2018/19, recorded missed collection complaints almost doubled (+657) compared to 2017/18. This increase was a consequence of a change to the complaints process in November 2017 which re-categorised disputed missed collection service requests as complaints.
- 25 This change increased visibility of this complaint type, allowing us to identify hotspots and key trends and drive discussions with the refuse and recycling team. By addressing and better managing the disputed missed collections (which mainly related to contamination) we have been able to reduce the number of complaint investigations carried out by the operational team, thereby freeing up more operational capacity, and maintain a downward trend in contact of this type throughout 2018/19 and into quarter one, 2019/20.

- 26 Of the correspondence complaints, the majority were from customers who had received a contamination notice they believed should have been sent to somebody else (due to, for example, the bin in question not being presented or being emptied as usual with no contamination sticker placed on it).
- 27 This rise has followed increased activity to reduce contamination. In addition to campaigns, door-knocks and sessions with community groups, recycling assistants are now accompanying bin crews on their rounds. Consequently, more contaminated bins are being identified. Of the 15,825 contamination notices issued during the 12 months ending 30 June 2019, 96% reached the correct recipient. The disputed 4% arose from difficulties, more noticeable in back streets, identifying the house to which the bin belongs. Mistakes are rectified as soon as we become aware.
- 28 Staff practice complaints mainly related to Refuse and Recycling crews not returning bins to bin collection points (113 complaints).

Corporate complaints subjected to independent investigation

- 29 During the year, 177 complainants remained dissatisfied with their response (49 during quarter one) and requested that we consider escalating their complaint to the Customer Feedback Team for independent investigation.



**all investigations should be completed within 30 days*

- 30 Details of complaints upheld by independent investigators during quarter one are included in Appendix 4.

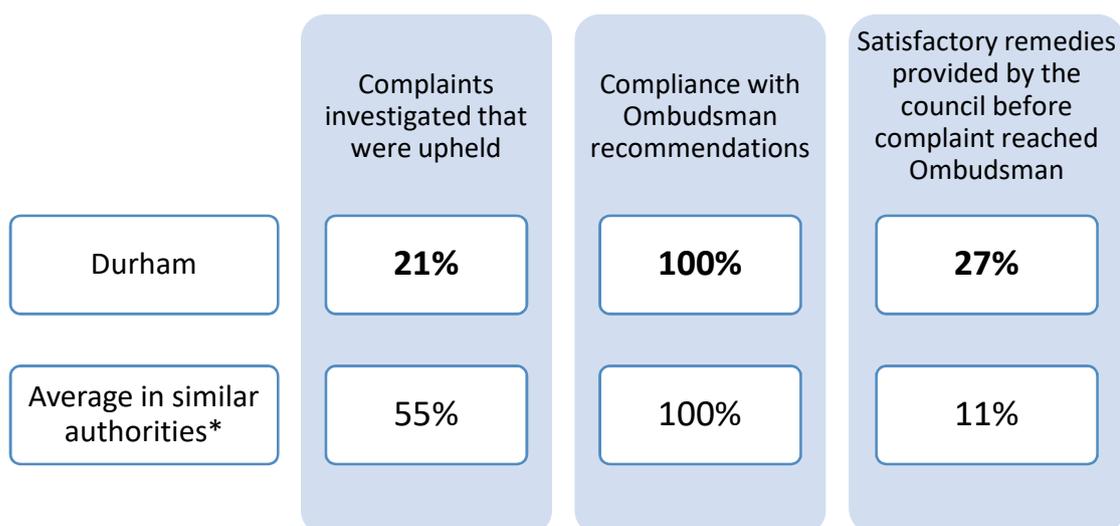
Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman)

- 31 During the 12 months ending 30 June 2019, the Ombudsman delivered decisions in relation to 84 complaints (22 during quarter one). Conclusions were reached based on details supplied by complainants, and in some instances, supplemented with contextual information from council officers.



- 32 Details of complaints upheld by the Ombudsman during quarter one is included in Appendix 5.

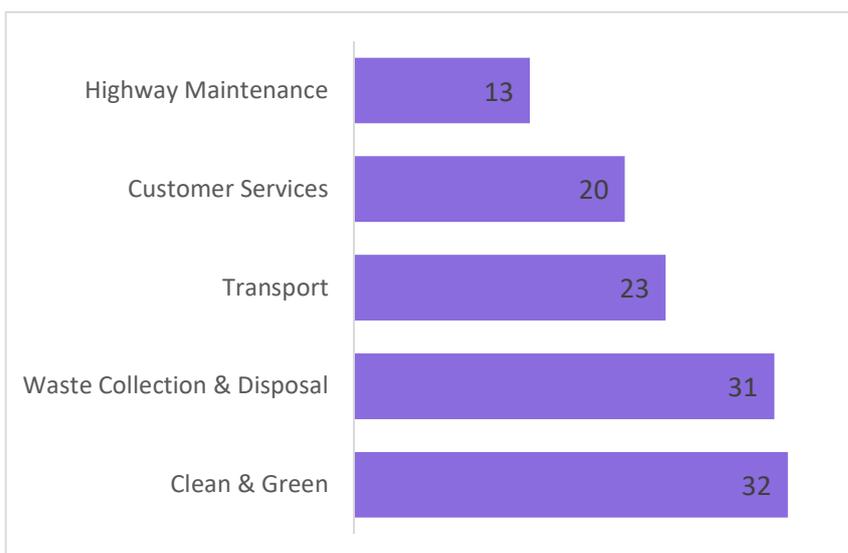
- 33 The Ombudsman published local authority performance data for 2018/19, including benchmarking against similar authorities, 31 July 2019:



**as defined by the Ombudsman*

- 34 Additional information regarding complaints escalated to the Ombudsman is available [here](#).

Appendix 1: Sample of compliments received during quarter one, 2019/20



Customer thanked Care Connect for the help and support they gave after a fall.

Customer thanked Street Lighting Team for fixing the light outside their property. They feel safer going out at night with their dog as the area is now well lit.

I would like to compliment the staff involved in the improvement to the area near to Binchester Roman Fort which was having problems with subsidence. It looks really good and hopefully will prevent further road closures happening so often.

Thanked staff at Chester-le-Street Customer Access Point for helping them with their council tax form.

Pest Control. Amazing service today - thank you. Booked online and here within the hour. Your team member was friendly, efficient, reassuring and obviously takes great pride in the work.

Customer advised that the staff at the Horden HWRC site are very polite, kind and are extremely helpful. Customer advised they use the site regularly and asked us to pass on their thanks.

Asked for compliments to be passed on to Clean and Green Team Leader for their prompt response to a service request to prune a dead tree. Customer was updated about progress and were very pleased with the service.

Customer rang to say what a great job staff had done widening the road to their property. Area was left clean and tidy and it is a great improvement.

The staff at Spennymoor leisure centre swimming pool are knowledgeable about disability access and extremely helpful; even assisting with transfer into the pool.

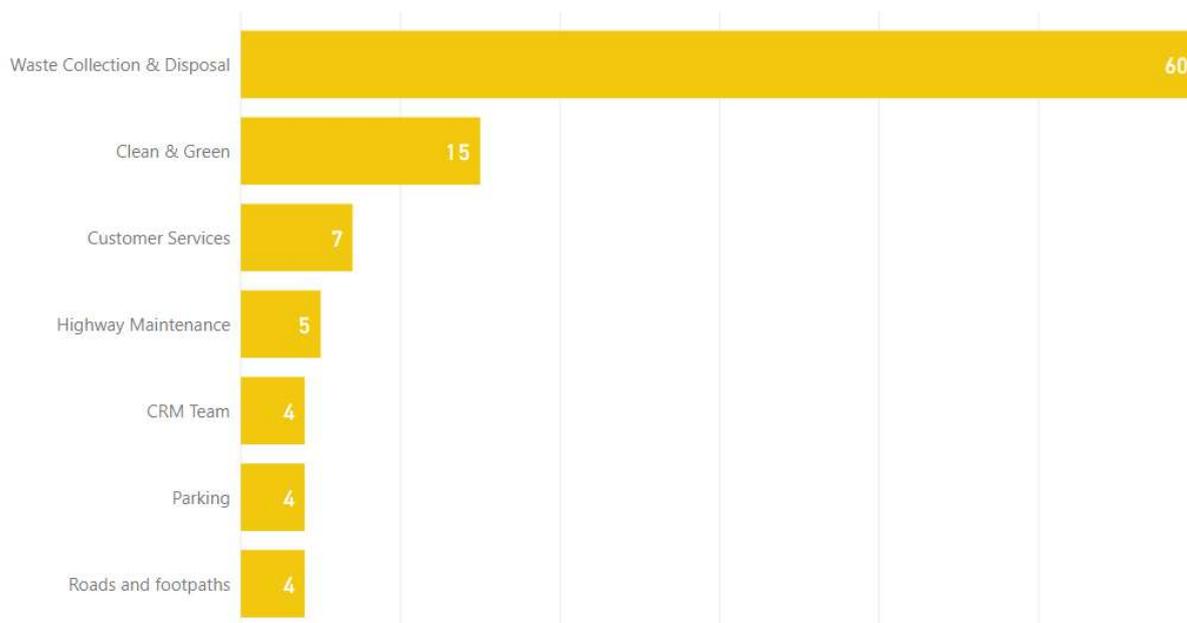
Thanked Traffic Management for recent works carried out at the junction at Beech Court and May Terrace, Langley Park. These works are an elegant solution to the potential sight-line hazard.

Thank you for providing access to a swimming pool in a welcoming environment.

Compliment regarding fast response and removal of reported fly-tip.

Compliments to the Drainage Team from customer who was very pleased with the speedy action and found the team very helpful.

Appendix 2: Sample of suggestions received during quarter one, 2019/20



You said: Customer suggested a bin is installed next to the bus stop adjacent to the Salvation Army building at Langley Moor to reduce amount of litter on the grass and pavement near this bus stop.

We did: We welcomed this suggestion and have made arrangements for a bin to be installed.

You said: Customer has suggested that when someone rings before or after opening times this is made obvious before all the other announcements as they were held on the phone for some time before this was made clear.

We did: We are currently reviewing, standardising and harmonising all messages at first point of contact to support a consistent experience for customers who contact us by telephone.

You said: Customer would like to suggest that we add onto the garden waste calendar that the bin needs to be presented at bin collection point for 7.00am to make people who may be unaware that this is the policy.

We did: This information is included within the terms and conditions section of the garden waste web page and we will consider including on next seasons calendar.

You said: Suggestion that system is introduced to register births online rather than at the registry office in Durham.

Our response: The qualified informant is required by law to give information regarding the baby in person, via direct questioning with a registrar and then sign a register page. As the statutory requirements are laid down in law within the Births and Deaths Registration Act, we do not have the power to change the process.

Appendix 3: Satisfaction questionnaires are applied to the following service requests

- Abandoned shopping trolleys
- Abandoned vehicles
- Access bus
- Allotments
- Animals
- Anti-social behaviour
- Archaeology day – order tickets
- Barriers
- Bin – new, replacement, repair
- Bin – waste collections for businesses
- Bin – request help with your bin
- Bollards
- Bonfires
- Built structures
- Bulky waste – white goods collection
- Bus stop and shelters
- Care Connect – apply
- Care Connect – VAT exemption
- Complaints
- Council tax account
- Council tax paperless billing
- Council tax – change of payment
- Customer Services appointment
- Dead animal removal
- Dog bins and litter bins
- Dog fouling
- Drainage and flooding
- Dropped kerbs and disabled ramp access
- Durham employment and Skills
- Durham Institute of Sport
- Flyposting
- Fly-tipping
- Free school travel – apply
- Garden waste – appeal /exchange your bin / join the scheme
- Generic enquiry
- Graffiti
- Grass cutting, shrubs and flower beds
- Gritting or snow clearance – request
- Gypsy, roma and traveller sites
- Invite our chairman to your event
- Litter
- Manhole and utility covers
- Needles and drug paraphernalia
- Noise complaint
- Public Rights of Way and countryside paths
- Road markings
- Road or footpath
- Roads or footpath obstruction – non-vehicular
- Roads or footpath obstruction – vehicular
- Road or pavement – spillage
- Road signs
- Roadworks
- Rubbish in gardens and yards
- Safety Advisory Group (SAG)
- Salt bins
- Sandbags
- School crossing patrol service – report an issue
- Seating and benches
- Spilt rubbish
- Stray dogs
- Stray horses
- Street lighting
- Street name plates
- Taxis – report an issue with a driver
- Taxi licencing - driver
- Taxi licencing – vehicle
- Traffic safety and traffic calming schemes
- Traffic lights and crossings
- Tree or hedge pruning, removal
- Walls and fences
- Waste collection for businesses
- Waste permits
- Ways to wellbeing

Appendix 4: Independent Investigations by Customer Feedback Team where corporate complaints were upheld

Complaint	Action to be taken
Complainant unhappy with planning decision and lack of response from planning authority.	Although we acted appropriately in waiting to see whether the new application was granted planning permission, we acknowledge that the complainant should not have needed to progress chase.
Complainant dissatisfied with our response regarding Executive Rights of Burial and our failure to supply requested information.	We are satisfied that the register would not be updated without completion of necessary paperwork and correct payment being made, however complaint is partially upheld due to lost information.
Complainant is unhappy that a payment was incorrectly taken from their bank account, they were not provided with the correct phone number to contact Arriva and that calls to school transport service are not recorded.	We apologised that the payment was taken. We accept that we should have provided the specific telephone number required rather than the general Arriva customer services number. We are exploring the possibility of recordings calls to this service. Bus pass procedure refresher training will be provided for all staff.
Complainant is unhappy that we issued an incorrect suspension notice in the first instance, then sent a letter stating we were 'satisfied that the reasons which lead to the suspension no longer exist', confirmed an appointment which did not exist (although complainant was accommodated on arrival nonetheless), lack of contact regarding the notice and financial loss suffered as a result.	Regarding the response issued, we have issued appropriate instruction and reminders to the team to ensure this does not occur again. We are considering alternative ways to communicate suspension notices with drivers.

Appendix 5: Complaints upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman)

Ombudsman's final decision	Agreed action
<p>Complainant unhappy that the council delayed sale of joint property, causing unnecessary accumulation of council tax arrears.</p> <p>The Ombudsman found there was fault on the part of the council.</p>	<p>We apologised unreservedly for anxiety caused by delays we were responsible for, and applied a backdated exemption for council tax arrears.</p>
<p>Ombudsman found no fault in the way we dealt with roadworks, but there was fault in the way we handled the complaint.</p>	<p>We have apologised for the way the complaint was managed.</p>
<p>Complainant unhappy with; how quickly we discharged their parent from a care home, the high turnover of staff, lack of communication from social worker and the care received after two falls.</p>	<p>We have apologised for the gaps in contact from the social worker and care home, and agreed to pay £500 to recognise the distress this caused.</p> <p>We have reminded staff of the importance of regular communication and will carry out an audit to ensure the care home is applying its falls policy correctly.</p>
<p>Ombudsman found that we delayed moving a homeless family from a B&B and delayed providing a decision regarding their homelessness – denying them the opportunity to ask for the suitability of their accommodation to be reviewed. A child in the family with SEN also missed 6 weeks of school due to the delay arranging school transport.</p>	<p>We have apologised and agreed to pay the family £1,550.</p>
<p>Ombudsman agreed it was unreasonable to stop paying a family SGO allowance, despite knowing their finances were strained.</p>	<p>A financial settlement to be made, considering all relevant information when assessing whether the family's circumstances are exceptional and merit further financial support.</p>

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**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

22 October 2019

**Quarter One 2019/20
Performance Management Report**



Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework.

Performance Report for quarter one, 2019/20

- 2 The performance report for quarter one, 2019/20 is attached at Appendix 2. It is structured around a set of key questions aligned to the six priority themes of the Altogether framework and includes the key performance messages from data available this quarter along with visual summaries and data tables for each priority theme.

Future Performance Reporting

- 3 As our current vision, which forms the basis of this performance report, is over nine years old and many of the original aims have been achieved, we are developing a new set of proposed ambitions that better reflect the needs and opportunities of County Durham. This new vision will be launched in the autumn and the format and content of this performance report will be modified to align to the new ambitions.

Executive summary

- 4 Key performance messages for quarter one, by priority theme:

Altogether Wealthier

- (a) Our focus on investment that creates more and better jobs continues. Three further inward investments were confirmed this quarter and we are developing new business sites with the

potential to create thousands of jobs, creating new infrastructure, investing in our roads so they are on par with those nationally, and building on our growing tourism and cultural activity. We have put in place effective programmes to engage and support both businesses and people across the county, and we are successfully accessing additional funding to maximise our impact. Although the medium-term employment rate remains positive and the employment rate for young people (aged 16-24) is higher than regional and national levels, we are concerned about the employment gap between those with a disability and those without, and the relatively low employment of older people (50-64).

Altogether Better for Children and Young People

- (b) There are many positives in this area. Strong multi-agency delivery through our Early Help Strategy and the stronger families programme is helping to drive opportunity, address inequalities and secure better outcomes for children, young people and their families. Schools across the county have maintained their success from last year and there has been significant improvements in the academic performance of disadvantaged pupils in relation to Attainment 8. Caseloads across children's social care have improved, and there is improving performance in a number of areas. Improvements in practice are also being supported through more detailed review and analysis of performance information, as well as continued development/refinement of data reports and dashboards following the migration to Liquidlogic. There are however still a number of challenges: poverty pressures across the county, the proportion of secondary schools rated as 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' and the comparably high rates of teenage conceptions and alcohol-specific hospital admissions for under-18s. We are mitigating these concerns by reviewing educational provision across the county (including elective home education), strengthening our links with Ofsted and educational establishments, implementing initiatives and interventions that support physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people and improve their life chances.

Altogether Healthier

- (c) Health continues to be a challenging area. Inequality across the county and between County Durham and the rest of the country remains unacceptably high, in particular the difference in healthy life expectancy (19 years across the county). More than two in ten children starting primary school have excess weight, which increases to almost four in ten at the start of secondary school,

and further increases to almost seven in ten adults, which is higher than regional and national rates. Smoking prevalence appears to have stabilised at a lower level, where we are on par with the rest of the country, but tobacco dependency in pregnancy remains a concern with rates higher than both the national and regional averages and with geographical variation across the county. We are working with partners to address these challenges; running campaigns and initiatives that encourage people to quit smoking, reduce excess weight and improve oral health, supporting mothers in their communities and local businesses to be breastfeeding-friendly, helping organisations achieve the Better Health at Work Award and working with pharmacies to promote NHS health checks. We continue to perform extremely well in preventing delayed transfers of care and the latest survey of adult carers shows satisfaction across the county is higher than the England and North East averages.

Altogether Safer

- (d) Although crime and anti-social behaviour levels have remained static, we are concerned about increases in specific crime areas (repeat 'violence without injury', alcohol-related violence, possession of a weapon or drugs and shoplifting) along with an increase in domestic violence referrals. We are continuing to address our concerns, through the Safe Durham Partnership, via specific actions which include the continuation of countywide multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) so domestic violence cases are heard quicker and joint actions identified sooner, multi-agency screening of medium risk domestic violence cases to speed up processing times, a new streamlined process for referrals to mental health services and mapping child casualties to better target road safety training.

Altogether Greener

- (e) Although overall environmental cleanliness levels remain good, there has been some deterioration, especially relating to detritus, and we have noted increases in some enviro-crime categories (graffiti, bonfires, drug paraphernalia (incl. needles). Across the county, carbon emissions are reducing significantly as we generate more energy from renewable sources. Having declared a climate emergency and set a target to become carbon neutral by 2050, we have developed a new action plan, building on current activity, that sets out how we will address the issues. However, almost one fifth of kerbside recyclate is contaminated and cannot be reprocessed. A range of campaigns is underway to improve both the level and the quality of recycling.

Altogether Better Council

- (f) Our transformation programme continues to make a difference to the way we work and the services we provide. Having recognised the need to strengthen our approach to workforce development, we have enhanced training and development opportunities, produced a new suite of HR guidance documents, further simplified HR policies and rolled-out our new digitised performance appraisal scheme. These changes are helping us achieve our objectives whilst retaining and developing staff. We are also continuing to develop and use digital tools, techniques and processes to make our internal procedures more efficient and effective, and our integrated customer services initiative, to develop a customer-focused, one-council approach to service delivery, is underway. Targeted interventions appear to be impacting positively on attendance management. Although, performance relating to Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) remains below expectation we expect our new FOI/EIR system will drive improved performance.

Risk Management

- 5 Effective risk management is a vital component of the council's agenda. The council's risk management process sits alongside our change programme and is incorporated into all significant change and improvement projects. Appendix 3 summarises key risks in delivering the ambitions for each priority theme and how we are managing them.

Recommendation

- 6 That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considers the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter one performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of underperformance.

Contact: Jenny Haworth

Tel: 03000 268 071

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

Latest performance information is being used to inform corporate, service and financial planning.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality measures are monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

Climate Change

We have declared a climate change emergency and consider the implications of climate change in our reports and decision-making.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

A number of performance indicators and key actions relating to crime and disorder are continually monitored in partnership with Durham Constabulary.

Staffing

Performance against a number of relevant corporate health indicators has been included to monitor staffing issues.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

Reporting of significant risks and their interaction with performance is integrated into the quarterly performance management report.

Procurement

Not applicable.

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Altogether better

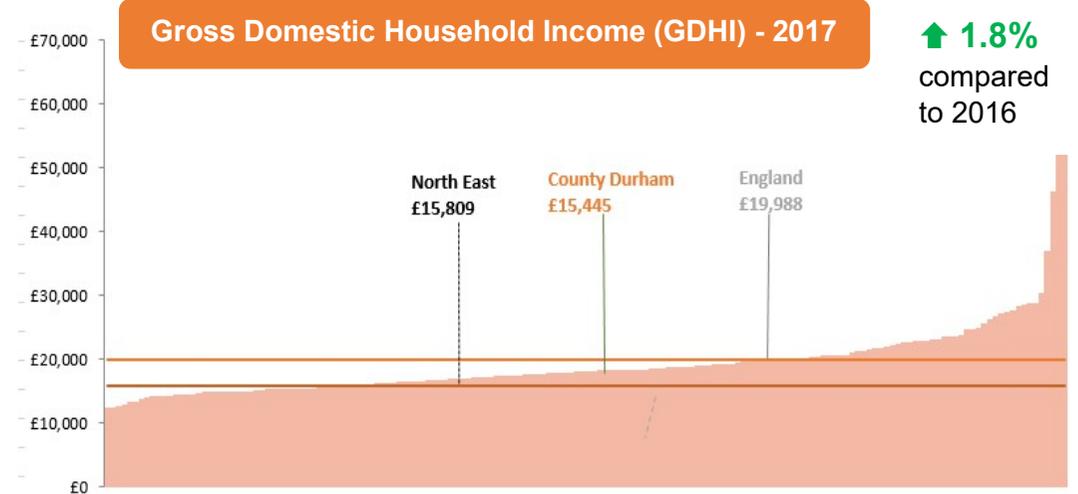
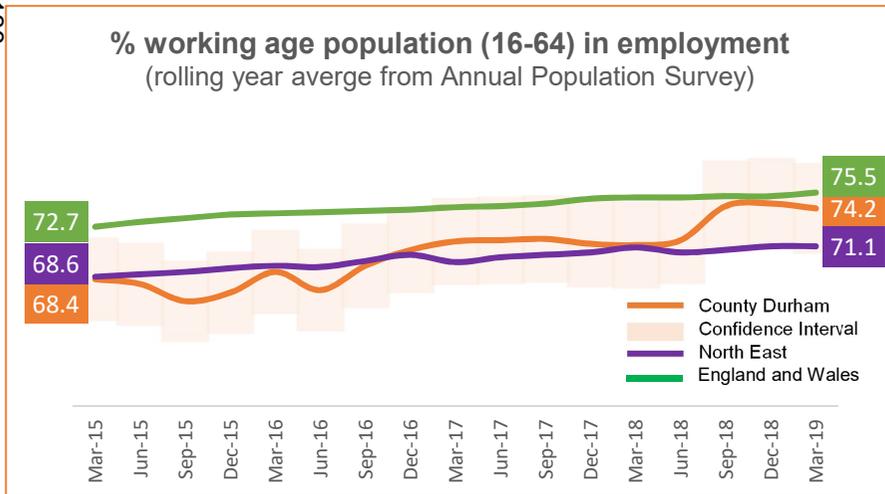


Durham County Council Performance Management Report

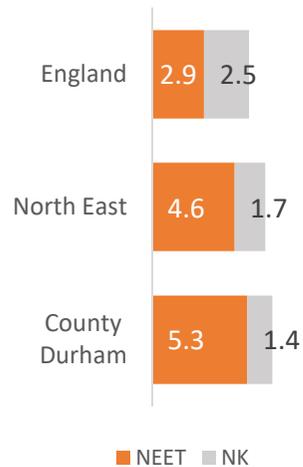
Quarter One, 2019/20



Do residents have good job prospects?



% 16 – 17 year olds NEET / Not Known



Key employment rate stats: (Apr 18-Mar 19)

	County Durham	National
Male	78.9%	80.1%
Female	69.7%	70.8%
Private sector	75.6%	79.0%
Part-time	24.4%	24.6%
Without a disability	83.7%	81.1%
With Equality Act core or work limiting disability	47.7%	54.2%

Additional employment rate information available via Durham Insight and Index of Deprivation in County Durham (Employment Domain)



2,312 jobs created & 117 jobs safeguarded* as a result of Business Durham activity during quarter one

1,106 people registered & 285 people supported into employment / self-employment via Employability Programmes to date

*Job safeguarded: must be a permanent, paid, full time equivalent (FTE) job which is at risk



Altogether Wealthier

- 1 The priority theme of Altogether Wealthier is structured around the following five key questions:
 - (a) Do residents have good job prospects?
 - (b) Is County Durham a good place to do business?
 - (c) Do residents have access to decent and affordable housing?
 - (d) Is it easy to travel around the county?
 - (e) How well do tourism and cultural events contribute to our local economy?

Do residents have good job prospects?

- 2 The employment rate has remained relatively static at 74.2% and continues to exceed our target (73%). However, as the rate is an estimate from a sample survey it is possible that the increase since June 2018 is due to random sample variation, as it is within the estimated confidence intervals (+/- 2.8%). We will be closely monitoring the data over the coming months.
- 3 However, the employment rate varies across population sub-groups. A 36 percentage point gap exists for the employment rate of those with an Equality Act core or work limiting disability and those without. This is the 17th highest of 125 authorities. Currently a Disability Confident Employer, we will apply to become a [Disability Confident Leader](#) in autumn 2019. Our proposed leadership action plan sets out how we will enhance support for our staff and how we will support local businesses to become disability confident. This will include engaging with local employers (especially SMEs with limited capacity), sharing good practice and providing bespoke support to help local employers attract and retain their disabled staff.
- 4 The employment prospects of young people (16-24) have steadily improved since 2012. In 2019, almost three in five young people (57%) are employed, compared to two in five (38%) in 2012, and is above the national (54%) and regional (50%) averages. However, the rate is lower than other age groups and its pre-recession rate of 61%.
- 5 The increased proportion of young people not in education, training and/or employment (NEET) is partly due to figures being at a transition point, as academic programmes close and young people have yet to confirm a new destination, i.e. employment or continuation of training.
- 6 All young people who are NEET are referred to DurhamWorks which specialises in helping vulnerable young people, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), care leavers and those supervised by the Youth Offending Service. To date, 6,245 young people have been supported and, of the 52% who have completed their supported intervention, 88% have progressed to EET.

Is County Durham a good place to do business?

Apr-Jun 19	Business Durham Activity	compared Apr-Jun 18
3	inward investments secured	↑ 3
28	businesses received intensive support received	
86.1%	Business Durham floor space occupied	↑ 3.7pp
£12.6	GVA from jobs created/safeguarded (million)	↑ £1.5m

£690,000 grant request submitted to European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in May 2019 for a new project to support ambitious business start-ups

Finance Durham (FD)
To date:
£3.4m investment in business
12 investment deals through FD fund

96.2%
major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (target 90%)

County Durham Plan
Submitted to Planning Inspectorate in June.
Examination in Public to commence October 2019.



LEADER Programme - EU initiative to support rural business to create jobs and support the economy



Durham Coast & Lowlands
40 projects worth **£1,308,042** approved to date (91% of programme allocation). If approved, 3 projects at full application stage will commit remainder of programme allocation.

North Pennines & Dales
43 projects worth **£1,611,305** approved to date (83% of programme allocation). 6 projects at full application stage. If approved, 2% of budget to allocate by end quarter two.



Businesses Supported (quarter one)
11 as a result of Development and Housing targeted business improvement schemes
15 through Community Economic Development Team who provide advice, grant support and access to training

Additional information on businesses is available via [Durham Insight](#)

- 7 Having recognised more action is required to further increase young people in EET, we have undertaken various consultative activities including peer led discussions with young people and workshops involving key stakeholders. Feedback has helped develop a new vision and key aims for a revised partnership plan.
- 8 Employment across the 50 to 64 age group, where there is a relatively lower number of workers, is 68%. This is comparable with the regional rate but lower than nationally (72%).
- 9 Three inward investments were confirmed during quarter one: Orchidsoft Limited (an intranet software specialist), Maveco Stone Machinery Ltd and a company that wishes to remain confidential.
- 10 Work on our new headquarters commenced in August, paving the way to develop Aykley Heads as a multi-million pound business district, creating up to 6,000 jobs and boosting the local economy by £400 million.

Is County Durham a good place to do business?

- 11 Bishop Auckland has been shortlisted for the second phase of the government's 'Future High Street Fund', which aims to renew and reshape town centres, and will bid for a share of £675 million. In addition, the masterplan for Bishop Auckland town centre has now been approved. It sets out how key spaces are used, how to access and navigate the town centre and the impact of developing visitor attractions on its infrastructure.
- 12 Forrest Park in Newton Aycliffe, with the potential to create more than 3,000 jobs, is one of 11 projects selected by the Department for International Trade to showcase Britain's key business sectors and investment opportunities at an international level.
- 13 The LEADER funding programme, helping businesses and organisations develop, diversify and grow in rural areas across the county, is delivered through two area based schemes (Durham Coast and Lowlands and North Pennine Dales). Examples of success are: Taylored Fit Physio renovated and adapted an unused chapel in Langley Park into a new physio and health centre (£56,388, created five jobs); Moorcock Inn, Weardale constructed a glamping site with 12 camping pods, facilities block, café and shop selling local produce (£124,763, created five jobs); and, Parlourmade, Teesdale purchased and installed a new cheese store / ripening room and washing facility (£5,695) and a robotic milking system (£65,636).

3. Do residents have access to decent and affordable housing?

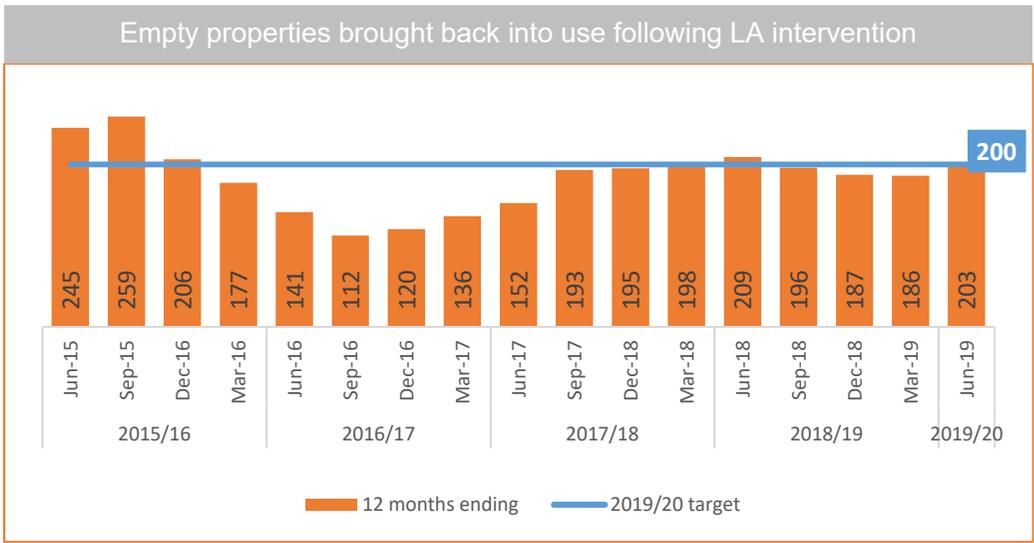
Housing advice and support (Apr–Jun 19, compared to same period last year)		
546	properties improved, adapted or brought back into use	↓ 6%
3,019	households accessed Housing Solutions	↓ 3.5%
260	households helped to stay in their homes	↑ 29%
249	households helped to move to alternative accommodation	

Net homes completed
(Apr–Jun 19)

401

↑ 20 (5%)
compared to same period last year

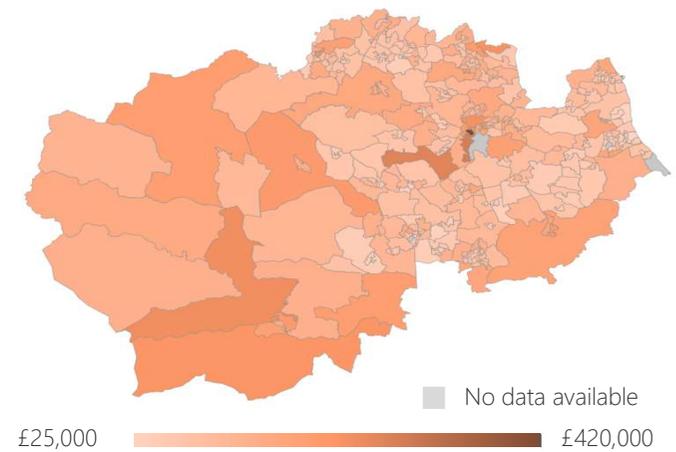
532 affordable homes delivered (2018/19)	234 rental units
	100 shared ownership
198 affordable rent and development management properties	



Additional housing information available via the [Durham Insight – Housing factsheet](#)

County Durham median house price by lower layer super output area (year ending Dec 18)

Source: [ONS](#)



15.4 Average days spent in temporary accommodation (Apr–Jun 19)

↑ 2.6 days from same period last year

7 main duty (to secure accommodation)

125 relief (within 56 days)

167 prevention

Number of households supported under Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) during quarter one

Do residents have access to decent and affordable housing?

- 14 Feedback received from consultation on the [Housing](#) and [Homelessness](#) Strategies has been considered and, where appropriate, included within the final documents which have now been approved. We included an additional section in the Housing Strategy relating to support, adaptations and housing products for people with disabilities, a section on 'health' as a cross-cutting theme, and health and housing related case studies.
- 15 We are continuing to work on a business case to widen selective licensing across the county. The scheme will require private landlords to obtain a licence for each of their properties. Data collection and cleansing is complete, and we are now analysing the findings which will be reported to Cabinet in October ahead of consultation.
- 16 An Assessment Centre (based at the Fells, Plawsworth) and a Stay Safe Hub have now opened following a successful bid for regional funding. The initiative gives rough sleepers immediate access to accommodation and supports them in finding a more permanent place to stay. Once housing is secured, the funding allows for tenancy support, helping vulnerable people maintain their tenancy through regular visits, assistance with bills, cleaning and establishing the tenancy.
- 17 We have also been successful in securing almost £250,000 of funding from the Rapid Rehousing Programme to establish a lettings agency that will help secure housing for homeless people.
- 18 The definition of affordable housing¹ has widened, and grant rates increased, in response to government legislation. It is now defined as social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market, and can be a new build or private sector property purchased for use as an affordable home. Increased partnership working with registered providers and Homes England has contributed to the high number of affordable homes delivered.
- 19 The Chapter Homes development at Eden Field, Newton Aycliffe is scheduled for completion in August 2019. The final phase has been released and only six of the 143 homes are yet to be reserved.
- 20 Fewer properties have been improved, adapted or brought back into use due to a 33% decrease in Disabled Facilities Grants, which are demand led and dependant on internal referrals. However, 145 future adaptations are committed and 151 applications in progress.

¹ See Annex 2 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

4. Is it easy to travel around the county?

Overall condition of A, B & C roads

Good / stable

55/148 national rank

Declined

91/116 national rank

Overall condition of unclassified roads

National Highways and Transport Survey: satisfaction with...

	Overall (local)	Highway maintenance	Street lighting
Durham	57%	53%	62%
North East	56%	51%	67%
National	53%	51%	65%

Confidence interval – 3%

Highways Maintenance Backlog



Bridge Stock Condition - Principal roads

Good to fair

80.7% (+0.7pp)

Good to fair

79.9% (-1.1pp)

Bridge Stock Conditions - Non-principal roads

Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-29



Renovations and improvements to the A167 cycle path running from Cock o' the North roundabout to Merryoaks are now complete.

Work included; resurfacing, signage improvements and the closure of a layby to make the area safer.



Local passenger journeys on the bus network

(compared to 2016/17)

2016/17 - 23.52 million	2017/18	2018/19
	-142,444	-273,895

Is it easy to travel around the county?

- 21 The latest Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) 2018, which sets out our long term plan for managing highways, indicates our maintenance backlog is decreasing which is, in part, due to investment made in carriageways and footways resurfacing.
- 22 The condition of A, B and C roads has improved and is now rated close to the national average. Structures such as bridges and tunnels are generally in 'good to fair' condition and the backlog has now stabilised after increasing in recent years mainly due to collection of improved data.
- 23 Whorlton Suspension Bridge is closed to traffic (but not pedestrians or cyclists) following a routine inspection which identified a safety issue. As a scheduled monument, the repairs require permission from Historic England, so the duration of the closure is not yet known. Engineers have also started repairing a large sinkhole that unearthed a Victorian railway bridge alongside the A691 at Blackhill in Consett. Works are expected to take two to three weeks.
- 24 Having retained our maximum Department for Transport Band 3 efficiency rating in 2019 (only two of 119 Highway Authorities in England achieved this) we will continue to access maximum funding from the DfT's Incentive Fund going forward.
- 25 Construction works to create a 139-space car park and bus stops at Horden Rail Station has started. Work to develop the station, which will feature two 100-metre platforms with shelters connected by an accessible footbridge, will begin in September.

How well do tourism and cultural events contribute to our local economy?

- 26 £1.3 million grant from the Coastal Communities Fund will go toward the £2.2 million project to create a Crimdon Coastal visitor and events hub, which will consist of a café, public toilets, and a community, educational and volunteer space. The council will provide match funding.
- 27 Despite the first day of Seaham Food festival being cancelled due to strong winds and torrential rain, almost 15,000 people attended the second day and traders reported selling two days of produce in a single day and town centre businesses reported a bumper day's trade.
- 28 Unfortunately, the Velo North Series, scheduled to take place in September 2019, has been cancelled as it was unable to attract sufficient riders to justify the event going ahead.

5 How well do tourism and cultural events contribute to our local economy?

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Durham Pride (May 2019)

- 6th Pride event in Durham
- Around **20,000** attendees



Seaham Food Festival (June 2019)

- **15,000** attendees
- **100+** traders



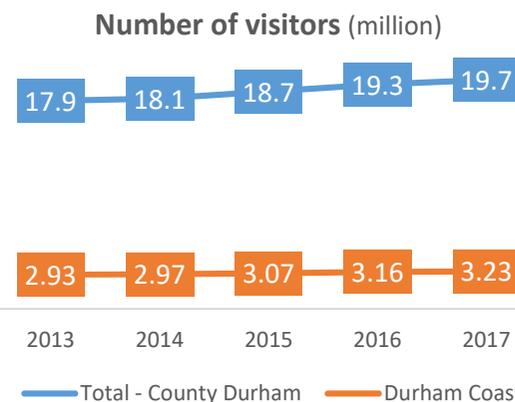
Pyjamarama (June 2019)

- *Book trust event encouraging children to read bedtime stories*
- **778** children and **284** adults attended
- **48** events and activities held
- **46** children signed up to become a new library members



Cricket World Cup (July 2019)

- **3** matches held at Durham County Cricket Club
- Durham hosted one of eight city fan zones



Generated by the visitor economy	Employed in tourism
£866.7m	11,682
↑4.9%	↑ 4.7%

93% satisfaction with visitor information network (2018/19)

↑ 2pp compared to 2017/18

Durham County Records Office

During 2018/19:

1.1m interactions with archive services

77 groups visited

80 outreach activities undertaken

36 exhibitions staged



Durham History Centre

Mount Oswald Manor House will be brought back into use, adding a high quality, visually appealing extension.

Phase 2 consultation ended 28 July 2019.

Feedback from **193** respondents will be used to develop the project.

More information is available [here](#).

- 29 Peterlee leisure centre and library has re-opened following a £2 million improvement programme. This included refurbishing the pool changing rooms, reception space, parking facilities and the creation of the new library facility.
- 30 New ticket prices have been introduced at the Gala cinema, including a £20 family ticket and £5 cinema tickets regardless of the day or time.
- 31 Consultation on plans for a new Durham History Centre closed in July 2019. We are currently analysing feedback from 193 respondents, but initial findings suggest the majority of respondents like the design. The project will bring into one central location historic records, photographs and objects, bring Mount Oswald Manor House back into use, provide space for exhibitions, activities and events and provide enhanced registration services. It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted in autumn 2019.

Altogether Better for Children and Young People

- 32 The priority theme of Altogether Better for Children and Young People is structured around the following four key questions:
- (a) Are children, young people and families in receipt of universal services appropriately supported?
 - (b) Are children, young people and families in receipt of early help services appropriately supported?
 - (c) Are children, young people and families in receipt of social work services appropriately supported and safeguarded?
 - (d) Are we being a good corporate parent for looked after children?

Are children, young people and families in receipt of universal and early help services appropriately supported?

- 33 We are developing, with key partners, an updated strategic approach to early help to ensure effective, targeted and co-ordinated 'early help' that promotes opportunity, addresses inequalities and secures better outcomes for children, young people and their families. Feedback from parents, carers, children and young people helped to shape its approach. Key actions over the coming year include implementation of Early Help Guidance and Support meetings which will provide an environment for professionals to discuss those children and families in need of early help and decide on best possible solutions in order to provide the right support to the child and family, developing a Quality Improvement Framework across Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children services and developing programmes to support children young people and families affected by parental conflict.

ALTOGETHER BETTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

are (1) children, young people and families in receipt of universal services appropriately supported and (2) are children, young people and families in receipt of early help appropriately supported?

Schools judged good or outstanding
(as at 30 June 2019)

100%
Early Years

90%
Primary

64%
Secondary



Click [here](#) for the relationship between secondary school Ofsted ratings and indices of deprivation.

401 children and young people known to be electively home educated (as at June 19)

% EHCP completed within 20 week timescale

Durham (Jan-Jun 19)
64%

North East (2018)
82%

England (2018)
60%

Target
90%

Student Voice Survey (spring 18/19)

3,111 pupils from **74** primary schools

5,625 pupils from **29** secondary schools

Detailed results will be available during quarter two.

2,210

cases open to **One Point** (as at 30 Jun 19)



2,885 families

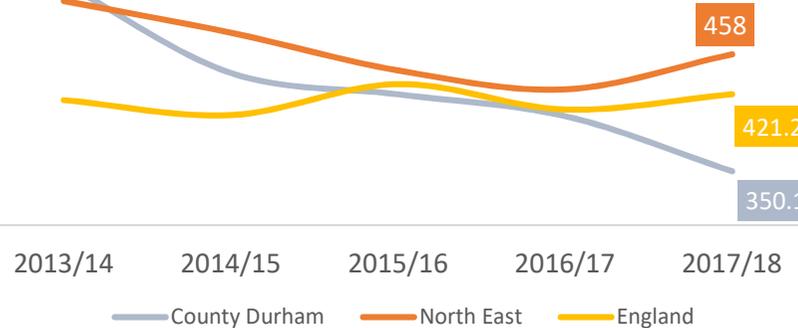
have achieved significant and sustained outcomes (as at end June 2019).

66% of May 2020 target

Early help assessments completed within 45 working days (Apr-Jun19)

88%

Hospital admissions as a result of self-harm per 100,000 (10-24 years)



Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Framework

Under-18 conception rate is higher than the same period last year, lower than the North East & higher than England

Alcohol specific hospital admissions for under-18s (rate per 100,000)

Durham (2015-2018)
53.1
↓ 3.1 from 12 months earlier

North East (2015-2018)
62.7
↓ 2.1 from 12 months earlier

National (2015-2018)
32.9
↓ 1.3 from 12 months earlier

■ better than last year
■ worse than last year

Are children, young people and families in receipt of universal and early help services appropriately supported?

- 34 One in every five children (20%) across the county is eligible for, and claiming, free school meals (compared to one in seven (15%) nationally) and although the take-up rate (based on eligible children taking their free meal on census day) has decreased nationally, it has remained relatively static across the county (at 80%).
- 35 As at 30 June 2019, more than 8,000 families were engaged with our Stronger Families Programme. One of only 14 councils with Earned Autonomy (EA) status, and therefore eligible to receive all of the funding over 2018/19 and 2019/20 from the Troubled Families programme, we are working collaboratively to a 'whole family' approach to ensure children, young people and families with a range of multiple and complex needs can access effective early help.
- 36 We have made progress in several key areas: redesigning our One Point Service; providing more targeted early help and outcome focussed working; implementing the Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance programme; and, providing specialist social care services such as the Pre-Birth Intervention Service and Supporting Solutions (Edge of Care Service).
- 37 To date, we have evidenced that 2,885 families have achieved significant and sustained outcomes through our Stronger Families programme which equates to two-thirds of our March 2020 target.
- 38 Across the county, eight in ten pupils (81%) attend a primary or secondary school rated as 'good' or 'outstanding'. Although slightly higher than the North East average (79%), it is below the England average (84%). Ofsted has now piloted its new school inspection framework prior to full implementation from September 2019.
- 39 Ofsted is refocusing inspections of schools, early years settings and further education and skills providers. Inspectors will spend less time looking at exam results and test data, and more time considering how a nursery, school, college or other education provider has achieved their results. Schools will be empowered to put the child first and be actively discouraged from negative practices, such as 'off-rolling', where schools remove pupils in their own best interests, rather than that of the pupils. Such schools are likely to find their 'leadership and management' judged inadequate under the new framework.
- 40 More than 9,600 schools across England have voluntarily registered to participate in the Reception Baseline Assessment pilot this autumn. Schools will complete the assessment within six weeks of the children starting school. It will be an activity-based assessment of pupils' ability in language, communication and literacy and mathematics. It will be used as the baseline for measuring the progress primary

schools make with their pupils. This is a voluntary pilot and it is not yet known which County Durham primary schools are participating.

- 41 The overall attainment 8 score (formerly GCSE) for pupils in County Durham has risen again to 44.7 from 44.4 last year. This is a measure of a pupil's average grade across a set of eight subjects. Disadvantaged attainment 8 has improved considerably to 40.4 compared to 35.5 in 2018.
- 42 The proportion of pupils achieving success at grade 4 and above in both English and maths is 60%. This matches last year's performance, which was an improvement from 56% in 2017. The average attainment score for both subjects has also increased. (A level 4 is deemed as a 'pass' which is similar to the old 'C' grade).
- 43 The A-level overall point score is now 35.4 compared to 31.9 three years ago, and the average attainment grade has increased to B-. This is higher than the national average of C+.
- 44 Pupils who did not receive the grades they hoped for and those looking for careers advice are supported by [DurhamWorks](#) to find apprenticeships, recruitment and training for 16 to 24-year-olds across the county.
- 45 The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is undertaking a review of elective home education, focusing on education standards, protecting children from harm and the support available for children and their families. Evidence gathering will commence in September 2019 and recommendations considered in early 2020.
- 46 Although better than the national level, our performance in relation to completing Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP) for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) within 20 weeks has deteriorated. This stems from the significant increase in demand for EHCPs in early 2019. Identifying placements for children with complex needs remains both a local and national issue and is a consistent factor in EHCPs going out of timescale.
- 47 As part of our work to improve the mental health of our children and young people in County Durham, and in response to the new theme of the Ofsted led Joint Targeted Area Inspection around mental health, there are a number of activities planned as part of the Children and Young People Mental Health and Resilience Local Transformation Plan.
- 48 We are participating in the national rollout of the [Mental Health Services and Schools and Colleges Link Programme](#) (MHSSCLP), a ground-breaking initiative to help CCGs and local authorities work with schools and colleges to provide timely mental health support to children and young people. It works to empower staff by

brokering contact, sharing expertise and developing a joint vision for CYP mental health and wellbeing in each locality.

- 49 We are also delivering the Durham Resilience programme (DRP) to develop greater awareness and understanding of resilience within schools and to promote working practices that support resilience in both pupils and staff. The Youth Aware Mental Health (YAM) programme which, to date, has reached 2,253 year 9 pupils across 14 schools continues to be rolled out.
- 50 A recent consultation event with children, young people and their families at Durham Cricket Ground, gathered views on the Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) within schools. Feedback will be used to inform our 'Trailblazer' bid which was successful in securing funding for the three MHST across County Durham. There is over £1 million coming into Durham from NHS England and Public Health are complementing this funding for the next three years. The funding will support 5-18 year olds within up to 60 educational establishments which includes three colleges in a North, South and East team structure.
- 51 We have introduced a children, young people and family-focused physical activity offer within the context of the developing wellbeing model. It will be introduced via a locality-based stepped approach between September 2019 and August 2020.
- 52 Across the county, tooth decay remains a concern. Phase 3 of the tooth brushing "train the trainer" scheme, available to the top 30% deprived areas across the county with the County Durham Integrated Needs Assessment for Oral Health indicating the priority areas, started at the end of April. An additional 14 settings, with the combined potential to reach 540 children, have accepted this offer.
- 53 A County Durham Oral Health Neglect Conference, held in early May 2019, raised awareness of dental decay being a significant factor in neglect. Feedback from the conference will help develop an action plan led by the neglect sub-group.
- 54 Although teenage conceptions across the county have greatly reduced, they remain higher than nationally. To help young people make informed choices and in preparation for the introduction of statutory Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) in September 2020, a range of interventions, co-ordinated through the Teenage Parent Steering Group and delivered by key stakeholders, has been put in place. The Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS) delivered by County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT) are increasing their offer for young people particularly in areas where conception rates are consistently 20% higher than the Durham average. The ISHS have recently consulted service users with the aim of improving the service offered this includes the following;
- (a) Increase in the numbers of community-based evening Teen Plus Contraception and Sexual Health (CaSH) /GUM clinics;
 - (b) Ensure that weekend provision of CaSH/GUM is made available;

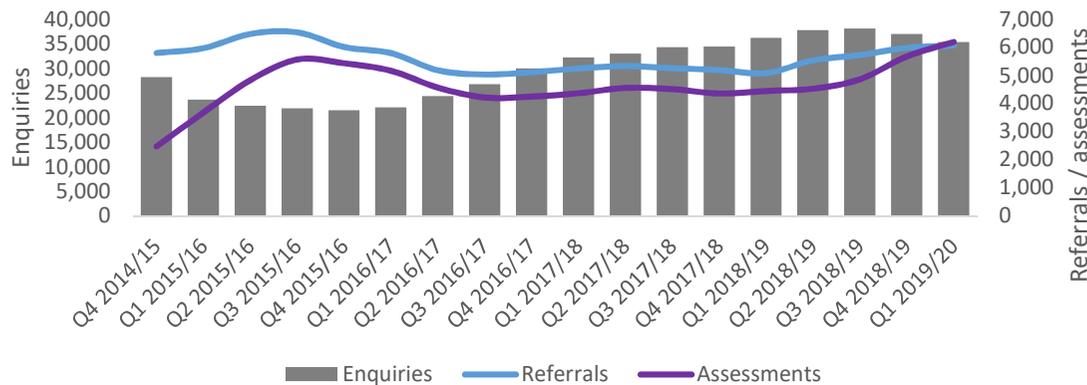
3. Are children, young people and families in receipt of social work services appropriately supported and safeguarded?

↓ 2% in enquiries compared to Jun 18

↑ 19% in referrals compared to Jun 18

↑ 39% in single assessments compared to Jun 18

Enquiries, Referrals and Assessments (rolling 12 months)



91% social work assessments completed within 45 working days (Apr-Jun19)
Highest ever in June 2019 at 96%

Number of children on a Child Protection Plan (CPP)



Quality of case work Collaborative audits (Jan-Mar19)

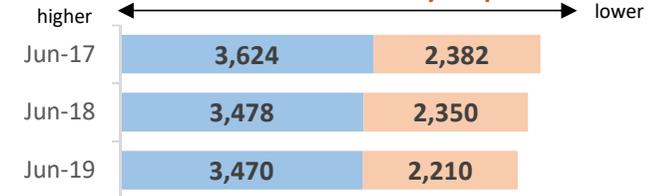
86% case files given a scaling score of 6 or above



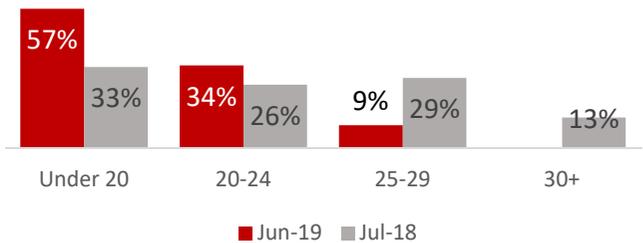
Number of children by level of need

Level 4 (statutory cases)
LAC, CPP, Children in Need

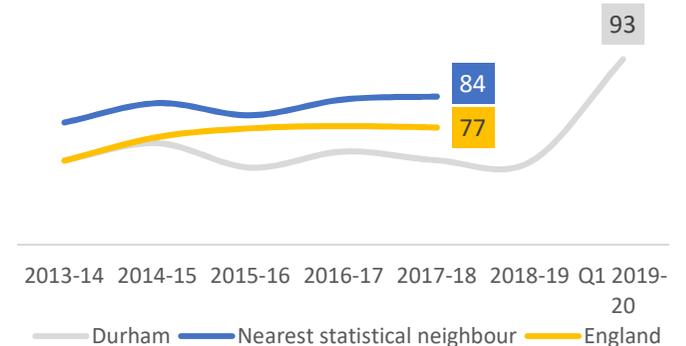
Level 3/2
One Point Service,
Early Help



Social Worker - Caseload Distribution



% of Initial Child Protection Conferences held within 15 days of Section 47 investigation commencing



- (c) Increase in the number of community-based walk in Teen Plus CaSH clinics;
- (d) Increase in the number of school-based CaSH clinics.

55 The Student Voice Survey was carried out in early 2019 for the third year. Responses were received from 3,111 pupils attending 74 primary schools and 5,625 pupils attending 29 secondary schools across County Durham. Analysis of these results is ongoing and will be reported later this year; key topics include achievement and quality of teaching, safety and bullying, use of technology, careers advice, and wellbeing, including eating habits, mental health, alcohol and drugs and culture and sport.

Are children, young people and families in receipt of social work services appropriately supported and safeguarded?

- 56 As at 30 June 2019, our statutory social work teams were supporting 3,470 children, including 368 children on a child protection plan and 873 children in care.
- 57 During quarter 1, around nine in ten children's case files audited were scored as six or above. Detailed analysis of our collaborative audit work is routinely reported to our social care Quality Improvement Board and corrective action and support put in place where the need for improvement is identified. We have commissioned external peer review of our audit process. Improvements in practice are also being supported through more detailed review and analysis of performance information, as well as continued development / refinement of data reports and dashboards following the migration to Liquidlogic.
- 58 The move to a new case management system was driven by a recommendation from our 2016 Children's Services Ofsted inspection to "continue with the plan to review existing recording systems to ensure that children's case records are organised in such a way that they present a coherent, accurate and easily accessible picture of a child's journey". Moving to a new children's social care case management system is a significant and complex project which is providing many modernising improvement opportunities to process and present performance data and management information in new ways as well as develop our understanding of outcomes for children and families.
- 59 Some significant performance improvements are evident, supported by the introduction of monthly performance clinics across the social care service. Highlights include the timeliness of assessments and initial child protection conferences.

Number of Children Looked After



Children's Commissioner Stability Index 2019

CLA with **0 Social Worker changes** over 12 months

46%

39% England

43% Statistical Neighbours

CLA with **0 placement changes** over 24 months

57%

53% England

52% Statistical Neighbours

CLA with **any school changes** in 1 year

14%

17% England

16% Statistical Neighbours

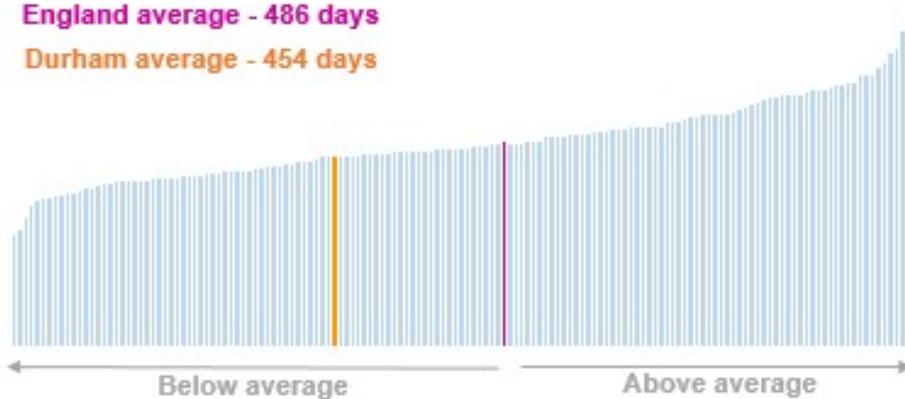


The [Stability Index](#) is an annual measure of the stability of the lives of children in care. It was first launched by the Children's Commissioner in 2017 to shine a light on the issue of stability... and ultimately drive improvements in stability for children in care. (Data relates 2017/18)

Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (2015-18)

England average - 486 days

Durham average - 454 days



One child comes into care every day!



Could you offer a child a loving home?

Where do our children in care live?	%
In-house foster care	48.0
Friends and family	16.4
Independent Fostering Agency	14.4
Placed with parents	7.7
In-house residential (incl. children's homes)	3.6
External residential (incl. children's homes and res school)	4.0
Placed for adoption	3.2
Independent living (incl. supported lodgings)	2.3
Secure (incl. YOI and prisons)	0.2

- 60 A reduction in children on a child protection plan (CPP) is evident. Initial analysis has begun which shows that of those CPPs closed in less than three months the most common reason was the child becoming looked after (four in ten children) but for those CPPs closed in over three months the main reason was that “threshold of significant harm no longer being met”. We will continue to provide updates on our findings.
- 61 Signs of Safety, which continues to be implemented across the service as the model for practice, has been positively received by social workers, children, young people and families. This is in addition to a new system of collaborative audits, making practitioners, children, young people and families central to the audit process. Social workers value the feedback and learning the process provides. The quality of the case files, which were audited during the quarter, has improved and reflects ongoing improvements.
- 62 In the last six months, eight agency workers have been employed on permanent contracts and a further four are currently undergoing pre-employment checks for new posts. This is part of a strategic investment in children’s social care and, as a result, caseloads have reduced, with no Social Workers now having a caseload of 30 or more, assisting us in our aim to create an environment where good quality social work practice can flourish.

Are we being a good corporate parent to Children Looked After (CLA)?

- 63 As previously reported, the number of children in care increased in Durham from 2016 and then stabilised at around 800, this has however begun to increase again since summer 2018. Increases in CLA are evident throughout most of the North East and regional analysis has been undertaken. This analysis is intended to inform and support a deep dive of children looked after numbers, primarily examining if any trends or features can be identified which can explain the recognised increase in children looked after which will be led by the regional Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS). Despite the more recent increasing trend our rate of children in care per 10,000 children aged 10-17 is lower than the North East average and is third lowest in the region based upon provisional 2018/19 data.
- 64 It is encouraging to note that despite an increasing number of children in care, around eight in ten children in care live in foster care and the national Children’s Commissioner Stability Index 2019 identifies placement stability, social worker changes and school moves as better than national and statistical neighbour averages.
- 65 Linked to our increase in children in care, care proceedings across the county increased by 24% in 2018/19, whilst decreasing by 5% nationally. Durham has the 21st highest rate of care proceedings in the country. Regionally, only one council

was not in the top quartile of care proceedings nationally. The family courts used by the council, and other North East councils, regularly do not meet the 26 week target for care proceedings, with high levels of demand in the region prevalent. We continue to work closely between our children's social care service, legal team, Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) and the courts to achieve the best outcomes for children and their families. Fortnightly legal panels are well established to ensure as little drift and delay as possible for children and their families.

- 66 The next key foster carer recruitment period, our main campaign activity, will be in September. The 'empty nester' campaign is time marked by the start of a new academic term which heralds changes in family life and family composition. Last year, our highest number of enquiries were in September.
- 67 There were 48 children adopted from care in the 12 months to August 2019. Adoption timeliness is positive with the average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family in 2015-18 reducing from 2014-17 and lower than the England and statistical neighbour average.

Altogether Healthier

- 68 The priority theme of Altogether Healthier is structured around the following two key questions:
- (a) Are our services improving the health of our residents?
 - (b) Are people needing adult social care supported to live safe, healthy and independent lives?

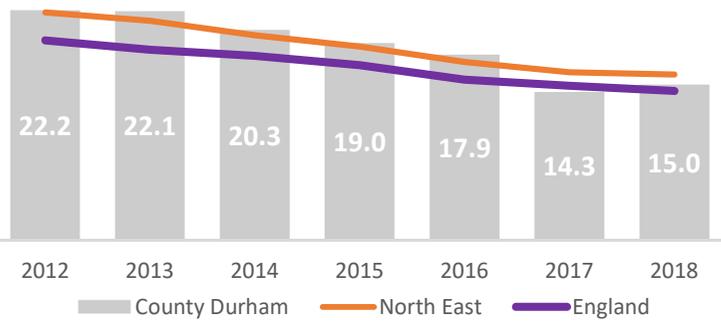
Are our services improving the health of our residents?

- 69 Since 2011 there has been a continued reduction in smoking prevalence across County Durham. However, the latest data ([Tobacco Control Profiles](#)) shows a slight increase in the prevalence rate. As the rate is calculated from a sample survey and remains within the estimated confidence intervals (+/-2.3), we do not believe this increase is significant but rather due to random sample variation. We will continue to closely monitor the data.
- 70 The government plans to eradicate smoking in England by 2030 by cracking down on the industry and pledging to help smokers quit or move to reduced risk products like e-cigarettes. In the meantime, [Stop Smoking Services](#) continue with various activities to reduce smoking. Campaigns such as the Fresh [Quit16](#) which highlights that smoking causes 16 types of cancer, and the [Take Seven Steps](#) campaign to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke, are included in training sessions for midwives, health visitors and other children and family's workforce.

ALTOGETHER HEALTHIER

1. Are our services improving the health of our residents?

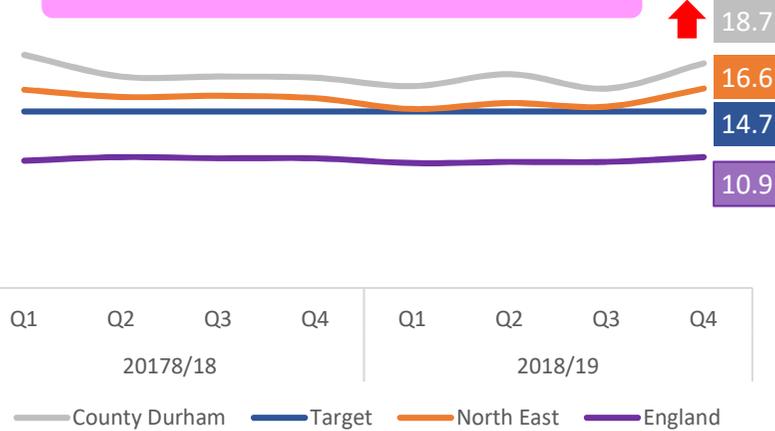
Smoking Prevalence – aged 18 and over



North East 16.0%
England 14.4%

29,000 fewer smokers than in 2012

Mothers Smoking at Time of Delivery

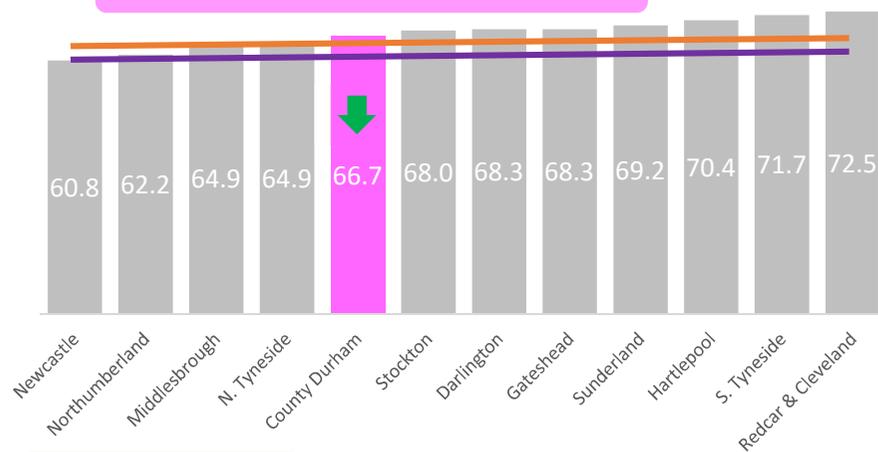


Mental Health

DCC participated in awareness week in May. Staff were encouraged to talk about mental health

More than **80** staff have signed up to become Time to Change Champions.

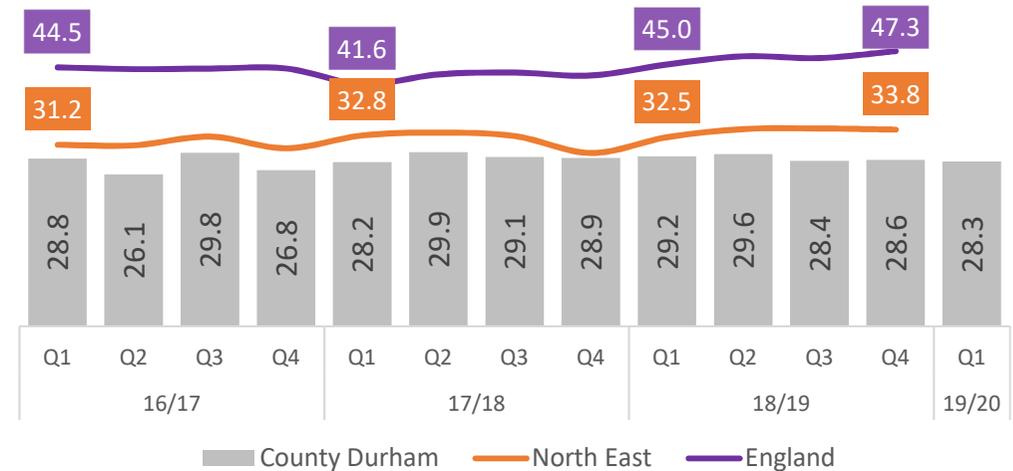
Excess weight in adults (2017/18)



North East 66.5%
England 62.0%

Almost seven in ten adults in County Durham have excess weight

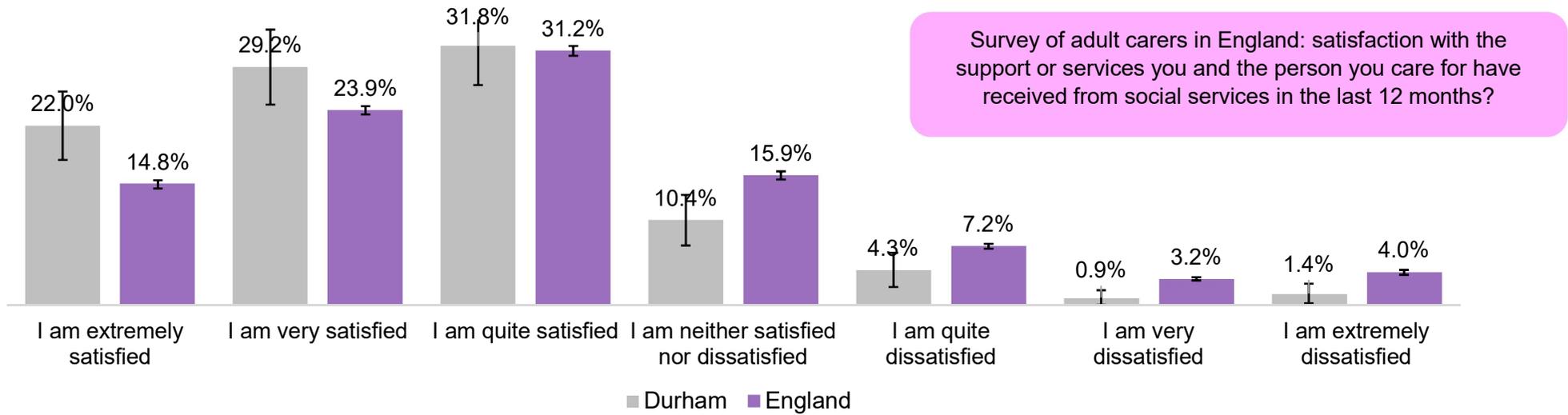
Breastfeeding Prevalence at 6-8 weeks



- 71 Reducing smoking in pregnancy remains a major priority. Not only are our smoking at time of delivery (SATOD) rates higher than both regional and national rates, there is wide geographical variation across the county. Sedgefield locality has the highest SATOD rate (20.6%) and Durham City the lowest (13.1%). Furthermore, analysis (pooled for the period 2014/15-2016/17) shows a clear social gradient across the county for SATOD. It is higher in the most deprived areas. We have identified those areas where SATOD is at least 20% higher than the average rate for the county to inform commissioners of where need is greatest and where resources should be targeted.
- 72 We also used this analysis to develop a three-year plan, for the County Durham Tobacco Dependency in Pregnancy steering group, with an overarching aim to reduce tobacco dependency in pregnancy to 6% or less by 2022. We are developing a 12-month action plan which includes a place based pilot in Shildon where Stop Smoking Services will be present at midwife clinics.
- 73 Latest provisional data shows that breastfeeding prevalence within County Durham remains lower than both national and North East averages. It has remained consistently under 30% for a number of years and is lower than national and regional data
- 74 As at the end of June, 155 businesses had signed up to our Breastfeeding Friendly scheme. Beamish Museum and East Durham College have received training and are now fully accredited. Training is also being discussed with our local Fire and Rescue Service and both of our Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure a positive environment for staff returning from maternity leave. We are hoping Dalton Park Shopping Centre will become the first breastfeeding friendly shopping centre in the county. Plans are underway for a Big Latch On event in Dalton Park and Wharton Park in August 2019.
- 75 During Mental Health Awareness Week in May, we encouraged our staff to hold conversations about mental health, and more than 80 colleagues agreed to become Time to Change (TTC) champions, actively tackling stigma and discrimination in the workplace and promoting good mental health.
- 76 During quarter one, we supported 63 organisations across the county to achieve the North East Better Health at Work Award. Organisations included Citizen's Advice, Durham Constabulary, DDES CCG, North Durham CCG, Hitachi, HM Passport Office and Northumbrian Water.
- 77 We are developing an 'approach to wellbeing' and held a stakeholder event to determine how the wellbeing approach can be incorporated into the commissioning of future services. The Wellbeing for Life service, supported by 40 trained health champions, has seen 888 clients on a one-to-one basis between April and June 2019.

ALTOGETHER HEALTHIER

2. Are people needing adult social care supported to live safe, healthy and independent lives?



196.7
adults aged 65+ per 100,000 population admitted to residential or nursing care on a permanent basis (Apr-Jun 19)

↓ compared to last year (199.5)

87.2%
of patients discharged into reablement/ rehabilitation services still at home after 91 days (Jan-Mar 19)

↑ compared to last year (85.9)

2.0
daily delayed transfers of care, per 100,000 population (May 2019)

better than national (9.2) and regional (5.9)

95.7%
of individuals achieved their desired outcomes from the adult safeguarding process (Apr-Jun 19)

↓ compared to last year (97.7)

- 78 The Joining the Dots project, providing support to adults with cancer, has now engaged with 252 clients: 147 clients with cancer, the remainder being carers, families or friends.
- 79 A review of the NHS Health Checks programme is underway to ensure clear pathways into lifestyle / behaviour change support are fully embedded. In addition, a pilot involving 22 pharmacies, held between February and August 2019, will identify irregular pulse and give brief advice and/or signpost to primary care. An evaluation of the scheme later in the year will determine if this is to be rolled out as part of the community element of the health checks programme.
- 80 We are reviewing the catering and vending offer inside leisure facilities and a trial (started May 2019) will offer a canned water only vending machine in Freeman's Quay Leisure Centre. This not only aligns to reducing single use plastic but also the sugar reduction agenda, as a mechanism to tackle obesity and poor oral health.

Are people needing adult social care supported to live safe, healthy and independent lives?

- 81 The latest survey of adult carers in England shows 51% of carers in County Durham are either 'extremely' or 'very' satisfied with the support or services they and the person they care for have received from social services in the last 12 months. This is an improvement on the 43% in the last survey in 2016/17. The result is also statistically significantly better than the England average of 39%. In Durham, only 2.3% of carers were 'extremely' or 'very' dissatisfied with the support or services received. This is an improvement on the 6% in the 2016/17 survey and is also statistically significantly below the England average of 7%.
- 82 96% of individuals achieved their desired outcomes from the adult safeguarding process. Although a slight deterioration from 98% over the same period last year, it is an improvement on the end-of-year 2018/19 performance of 95%.
- 83 Targets for the following two Better Care Fund (BCF) indicators have not yet been set for 2019/20, as the national planning guidance was not released until 20 July 2019:
- (a) 65+ permanent admissions to residential / nursing care
 - (b) the percentage of people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services.
- 84 The BCF planning submission from the Health and Wellbeing Board is due by 27 September 2019, so provisional targets will be available at quarter two. National BCF reporting will now not take place for quarter one. Both indicators have improved compared to the same period in 2018/19.

ALTOGETHER SAFER

How effective are we at tackling (1) crime and disorder, and (2) anti-social behaviour?

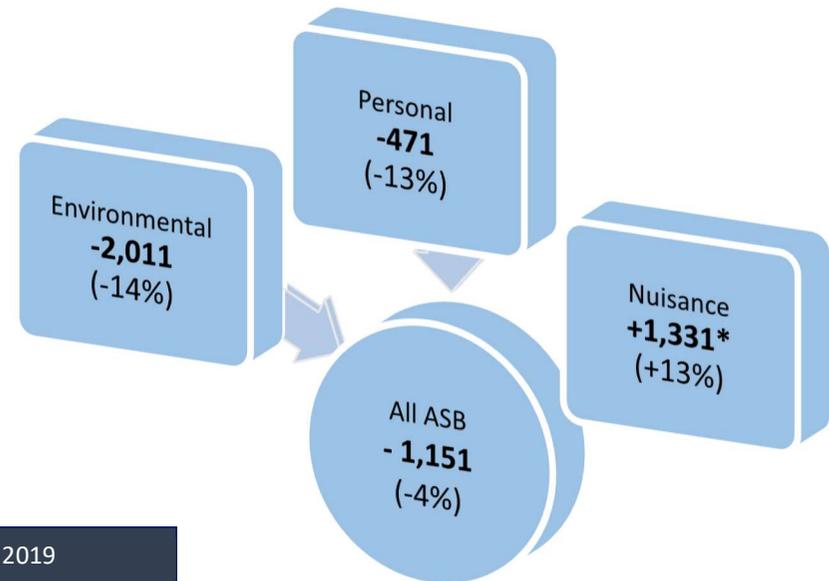
Durham Constabulary has been congratulated on **'excellent performance'** in its annual [police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy \(PEEL\) report](#)



You can view [County Durham Crime benchmarking data](#) and the level of crime in your area online by [Durham Constabulary crime map](#)



13,536 council reported	+299 (+2%)
13,586 police reported	- 1,450 (- 10%)



1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019
Compared to same period the previous year

*Now includes Environmental Health & Consumer Protection Noise

- 85 County Durham continues to perform extremely well in preventing delayed transfers of care. The data for May 2019 show that we recorded an average of 2.0 daily delayed transfers per 100,000 population, which is better than the England (9.2) and North East (5.9) averages.

Altogether Safer

- 86 The priority theme of Altogether Safer is structured around the following five key questions:
- (a) How effective are we at tackling crime and disorder?
 - (b) How effective are we at tackling anti-social behaviour?
 - (c) How well do we reduce misuse of drugs and alcohol?
 - (d) How well do we tackle abuse of vulnerable people, including domestic abuse, child exploitation and radicalisation?
 - (e) How do we keep our environment safe, including roads and waterways?

How effective are we at tackling crime and disorder, and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)?

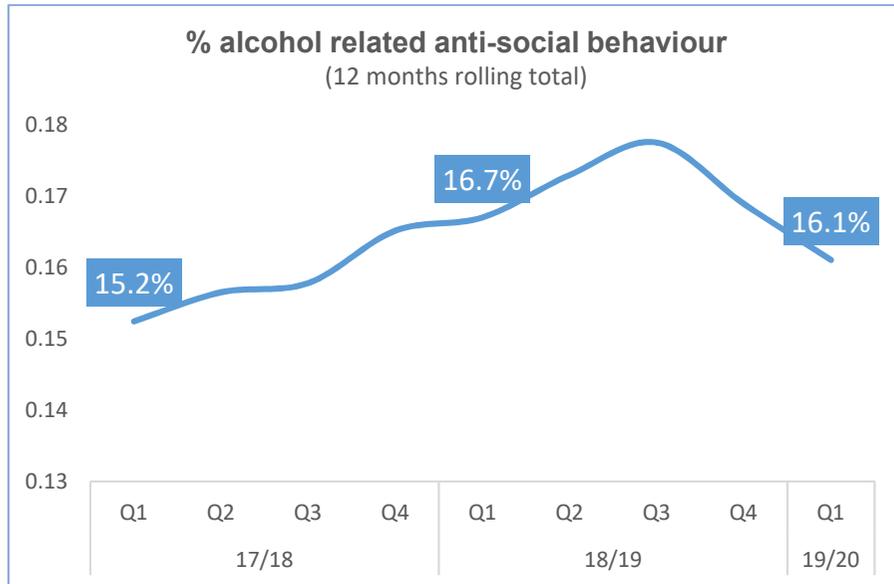
- 87 'Violence against the person' (VAP) is the most frequently recorded crime, this mainly consists of 'violence without injury'. Recent analysis shows that most violent crime is single episodes (70%), with repeats making up the remainder. Further analysis is underway to look at repeat victims of VAP crimes. Crime victims can potentially be victims of both 'violence with injury' and 'violence without injury'. Consideration is being given to target victim care/support/prevention activities on victims of 'violence without injury' to address the one category of recorded crime that has increased so markedly in volume over the last two reporting years.
- 88 Although overall theft, the second most frequently reported crime, has remained static, shoplifting continues to increase. The Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to review shoplifting as part of their 2019/20 work programme to determine if poverty could be an underlying factor.
- 89 Although 'possession of weapons' accounts for less for 1% of all crimes, we are concerned about the year-on-year increases over the last two years (69% and 41% respectively).
- 90 Council reported anti-social behaviour now includes 'noise complaints' reported to Environmental Health and Consumer Protection, as these 'complaints' are not included in previous data sets, the nuisance category of ASB has increased by 13%.

ALTOGETHER SAFER

How well do we (3) reduce misuse of drugs and alcohol?

17% violent crime alcohol related	↓ 8.2 pp	1 Apr 2018 - 31 Mar 2019	Compared to same period the previous year
16.1% ASB* alcohol related	-305 incidents (-12%)	1.5% ASB* drug related	-13 (- 20%)

*police figures only



Successful completion of treatment...

(Nov 17 to Oct 18 with reps to Apr 19)

- 29.5% (303)
- Target 28%
- England 37.9%

Alcohol



- 5.3% (80)
- Target 6%
- England 6.0%

Opiates



- 27.7% (207)
- Target 26.4%
- England 34.9%

Non-opiates



Alcohol CLear Assessment

CLear self-assessment tool helps partnership areas to assess local arrangements and delivery plans for reducing alcohol-related harm and identify opportunities for further development

- Recognises our robust partnership arrangements with political and senior officer buy-in
- Commends how active the public health team is across the alcohol agenda
- Highlights concerns regarding the lack of strategic engagement of NHS partners
- Identifies the need to refresh action plans and recognised opportunities for more integrated or joint working in areas such as alcohol licensing, information sharing and commissioning.
- Following the assessment, Alcohol and Drug Harm Reduction and Alcohol CLear action plans are currently being consulted on with partners.

How well do we reduce misuse of drugs and alcohol?

- 91 During quarter one, both alcohol related violent crime and alcohol related domestic violence increased. Alcohol remains a key driver in recorded crime and incident demand.
- 92 Drug offences account for only 2% of overall recorded crime and show only a slight increase compared to the same period last year. 'Possession' shows the most significant longer term increase. We have also seen increases in the number of reports of drug paraphernalia (including needles) within our 'enviro-crime' figures. Further geographical analysis is being undertaken to identify and understand hotspot areas.
- 93 We expect the government to publish a new National Alcohol Strategy for England in 2019. We anticipate it will include preventing and reducing harmful drinking (preventing dependency, improving pathways into treatment, preventing re-offending), tackling vulnerability and changes to the licensing regime.
- 94 We are reviewing our Statement of Licensing following public consultation which ended in May 2019. Feedback, where appropriate, will be used to develop the new document which will be launched in October 2019.
- 95 Training courses are available to our staff, through County Durham Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services, in relation to drug and alcohol including Cannabis and Brief interventions, opiate awareness and performance and image enhancing drugs.

How well do we tackle abuse of vulnerable people, including domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation?

- 96 Following continued increases over the past three years, domestic violence incidents reported to the police have fallen this quarter by 7%.
- 97 Repeat referral to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and Harbour, a charity working with families affected by domestic violence, continue to show a longer-term increasing trend. Despite fewer referrals to MARAC, there has been a 77% increase in repeat cases, compared to the previous year.
- 98 Process reviews have been undertaken by the police to improve efficiency against increasing demand in relation to several areas of multi-agency safeguarding work. Improvements included introducing multi-agency screening to medium-risk domestic abuse cases (thereby saving time sharing research / information). This has reduced processing times from 7-10 days to 1-2 days. A sifting process for adult referrals, avoiding duplication of referral to mental health services, was also introduced. As was a six-month pilot to hold 'dynamic' MARAC meetings twice weekly: received

ALTOGETHER SAFER

How well do we (4) tackle abuse of vulnerable people?

Domestic Violence (Jun 19)

↓ 7% in incidents

↓ 3.2pp in DV incidents classified as crimes

↑ 19.6% in incidents involving alcohol

↓ 5.6% of DV referrals received high risk (quarter four)

↑ 6.6pp in repeat referrals to Harbour within 12 month period

Operation Encompass in every County Durham school

Reported violence against the person (VAP) crimes with a domestic abuse qualifier (rolling total)



No. of child sexual exploitation referrals (12 months ending)



↓ 42 (-24%) compared to same period last year

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2015/16				
2016/17				
2017/18				
2018/19				
2019/20				

Preventing Modern Day Slavery

We have approved a new Modern Slavery Charter which outlines our commitment to preventing modern slavery in County Durham

To find out more about the charter, click [here](#).



More information about the Get Safe Online in Durham campaign can be found [here](#).

Apr/Jun 19 compared to same period the previous year

positively from all agencies, the more action focused meetings are leading to more prompt joint agency visits improving outcomes for victims.

- 99 Fewer young people have been identified as at risk of or subject to child sexual exploitation (CSE). The decrease is mainly attributed to better understanding, which has led to more appropriate referrals. The strategic Missing and Exploited Group (MEG) is developing a scorecard which evidences gender, age and risk level of young people on discharge from the service.
- 100 Durham Constabulary is refreshing the Child Sexual Abuse Exploitation Profile; findings are expected by the end of September.
- 101 Multi-agency training and awareness sessions have been delivered to police and partner agencies, following the adoption of the Police's initiative 'Intervene to Protect a Child'. Agencies include frontline professionals such as health, fire service, education, social services, scouts, brownies and swimming coaches with more is planned in the future. Training will be also be incorporated into the Police's Specialist Child Abuse Investigators Development Programme.
- 102 The Police's Street Triage Team, deployed to incidents requiring a mental health assessment to reduce officer time, is currently being evaluated. The Force Control Room is changing the process for identifying incidents tagged as mental health related. Control room staff are undergoing training to better define what mental health demand looks like.
- 103 The Vulnerability Intervention Pathways (VIP) programme, for adults with no parental responsibility who require a multi-agency response, aims to reduce adults coming to the attention of the Safe Durham Partnership agencies because of presenting problems, support needs, and repeat requirements for service. The programme has been evaluated and, of sampled clients, 70% had a reduction in total reported incident volumes. 95% had improvement in combined total assessment scores across ten problematic areas. Across 59% of the sample, there was a perceived improvement by the referrer. Mental health was identified as a key problematic area for VIP clients.

How do we keep our environment safe, including roads and waterways?

- 104 Both water safety forums, responsible for managing water safety in the city centre and countywide, continue to meet.
- 105 Throughout the year, the City Safety Group reviews incidents within the city centre to assess the effectiveness of existing safety measures. Following a number of incidents last quarter, involving individuals with poor mental health where self-harm or suicide were factors, the group has worked with partners to identify any required actions. There were fewer incidents during quarter one.

5. How do we keep our environment safe including roads and waterways?

People killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions*

209

16 fatalities
193 injuries

+35
(20%)

*CRASH recording system allows casualty information to be updated throughout the year and as such numbers and severity of injury can change. 2018 data has been verified and can be used for comparative analysis, published by the Dft in June 2019

Jul 18 - Jun 19

compared Jul 17 - Jun 18

28
0 fatalities
28 injuries

+8
(40%)

Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions*

Fatalities (rolling year)



Serious injuries (rolling year)



Road Safety
'Slow to 20'
by Dec 2019

Shotton Primary School, Shotton Colliery

St. Helen Auckland Community Primary School, St Helen, Auckland

St. Margaret's C of E Primary School, Durham

Waterway Safety

- **fourth** Dying to be Cool campaign this year
- more than **15,000** school children attended sessions
- **no** water related child fatalities in the county since **2016**

6% reduction in deliberate secondary fires in East Durham area (from 2017/18 to 2018/19) For more details, [click here](#)



Benfieldside Primary School, Consett

St. Patrick's RCVA Primary School, Langley Moor

Brandon Community Primary School, Brandon

[Dying to Be Cool](#)



- 106 During quarter one, the group undertook a further site visit to the completed Riverwalk development and arranged for a final assessment following the initial desktop review by RoSPA. It also arranged the installation of additional fencing at key parts of the footpath, in the vicinity of Pelaw woods adjacent to the rowing club and repaired existing fencing. This was completed in advance of the Durham Regatta.
- 107 The countywide group carried out a comprehensive review of all water safety priorities and risk to ensure its approach and use of resources is as effective as possible prior to summer 2019. Several site visits, in response to safety related issues, were undertaken and where appropriate additional control measures were recommended and passed to colleagues in the appropriate area for action.
- 108 Water safety assemblies were delivered to more than 2,000 primary and secondary school pupils. These were supported by a range of multi-agency communications, focusing on the school summer holiday period.
- 109 Although collisions resulting in injury decreased by 28%, there has been a slight increase in the number of fatalities and seriously injured. This quarter has also seen an increase in the number of children seriously injured.
- 110 A child casualty mapping exercise, combining areas of multiple deprivation with areas with high child casualties, highlighted Bishop Auckland and Shildon, Chester-le-Street, Durham, East Durham and Stanley AAP areas would benefit from specific initiatives. Individual analysis is being undertaken and the results reported to the associated Area Action Partnership throughout September 2019 to assist the delivery of target road safety education.
- 111 Six additional sites have been identified as suitable for the Slow to 20 for Safer Streets initiative and will be in place by the end of December 2019.

Altogether Greener

- 112 The priority theme of Altogether Greener is structured around the following three key questions:
- (a) How clean and tidy is my local environment?
 - (b) Are we reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change?
 - (c) How effective and sustainable is our collection and disposal of waste?

1. How clean and tidy is my local environment?

Reported and responded to fly-tipping incidents

↓ 889
(-11%)



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1												
2015/16				2016/17				2017/18				2018/19				2019/20

Top 3 fly-tip categories

451 household black bags

271 old furniture

231 mattresses and carpets

During quarter one;

24 cameras deployed

4 incidents caught on CCTV

12 stop and search operations

6 duty of care warning letters

5 producers issued*

369 further investigations

1 prosecution

6 FPNs

* producers are issued to scrap and waste businesses to produce their documents to show they are licensed to collect and dispose of scrap and waste materials.

Environmental Cleanliness: % of relevant land and highways assessed as falling below an acceptable standard

Litter



5.83%



-0.59pp

Detritus



16.22%



+3.61pp

Dog fouling



0.45%



-0.63pp

(18/19 compared to 17/18)

Graffiti Incidents

451

↑ 2.6% compared to same period last year

Bonfire Incidents

390

↑ 78.1% compared to same period last year

Reports of needles and drug paraphernalia

181

↓ 2.7% compared to same period last year

66 quarter one

↑ 24.5% compared to previous quarter

How clean and tidy is my local environment?

- 113 Although, litter and dog fouling continue to make up the majority of enviro-crime, fewer incidents are being reported. However, we have noted increases in bonfires, graffiti and drug paraphernalia (including needles). Reports of bonfires were predominantly seen within Crook, Seaham, Stanley and Newton Aycliffe, while graffiti concerns were mainly within Horden, Peterlee, Bishop Auckland Spennymoor and Durham. Almost two thirds of graffiti was offensive or racist. Drug paraphernalia was mainly concentrated within Durham City Centre. We will provide an update regarding actions taken to address this during quarter two, 2019/20.
- 114 Most fly-tipping incidents responded to this quarter were household black bags within the Easington and Durham City areas. Old furniture, mattresses and carpets were also prominent.
- 115 During quarter one, our Community Action Team (CAT) tackled a range of housing and environmental issues at Grange Villa, issuing 81 referrals and 14 legal notices. Additional patrols were carried out by neighbourhood wardens and the police, the fire service completed 11 Safe and Wellbeing visits and there were three housing inspections. Three properties were brought back into use, gates were reinstated to prevent fly-tipping, gas box covers replaced, weeds cleared, shrub beds improved, and new bins installed. The CAT team will move to Crook over the summer.
- 116 In addition, Spruce Up campaigns were carried out in Wolsingham, Grange Villa and Shotton Colliery. 88% of residents surveyed felt the work was a positive improvement.

Are we reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change?

- 117 Following our declaration of a Climate Emergency on 20 February 2019, we produced a [Climate Emergency Update Report](#) setting out; what we need to do to achieve our targets; what is required from the county as a whole (working in partnership) and measures that may be required on a national level. This report begins a wide consultation process across community, public and business sectors, as well as setting out some specific measures we plan to take.
- 118 One project in progress is the development of a solar farm at Tanfield Lea, expected to be operational from September. We are also seeking funding to develop an innovative project at the Louisa Centre, Stanley, where a mine water heat pump will be installed (alongside other energy efficiency measures) to provide heat for swimming pools and parts of the building.

2. Are we reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change?

% reduction CO₂ emissions in County Durham

-52%*
(2016)
from the
1990
baseline

↑ 4.7%
from
2015



Climate Change Emergency

- Climate Emergency Plan adopted by Council 17 July 2019.
- Public consultation on recommendations will begin in autumn.



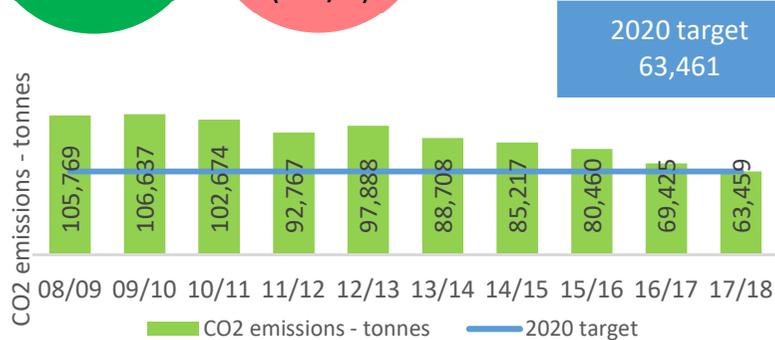
Electric Cleaning Equipment

- Clean and Green Team are using a new electric bin lift and road sweeper.
- Overall carbon footprint for electric sweeper is approx. one third of conventional machines.

-40%
from
2008/09
baseline

-9%*
(2017/18)
compared to
-14
(2016/17)

Annual CO₂ emissions from local authority operations



Single Use Plastics (SUP)

- The SUP pledge has now been signed by **73** organisations and residents.
- **11.3 tonnes** of plastic waste (equivalent of **2.8 million** plastic bags) incorporated into **22,477 m²** of road surface at;
 - A689 Sedgefield
 - Murton
 - A68 Toft Hill



*Latest available figures from Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

- 119 We also recently hosted our first [Climate Change Emergency Expo](#), showcasing projects, services and technologies from across the region, and providing information in relation to electric bikes and vehicles, walking and cycling routes, energy efficiency measures, recycling, woodland and peatland restoration projects and how to respond to flooding incidents.
- 120 Our Street Lighting Energy Reduction Project (SLERP), to remove almost 2,000 street lights and retrofit 60,000 more with energy efficient LED lights, has reduced energy consumption by almost 70% and is responsible for 8% of the reduction in our baseline carbon emissions, We are now developing a business case to retrofit an additional 15,000 street lights to further reduce energy consumption and contribute to our ambition to make the county carbon neutral by 2050.
- 121 We now use plastic in most of our resurfacing schemes, almost 100 tonnes to date, which is more than any other authority. This not only provides an outlet for single use plastic, it reduces bitumen required and carbon emissions produced.
- 122 The Durham Woodland Revival project, to conserve and restore the woodland network and improve resilience against disease and the effect of climate change, has received more than £400,000 of Heritage Lottery funding. Once in place, the team will provide help and support to woodland owners, people who would like to help manage their local woods and landowners wishing to plant new woodland.
- 123 Having completed the work to reinvigorate the existing 'red carpet' area of Chester-le-Street Market Place and create a location that could host festivals and events, as well as the existing market, the scheme to open up the Cong Burn, and alleviate flooding, is on target for completion in March 2020.
- 124 The Business Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP) has engaged with 259 small and medium sized enterprises to date. We have submitted a funding application to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which would extend the scheme for a further three years. We expect to hear the outcome in September.

How effective and sustainable is our collection and disposal of waste?

- 125 The government is currently consulting on flagship policies linked to its [Resources and Waste Strategy](#). The strategy, which sets out the ambitions for higher recycling rates, greater resource efficiency and a more circular economy, is intended to lead to changes in how we produce, consume and dispose of products and materials. The policies under consultation relate to reforming the packaging producer responsibility regulations in the UK, introducing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers and ensuring consistency in recycling. Updates, including the impact of these measures on the council, will be provided in future performance reports.

3. How effective and sustainable is our collection and disposal of waste?

95.3% of municipal waste diverted from landfill (Apr 18–Mar 19)

-1.3pp
(same period last year)

+8pp
(National 17/18)

+2.2pp
(same period last year)

-0.9pp
(National 17/18)

42.3% of household waste re-used, recycled or composted (Apr 18–Mar 19)



Recycling Matters Campaign

- Campaign aims to re-educate residents about what can/cannot be recycled and reduce contamination.
- From 25 June, stickers are being attached to all recycling bins reminding residents that bags (black bin liners, bags for life etc.) should not be included.

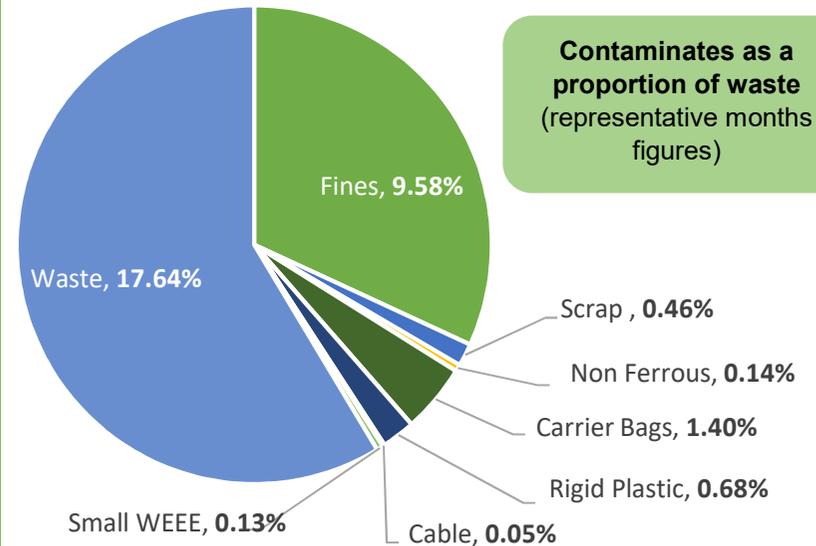
Stainton Grove Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)

• **175.17 tonnes** of material recycled at the site during May 2019 (34% of total tonnage received during 2017/18)

Proportion of waste collected for recycling identified as contaminated (12 months ending)



Mar 2017/18	Jun	Sep	Dec	Mar 2018/19
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Contaminates as a proportion of waste (representative months figures)

- 126 Latest waste figures show approximately 29% of the recyclate we collect from the kerbside is contaminated – 17% is waste that should have been placed in the general waste bin, and a further 12% is non-target material, e.g. hard plastics. Campaign stickers, urging residents not to put black bags into their recycling, have been placed on every household recycling bin and there are early indications that this is making an impact. During quarter one, waste collection crews received additional training in relation to contaminated bins and this has led to more bins being identified as contaminated.
- 127 Although we request that residents only place pure garden waste (grass cuttings, small branches, leaves, etc.) in their garden waste bins, we are aware that people are adding compostable and biodegradable bags. As these decompose at different rates, they are not suitable for use in the system employed at our current facility.
- 128 Since Stainton Grove Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) reopened in March 2019, following a £3 million refurbishment, there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of material being recycled. The re-use shop is proving popular and approximately two tonnes of items, that would otherwise have been sent for disposal, have been sold.

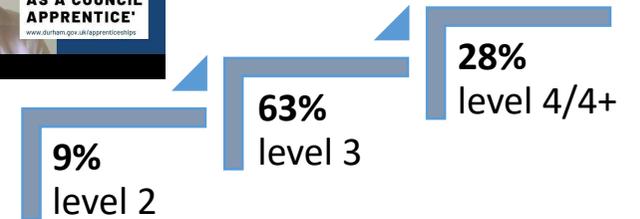
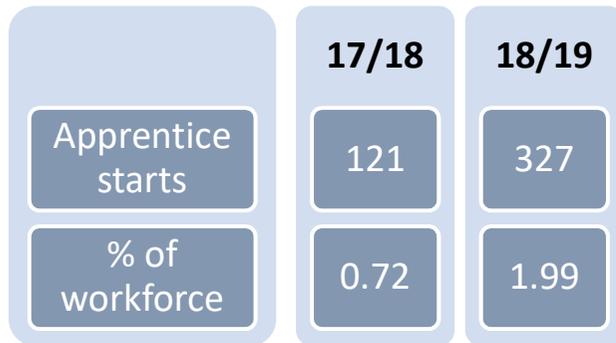
Altogether Better Council

- 129 The priority theme of Altogether Better Council is structured around the following three key questions:
- (a) How well do we look after our people?
 - (b) Are our resources being managed for the best possible outcomes for residents and customers?
 - (c) How good are our services to customers and the public?

How well do we look after our people?

- 130 During quarter one, in support of our application for gold status for Better Health at Work Award, we asked staff to complete a survey so we could better understand the factors affecting their health and wellbeing and develop an appropriate strategy and action plan. 2,662 people completed the survey and the main findings will be reported in the next quarter. The five campaigns for the Gold award will centre on; personal resilience, mental health, physical activity, women's health and men's health.

1. How well do we look after our people?



12 month rolling trend: days lost to sickness



59% of posts had no absence. 79% had 5 days or fewer

10.17 days lost per FTE equates to 4% of work hours

12.6% was work related

68% was long term (>20 work days)

34% due to mental health

32% due to 'musculo-skeletal'

Health & Safety incidents: 1,580 (Jul 18-Jun 19)

3 most frequent :

- 412 behavioural (26%)
- 211 physical violence & aggression (13%)
- 178 slips, trips and falls (11%)

6,077 days lost to work related incidents

% Staff Turnover (excl. school staff)

Jun 17-Jul 18

8.4

Jun 18-Jul 19

8.2

17/18 England Average

13.8*

* include school support staff, but exclude teachers

- 131 Having recognised the need to strengthen our approach to workforce development, we have made changes that will help us achieve our objectives whilst retaining and developing staff. All support and development available to managers is now captured in one place, and 'Durham Leadership Way' which details expectations of managers at all levels of the organisation will be available shortly.
- 132 We are expanding our suite of key HR documents. Our Workforce Strategy, focusing on re-shaping and developing our workforce, building leadership capacity and being a good employer, will be available later in the year. Our Valuing our Employees Strategy, consisting of four strands of engagement, recognition, benefits, ideas/innovation, will be available in the autumn. We are also developing proposals to take forward succession planning and talent management for key posts.
- 133 Simplification of key HR policies, making it easier for both managers and employees to find the information they need, continued with 'Recruitment and Selection' and 'Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace' policies.
- 134 Our new appraisal system, digitised through our Learning and Development System, has now been rolled out to all staff. Having gathered feedback from those who have used the system, we have further simplified the process, developed a short 'one-off' digitised transition Performance and Development Review (PDR) and improved goal setting functionality.
- 135 By December 2019, all employees will have completed a PDR reflecting on performance, setting future objectives and identifying learning and development needs. The digitised PDRs will be live documents, continually updated throughout the year at regular staff supervision rather than an annual document. Once this first cycle is complete, we will re-introduce the performance monitoring of appraisals into the corporate performance report. The new framework includes the offer of a coach, and our corporate coaching network was launched on 18 April 2019.
- 136 We have also launched the 2019/20 Corporate Learning and Development Programmes and allocated a dedicated fit for purpose training room to support their delivery. The two programmes (Employee Learning and Development Programme and Leadership and Management Development Programme) will meet all mandatory training requirements, corporate priorities and development needs.
- 137 In addition to these programmes, we have introduced two new mandatory e-learning courses for managers (coaching as a management style and mental health awareness) and will continue to provide further employee support to assist transformation such as the roll-out of Office 365.
- 138 Each mandatory element will be championed by a member of CMT who will agree, with the Head of People and Talent Management, the delivery methodology and content.

- 139 We are also required to meet the government's target that at least 2.3% of our staff (averaged between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2021) enrol in an apprenticeship, whether as a new recruit or part of career development for existing employees (upskilling). Actions, identified as part of our apprenticeship strategy to ensure the target is met, include identifying opportunities as part of workforce planning and a 'grow our own' approach to addressing skills shortages / hard to fill posts, holding drop-in sessions to increase awareness of apprenticeships and mapping apprenticeship standards against job roles. The complete action plan and progress to date can be found in our [Apprenticeship Strategy 2019-2022](#).
- 140 We continue to focus on attendance management and are working extensively with senior managers of services identified as having high absence rates. We are starting to see improvements in those services identified in April 2019 and, following a full progress report and sign-off in October 2019, expect to move onto other areas with high absence levels around December.
- 141 We continue with initiatives to reduce absence caused by the two most frequent sickness types of mental health and musculo-skeletal issues.
- 142 'Mental Health Awareness' training has been rolled out to tier four and five managers. The authority now has 102 Mental Health First Aiders (with another 128 completing their training over the next six months), 89 Time for Change Champions and 49 Health Advocates. We have also introduced a series of online courses including mindfulness and Zero Suicide courses.
- 143 Outcomes of the 'Get Up and Move' project include reducing ergonomic related risks through new ways of working and encouraging employees to work 'actively' throughout the day. The two-year pilot project within direct services of early intervention and improved musculo-skeletal health and wellbeing is ongoing. To date, 193 employees have attended appointments with Occupational Health.
- 144 We are working on delivering our 2019 flu vaccination programme, which is in place to protect both staff and vulnerable residents, and traditionally has a low take-up. Having gathered staff views via a survey, we have made changes to its delivery to include management buy-in and myth-busting in relation to perceived side effects. We are also working in parallel with the NHS flu board to drive vaccination uptake in the wider eligible population.

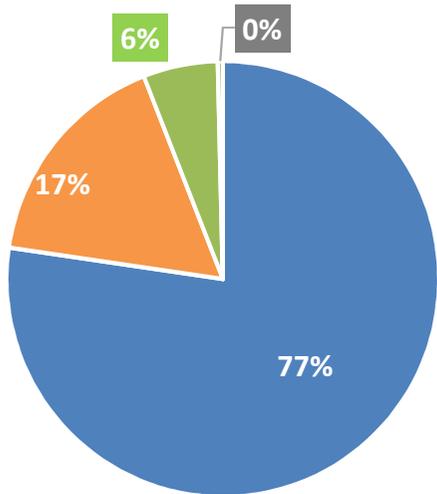
Are our resources being managed for the best possible outcomes for residents and customers?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 573,921 calls • 98% answered <p>Customer Services (ACD) </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 335,185 calls • 93% answered <p>Other ACD lines </p>
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Self-serve

- 164,000 self-serve requests logged
- 73% of waste permits
- 92% of garden waste joins
- 34% of bulky waste collections
- 46% of service requests
- 129 web-forms
- 135,752 accounts

Contact through customer services



social media: 2,898	↓ 34%
email: 41,373	↓ 15%
face to face: 124,062	↓ 17%
telephone: 573,921	↓ 10%

e.g. cultural events: timings, ticket availability, prices / recycling: what can be recycled, what can be taken to HWRC / costs & prices: bulky waste, pest control

e.g. new claims, change of circumstances, discounts,

e.g. bills / payments / unclear correspondence / arrears

Customer services: top actions

logging service requests	transferring calls	providing information	actioning CT requests	answering queries	providing progress updates	booking appointments
193,000	130,000	120,000	100,000	80,000	21,000	17,500

Unless stated all data is Jul 18-Jun 19, compared to the same period the previous year

145 The slight increase in reported behavioural health and safety incidents² followed further work which encouraged the reporting of incidents within educational and support establishments and highlighting the mechanisms to report. To assist with controlling risk, we are continuing to: provide training relative to risk; ensure specific risk assessments of problematic locations and cohorts; ensure adequate staff numbers to manage and control risk; work with teaching staff to ensure risk controls are in place where specific risks emerge; complete accident investigations to ensure compliance and identify opportunity for improvements.

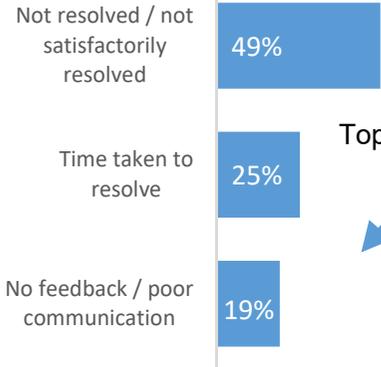
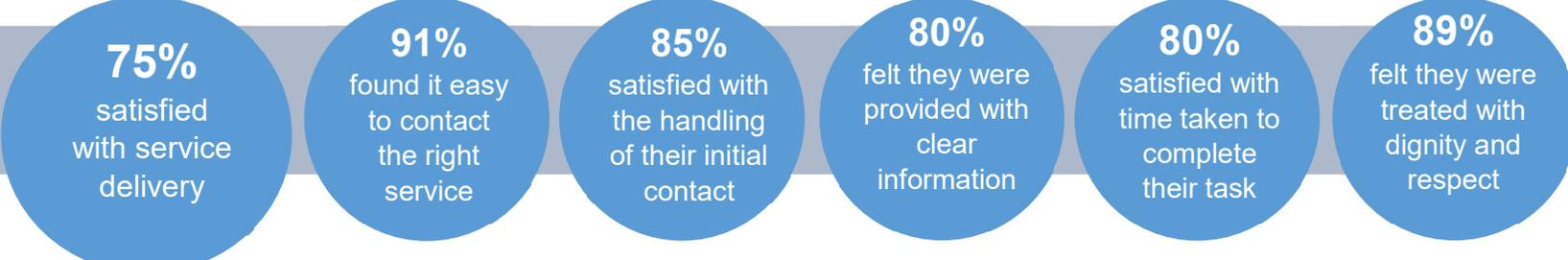
Are our resources being managed for the best possible outcomes for residents and customers?

- 146 As at the end of June 2019, almost 29% of council tax and 35% of business rates had been collected in-year, both in line with expectation. However, we are aware that the fluctuating incomes of people on universal credit, which results in multiple revised bills, is impacting collection rates, both nationally and across County Durham. We will be investigating the impact throughout the year.
- 147 Due to proactive promotion, there has been a continued increase in small business rate relief awards. Introduced in 2019/20, this retail discount, which aims to encourage small retail businesses, awarded over £2 million during quarter one.
- 148 Through our transformation programme, we are continuing to use digital tools, techniques and processes that make our internal procedures more efficient and effective. In addition, our integrated customer services initiative, to develop a customer-focused, one-council approach to service delivery, is underway.
- 149 Having fully mapped our First Point of Contact (FPOC) telephony offer, we are now widening our use of Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) technologies. This will standardise our telephony channel (including messaging and call routing), provide a strong foundation for the implementation of new technologies, and enhance reporting enabling us to develop a deeper understanding of customer demand and service performance.
- 150 We are also harmonising our activity by implementing quality assurance software across three of our larger contact centres and extending the use of workforce management software. We are also trialling various communication technologies to support collaborative and flexible working and improve customer journeys.

² The behavioural category in relation to Health and Safety incidents refers to service users who have a physical, learning or mental health disability which could lead to outbursts that are not appropriate for categorisation as intentional violence and aggression.

How good are our services to customers and the public?

Customer Satisfaction:
from the CRM closure process
(based on 4,093 responses)



Top 3 reasons people are dissatisfied

Customer experience of completing online request
(based on 25,797 customers)

- ★★★★★ - 61%
- ★★★★☆ - 21%
- ★★★☆☆ - 10%
- ★★☆☆☆ - 3%
- ★☆☆☆☆ - 5%

Unless stated all data is Jul 18 - Jun 19, compared to the same period the previous year

Customer Feedback:
from the CRM including compliments, suggestions and complaints

915 compliments (-116)	488 suggestions (-17)	177 comments about policies and procedures (-138)	10.5 average working days to respond	52% of complaints related to three issues:
182 objections to our decisions (-103)	123 dissatisfied with fees and charges (+76)	3,048 corporate complaints (+236) 3,018 investigated & 69% upheld*	Missed collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 938 • 31% of all complaints • 84% upheld
220 statutory complaints (+17) 140 CYPS: 37% upheld 80 AHS: 54% upheld*	177 independent investigation requests	84 decisions from the Ombudsman 13 complaints upheld (15%)	Issues with correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 476 • 16% of all complaints • 92% upheld
			Staff practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 172 • 6% of all complaints • 85% upheld

How good are our services to customers and the public?

- 151 During 2018/19, we sought views of both the public and employees on how we use digital technology and the areas we need to develop. We have used this feedback to develop our new digital strategy which will be launched in the autumn.
- 152 We held our first Digital Customer Feedback event in June 2019. A small focus group of six residents, who had all volunteered, provided some very insightful feedback that mirrors that gained from our satisfaction surveys and star rating. We are using feedback such as this to develop our website's home page and online forms. We are currently working on online forms in a pilot area (street lighting) and will provide a further update once completed, which is expected to be in September. Key milestones relating to the home page of the website will be provided in the quarter two report.
- 153 Although there has been an increase in recorded corporate complaints, this can mainly be attributed to a change in the complaints process, which re-categorised disputed missed collection service requests as complaints, and our increased activity to tackle contamination issues.
- 154 Performance relating to Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) has improved slightly compared to the same period last year. However, it has deteriorated when compared to the previous quarter. This is due to a capacity issue as staff are trained to operate our new FOI/EIR performance system, which will become fully operational in August. Performance is expected to improve steadily over the following months.
- 155 More customers are extending council tax payments over 11 or 12 months. Over 12,000 customers took up this option in quarter one, bringing the total to 28,000.
- 156 Due to our Digital Durham infrastructure programme, superfast broadband is now available to 96%³ of residential and commercial properties in County Durham, which is in line with the rest of the UK. As of May 2019, residential take up of superfast broadband services for coverage delivered was 58% for phase one and 46% for phase two - well above the government's programme targets of 20% and 30% respectively. We do not currently have figures that include commercial uptake, but will provide an update (including line speeds, availability start dates etc) at quarter three.

³ [ThinkBroadband](#) – County Durham Superfast and Fibre Coverage

- 157 It is ten years since we formed our Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and during this time, they have delivered more than 5,000 community projects, engaged with over 30,000 people and helped secure funding in excess of £100 million. They have also strengthened links with the towns and villages they serve, giving residents more say on how funding is spent and the opportunity to shape their local area.
- 158 The county has recently welcomed its 50th family under the vulnerable persons resettlement programme and vulnerable children's resettlement programme. The programmes are on track to assist with the resettlement of 250-300 individuals by March 2020.

Key Performance Indicators – Data Tables

There are two types of performance indicators throughout this document:

- (a) Key target indicators – targets are set as improvements can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the council and its partners; and
- (b) Key tracker indicators – performance is tracked but no targets are set as they are long-term and/or can only be partially influenced by the council and its partners.

A guide is available which provides full details of indicator definitions and data sources for the 2019/20 corporate indicator set. This is available to view either internally from the intranet or can be requested from the Strategy Team at performance@durham.gov.uk

KEY TO SYMBOLS

	Direction of travel	Benchmarking	Performance against target
GREEN	Same or better than comparable period	Same or better than comparable group	Meeting or exceeding target
AMBER	Worse than comparable period (within 2% tolerance)	Worse than comparable group (within 2% tolerance)	Performance within 2% of target
RED	Worse than comparable period (greater than 2%)	Worse than comparable group (greater than 2%)	Performance >2% behind target

National Benchmarking

We compare our performance to all English authorities. The number of authorities varies according to the performance indicator and functions of councils, for example educational attainment is compared to county and unitary councils however waste disposal is compared to district and unitary councils.

North East Benchmarking

The North East figure is the average performance from the authorities within the North East region, i.e. County Durham, Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-On-Tees, South Tyneside, Sunderland. The number of authorities also varies according to the performance indicator and functions of councils.

More detail is available from the Strategy Team at performance@durham.gov.uk

ALTOGETHER WEALTHIER
Do residents have good job prospects?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
1	% of working age population in employment	74.2	Apr18 – Mar 19	Tracker	71.2	75.5	71.1			Yes
				N/a	GREEN	AMBER	GREEN			
2	Per capita household disposable income (£)	15,445	2017	Tracker	15,166	19,988	15,809			Yes
				N/a	GREEN	RED	RED			
3	Number of gross jobs created or safeguarded as a result of Business Durham activity	2,429	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	379					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					
4	% of 16 to 17 year olds in an apprenticeship	7.8	as at Jun 2019	Tracker	9.8	5.8	7.6	7.7		Yes
				N/a	RED	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN		

ALTOGETHER WEALTHIER
2. Is County Durham a good place to do business?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
5	Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita in County Durham (£)	16,718	2017	Tracker	16,513	27,430	20,121			No
				N/a	GREEN	RED	RED			
6	Number of registered businesses in County Durham	17,150	2018	Tracker	17,120					No
				N/a	GREEN					
7	Value (£M) of new contracts secured	0	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	New indicator					Yes
				N/a	N/a					

ALTOGETHER WEALTHIER
2. Is County Durham a good place to do business?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
8	Value (£M) of GVA growth from jobs created	12.6	Apr-Jun 2019	10 GREEN	11.1 GREEN					Yes
9	Number of Inward Investments secured	3	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker N/a	0 GREEN					Yes
10	% of Business Durham business floor space that is occupied	86.1	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker N/a	82.4 GREEN					Yes

ALTOGETHER WEALTHIER
3. Do residents have access to decent and affordable housing?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
11	Number of properties improved, adapted or brought back into use	546	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker N/a	447 N/a					Yes
12	Number of empty properties brought back into use as a result of local authority intervention	73	Jul 18– Jun 19	50 GREEN	56 GREEN					Yes
13	Number of net homes completed	401	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker N/a	381 GREEN					Yes
Page 183 184	Number of affordable homes delivered	532	2018/19	200 GREEN	473 N/A					Yes

ALTOGETHER WEALTHIER
Do residents have access to decent and affordable housing?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
15	Number of households accessing the Housing Solutions Service	3,019	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	3,138					Yes
				N/a	N/a					
16	Number of households helped to stay in their home	260	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	202					Yes
				N/a	N/a					
17	Number of households helped to move to alternative accommodation	249	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	117					Yes
				N/a	N/a					

ALTOGETHER WEALTHIER
4. Is it easy to travel around the county?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
18	% of A roads where maintenance is recommended	2.6	2018	Tracker	2.6	3			2016/17	Yes
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN				
19	% of B and C roads where maintenance is recommended	4.7	2018	Tracker	4.7	6			2016/17	Yes
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN				
20	% of unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended	21	2018	Tracker	20	17			2016/17	Yes
				N/a	AMBER	RED				
21	Highways maintenance backlog (£millions)	179.7	2018	Tracker	187.6					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					

ALTOGETHER WEALTHIER

4. Is it easy to travel around the county?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
22	Bridge Stock Condition – Principal Roads	80.7	2018	Tracker	80.0					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					
23	Bridge Stock Condition – Non-Principal Roads	79.9	2018	Tracker	81.0					Yes
				N/a	AMBER					

ALTOGETHER WEALTHIER

5. How well do tourism and cultural events contribute to our local economy?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
24	Number of visitors to County Durham (million)	19.71	2017	Tracker	19.3					No
				N/a	GREEN					
25	Number of jobs supported by the visitor economy	11,682	2017	Tracker	11,158					No
				N/a	GREEN					
26	Amount (£ million) generated by the visitor economy	866.71	2017	Tracker	806					No
				N/a	GREEN					

ALTOGETHER BETTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Are children, young people and families in receipt of universal services appropriately supported?										
Page 186 Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
27	Average Attainment 8 score	45.0	2017/18 (academic year)	Tracker	44.6	46.6	44.9			No
				N/a	GREEN	RED	GREEN			
28	Average point score per A level entry of state-funded school students	33.4	2017/18 (academic year)	Tracker	31.9	32.4	32.5			No
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN			
29	% of pupils achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths (KS2)	67.7	2017/18 (academic year)	Tracker	64.6	65	68			No
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN	AMBER			
30	% of 16 to 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	5.3	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	5.1	2.9	4.6			Yes
				N/a	RED	RED	RED			
31	Gap between average Attainment 8 score of Durham disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally (KS4)	-14.5	2017/18 (academic year)	Tracker	-13	-13.5	-15.4			No
				N/a	RED	RED	GREEN			
32	% of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieving a Good Level of Development	72.8	2017/18 (academic year)	64	71.9	71.6	71.5			No
				GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN			
33	Gap between % of Durham disadvantaged pupils and % of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally who achieve expected standard in reading, writing and maths (KS2)	-18	2017/18 (academic year)	Tracker	-18	-20	-16			No
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN	RED			
34	Ofsted % of Primary schools judged good or better	90	as at 30 Jun 19	Tracker	92	87	91		as at 31 May 19	Yes
				N/a	AMBER	GREEN	AMBER			
35	Ofsted % of secondary schools judged good or better	64	as at 30 Jun 19	Tracker	61	75	56		as at 31 May 19	Yes
				N/a	GREEN	RED	GREEN			

*provisional data

ALTOGETHER BETTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Are children, young people and families in receipt of universal services appropriately supported?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
36	Exclusion from school of all Durham children - percentage of children with at least one fixed exclusion	2.16	2017/18 (academic year)	Tracker	1.95	2.33	2.81		2016/17 (academic year)	No
				N/a	RED	GREEN	GREEN			
37	% of all school pupils eligible for and claiming Free School Meals (FSM)	20.8	Jan 2019	Tracker	19.4	15.4	21			Yes
				N/a	RED	RED	GREEN			
38	Under-18 conception rate per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 17	23.7	2017	Tracker	21.6	17.9	24.7			No
				N/a	RED	RED	GREEN			
39	% of five year old children free from dental decay	74.2	2016/17	Tracker	64.9	76.7	76.1			No
				N/a	GREEN	RED	AMBER			
40	Alcohol specific hospital admissions for under 18s (rate per 100,000)	53.1	2015/16-2017/18	Tracker	56.2	32.9	62.7			No
				N/a	GREEN	RED	GREEN			
41	Young people aged 10-24 admitted to hospital as a result of self-harm (rate per 100,000)	350.1	2017/18	Tracker	400.8	421.2	458.0			No
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN			
42	% of children aged 4 to 5 years classified as overweight or obese	25.0	2017/18 (academic year)	Tracker	24.1	22.4	25.0			No
				N/a	AMBER	RED	GREEN			
43	% of children aged 10 to 11 years classified as overweight or obese	37.1	2017/18 (academic year)	Tracker	37.7	34.3	37.5			No
				N/a	GREEN	RED	GREEN			
44	% of Education Health and Care Plans completed in the statutory 20 week time period (excl. exceptions)	63.9	Jan-Jun 2019	90	92.4	60.1	81.7		2018	Yes
				RED	RED	GREEN	RED			

ALTOGETHER BETTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

3. Are children, young people and families in receipt of social work services appropriately supported and safeguarded?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
51	Rate of children in need per 10,000 population aged under 18 (statutory L4 open cases) [number of children]	345.1 [3,470]	as at 30 Jun 19	Tracker	346.9 [3,478]	341	460	404	as at 31 Mar 18	Yes
				N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a		
52	Rate of children at level 2 or 3 per 10,000 population aged under 18 (One Point open cases) [number of children]	219.8 [2,210]	as at 30 Jun 19	Tracker	228.4 [2,291]					Yes
				N/a	N/a					
53	% of strategy meetings initiated which led to an initial child protection conference being held within 15 working days	92.5 [147]	Apr-Jun 2019	75	72.5 [137]	77	83	84	2017/18	Yes
				GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN		
54	% of Social Workers with fewer than 20 cases	52.1	as at 9 Apr 19	Tracker	45.5	44.1				Yes
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN				
55	% of Statutory Case File Audits which are given a scaling score of 6 or above	85.7	Apr-Jun 2019	80	New indicator					Yes
				GREEN	N/a					

ALTOGETHER BETTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

4. Are we being a good corporate parent to Looked After Children?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
56	Rate of children looked after per 10,000 population aged under 18 [number of children]	86.8 [873]	as at 30 Jun 19	Tracker	80.5 [807]	64	95	90	as at 31 Mar 18	Yes
				N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a		

ALTOGETHER BETTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Are we being a good corporate parent to Looked After Children?

Page 190 Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
57	% of children adopted from care (as % of total children leaving care) [number of children]	9* [7 of 78]	Apr-Jun 2019	15	12.5 [10 of 80]	13	14	19	2017/18	Yes
				RED	RED	RED	RED	RED		
58	% of CLA who are fostered	77.7 [678]	as at 30 Jun 19	Tracker	80 [646]	73	77	73	2017/18	Yes
				N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a		
59	% of external residential placements	3.6 [31]	as at 30 Jun 19	Tracker	3.2 [26]					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					
60	% of children looked after continuously for 12 months or more who had a dental check	94.7	as at 30 Jun 19	Tracker	93.7	88	94	95	2017/18	Yes
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN	RED	RED		
61	% of children looked after continuously for 12 months or more who have had the required number of health assessments	89.8	as at 30 Jun 19	Tracker	89.9	88	94	95	2017/18	Yes
				N/a	AMBER	GREEN	RED	RED		
62	Emotional and behavioural health of children looked after continuously for 12 months or more (score between 0 to 40)	15.5	2017/18	Tracker	16.0	14.2	14.1	14.0		No
				N/a	GREEN	RED	RED	RED		
63	Average Attainment 8 score of Children Looked After	23.2	2017/18 (academic year)	Tracker	21.9	18.9	20.8	19.5	2017/18 (academic year)	No
				N/a	N/a	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN		
64	% of CLA achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths (at KS2)	36.6	2017/18 (academic year)	Tracker	35	35	44	38	2017/18 (academic year)	No
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN	RED	RED		
65	% of care leavers aged 17-18 in education, employment or training (EET)	Data being validated	Data being validated	Tracker	N/a	64	66	64	2017/18	No
				N/a	N/a	GREEN	RED	GREEN		

ALTOGETHER BETTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

4. Are we being a good corporate parent to Looked After Children?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
66	% of care leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment or training (EET)	Data being validated	Data being validated	Tracker	N/a	51	52	58	2017/18	No
				N/a	N/a	GREEN	GREEN	RED		
67	% of care leavers aged 17-18 in suitable accommodation	Data being validated	Data being validated	Tracker	N/a	89	93	84	2017/18	No
				N/a	N/a	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN		
68	% of care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation	Data being validated	Data being validated	Tracker	N/a	84	91	90	2017/18	No
				N/a	N/a	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN		

ALTOGETHER HEALTHIER

1. Are our services improving the health of our residents?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
69	% of mothers smoking at time of delivery	18.7*	Jan-Mar 2019	14.7	17.5	10.9*	16.6*			Yes
				RED	RED	RED	RED			
70	Four week smoking quitters per 100,000 smoking population [number of quitters]	N/a**	-	N/a	N/a					No
71	Male life expectancy at birth (years)	78.3	2015-17	Tracker	78.0	79.6	77.9			No
				N/a	GREEN	AMBER	GREEN			
72	Female life expectancy at birth (years)	81.4	2015-17	Tracker	81.3	83.1	81.6			No
				N/a	GREEN	RED	AMBER			

ALTOGETHER HEALTHIER

Are our services improving the health of our residents?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
73	Female healthy life expectancy at birth (years)	58.7	2015-17	Tracker	59.0	63.8	60.4			No
				N/a	AMBER	RED	RED			
74	Male healthy life expectancy at birth (years)	58.9	2015-17	Tracker	59.1	63.4	59.5			No
				N/a	AMBER	RED	AMBER			
75	Excess weight in adults (Proportion of adults classified as overweight or obese)	66.7	2017/18	Tracker	67.7	62.0	66.5			Yes
				N/a	AMBER	RED	AMBER			
76	Suicide rate (deaths from suicide and injury of undetermined intent) per 100,000 population	12	2015-17	Tracker	12.6	9.6	10.8			No
				N/a	GREEN	RED	RED			
77	Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks from birth	28.3	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	29.2	47.3	33.8		Jan-Mar 2019	Yes
				N/a	RED	RED	RED			
78	Estimated smoking prevalence of persons aged 18 and over	15.0	2018	Tracker	14.3	14.4	16.0			Yes
				N/a	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN			
79	Self-reported well-being - people with a low happiness score	8.9	2017/18	Tracker	6.9	8.2	9.1			No
				N/a	RED	AMBER	GREEN			
80	Participation in Sport and Physical Activity: active	58.5%	Nov 17- Nov 18	Tracker	63.1	62.6	58.8			No
				N/a	RED	RED	AMBER			
81	Participation in Sport and Physical Activity: inactive	29.9%	Nov 17- Nov 18	Tracker	25.3	25.1	29.5			No
				N/a	RED	RED	AMBER			

*provisional data

** quality of data being reviewed

ALTOGETHER HEALTHIER

2. Are people needing adult social care supported to live safe, healthy and independent lives?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
82	Adults aged 65+ per 100,000 population admitted on a permanent basis in the year to residential or nursing care	196.7	Apr-Jun 2019	TBD	199.5					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					
83	% of older people who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/ rehabilitation services	87.2	Jan-Mar 2019	TBD	85.9	82.9	83.9	81.8*	2017/18	Yes
				N/a	GREEN	Not comparable	Not comparable	Not comparable		
84	% of individuals who achieved their desired outcomes from the adult safeguarding process	95.7	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	97.7	94.2		93.6*	2017/18	Yes
				N/a	AMBER	Not comparable		Not comparable		
85	% of service users receiving an assessment or review within the last 12 months	87.6	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	86.9					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					
86	Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support	66.6	2017/18	Tracker	63.6	65.0	67.9	66.3*		No
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN	AMBER	GREEN		
87	Overall satisfaction of carers with the support and services they receive (Biennial survey)	51.2	2018/19	Tracker	43.3**	38.7	47.2	41.8*		Yes
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN		
88	Daily delayed transfers of care beds, all, per 100,000 population age 18+	2.0	May 2019	Tracker	4.9	9.2	5.9	9.8*		Yes
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN		
89	% of adult social care service users who report they have enough choice over the care and support services they receive	74.9	2017/18	Tracker	73.1	68.2	72.1	69.1*		No
				N/a	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN		

*unitary authorities

** results from 2016/17 survey

ALTOGETHER SAFER

How effective are we at tackling crime and disorder?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
90	First time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10 to 17 (per 100,000 population aged 10 to 17)	257	Jan 17- Dec 18	Tracker	371	238	332	251		Yes
				N/a	GREEN	RED	GREEN	GREEN		
91	Overall crime rate per 1,000 population	25.8	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	25.3					Yes
				N/a	AMBER					
92	Rate of theft offences per 1,000 population	7.3	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	7.1					Yes
				N/a	AMBER					
93	Proportion of all offenders who re-offend in a 12 month period (%)	30.6	Oct 16 – Sep 17	Tracker	32	29.4	35.5			Yes
				N/a	GREEN	AMBER	GREEN			
94	Proven re-offending by young people (who offend) in a 12 month period (%)	46.3	Oct 16 – Sep 17	Tracker	41.6	39.2	41.7			Yes
				N/a	RED	RED	RED			

ALTOGETHER SAFER

2. How effective are we at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
95	Dealing with concerns of ASB and crime issues (%) by the local council and police	51.9	Mar 19	Tracker	53			56.4		Yes
				N/a	RED			RED		

ALTOGETHER SAFER

2. How effective are we at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
96	Number of police reported incidents of anti-social behaviour	13,573	Jul 18-Jun 19	Tracker	15,058					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					
97	Number of council reported incidents of anti-social behaviour	11,585	Jul 18-Jun 19	Tracker	12,495					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					

ALTOGETHER SAFER

3. How well do we reduce misuse of drugs and alcohol?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
98	% of successful completions of those in alcohol treatment	29.5	Nov 17-Oct 18 with rep to Apr 19	28	33.6	37.9	32.7			Yes
				GREEN	RED	RED	RED			
99	% of successful completions of those in drug treatment - opiates	5.3	Nov 17-Oct 18 with rep to Apr 19	6	6	6	4.6			Yes
				AMBER	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN			
100	% of successful completions of those in drug treatment - non-opiates	27.79	Nov 17-Oct 18 with rep to Apr 19	26.4	30.6	34.9	25.7			Yes
				GREEN	RED	RED	GREEN			
101	% of anti-social behaviour incidents that are alcohol related	16.1	Jun 19	Tracker	18.5					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					
102 Page 102 561095	% of violent crime that is alcohol related	17	Jun 19	Tracker	25.2					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					

ALTOGETHER SAFER

How well do we reduce misuse of drugs and alcohol?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
103	Alcohol seizures	194	Apr-Jun 2018	Tracker	398					No
				N/a	GREEN					

ALTOGETHER SAFER

4. How well do we tackle abuse of vulnerable people, including domestic abuse, child exploitation and radicalisation?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
104	Building resilience to terrorism (self-assessment). Scored on level 1 (low) to 5 (high)	3	2017/18	Tracker	3					No
				N/a	GREEN					
105	Number of child sexual exploitation referrals	128	Jul 18-Jun19	Tracker	191					Yes
				N/a	N/a					

ALTOGETHER SAFER

5. How do we keep our environment safe, including roads and waterways?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
106	Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	209	Jul 18 – Jun 19	Tracker	174					Yes
	- Number of fatalities	16		N/a	RED					
	- Number of seriously injured	193			11					
107	Number of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	28	Jul 18 – Jun 19	Tracker	20					Yes
	- Number of fatalities	0		N/a	RED					
	- Number of seriously injured	28			0					

ALTOGETHER GREENER

1. How clean and tidy is my local environment?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
108	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of litter that fall below an acceptable level	5.83	2018/19	Tracker	6.24					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					
109	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of detritus that fall below an acceptable level	16.22	2018/19	Tracker	12.61					Yes
				N/a	RED					
110	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of dog fouling that fall below an acceptable level	0.45	2018/19	Tracker	1.08					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					

ALTOGETHER GREENER

Page 198 How clean and tidy is my local environment?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
111	Number of fly-tipping incidents	7,052	Jul 18- Jun 19	Tracker	7,941					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					

*Not directly comparable

ALTOGETHER GREENER

2. Are we reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
112	% reduction in CO ₂ emissions in County Durham (by 40% by 2020 and 55% by March 2031)	52.3	2016	Tracker	49.9					No
				N/a	GREEN					
113	% change in CO ₂ emissions from local authority operations	-9	2017/18	Tracker	-14					No
				N/a	RED					

ALTOGETHER GREENER

3. How effective and sustainable is our collection and disposal of waste?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter	
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different		
114	% of municipal waste diverted from landfill	95.3	Apr 18 – Mar 19	95	96.6	87.3	92			2017/18	Yes
				GREEN	AMBER	GREEN	GREEN				

ALTOGETHER GREENER

3. How effective and sustainable is our collection and disposal of waste?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
115	% of household waste that is re-used, recycled or composted	42.3	Apr 18 – Mar 19	Tracker N/a	40.1 GREEN	43.2 AMBER	34.5 GREEN		2017/18	Yes

ALTOGETHER BETTER COUNCIL

1. How well do we look after our people?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
116	% of performance appraisals completed in current post in rolling year period (excluding schools)	N/a ⁴	-	N/a N/a	N/a N/a					No
117	Days / shifts lost to sickness absence (all services excluding schools)	10.17	Jun 18/Jul 19	11.20 GREEN	11.10 GREEN	9.2 ⁵ RED			2017/18	Yes
118	% posts with no absence in rolling year (excluding schools)	59.13	Jun 18/Jul 19	Tracker N/a	57.73 GREEN					Yes
119	% of sickness absence which is short term	13.88	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker N/a	13.95 N/a					Yes
120	% of sickness absence which is medium term	17.74	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker N/a	16.15 N/a					Yes

⁴ Due to new system introduction

⁵ Include school support staff, but exclude teachers. All single / upper tier councils: [Local Government Workforce Survey 2017/18](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-government-workforce-survey-2017-18)

ALTOGETHER BETTER COUNCIL
1. How well do we look after our people?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
121	% of sickness absence which is long term	63.38	Apr-Jun 2019	Tracker	69.89					Yes
				N/a	N/a					
122	% of employees having five days or less sickness per 12 month period	78.98	Jun 18/Jul 19	Tracker	78.57					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					

ALTOGETHER BETTER COUNCIL
2. Are our resources being managed for the best possible outcomes for residents and customers?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
123	% of council tax collected in-year	28.51	Apr-Jun 2019	28.86	28.79					Yes
				AMBER	AMBER					
124	% of business rates collected in-year	34.36	Apr-Jun 2019	34.53	34.42					Yes
				AMBER	AMBER					

3. How good are our services to customers and the public?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Comparison to						Data updated this quarter
				Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	
125	% of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests responded to within 20 working days	76	Apr–Jun 2019	90 RED	75 GREEN					Yes
126	Customer contacts: telephone	909,106	Jul 18–Jun 19	Tracker	971,918					Yes
				N/a	N/a					
127	Customer contacts: face to face	124,062	Jul 18–Jun 19	Tracker	150,252					Yes
				N/a	N/a					
128	Customer contacts: web forms	135,402	Jul 18–Jun 19	Tracker	107,801					Yes
				N/a	N/a					
129	Customer contacts: emails	41,373	Jul 18–Jun 19	Tracker	50,622					Yes
				N/a	N/a					
130	Customer contacts: social media	2,898	Jul 18–Jun 19	Tracker	4,413					Yes
				N/a	N/a					
131	% of calls answered	95.9	Jul 18–Jun 19	Tracker	94.8					Yes
				N/a	GREEN					
132	% of calls answered within 3 minutes	91.8	Jul 18–Jun 19	Tracker	88.6					Yes

Appendix 3: Risk Management

- 1 Effective risk management is a vital component of the council's challenging improvement agenda, so that any risks to successful delivery can be identified and minimised. The council's risk management process therefore sits alongside service improvement work and is integrated into all significant change and improvement projects.
- 2 The key risks to successfully achieving the objectives of each corporate theme are detailed against each Altogether theme in the relevant sections of the report. These risks have been identified using the following criteria:
 - a) Net impact is critical, and the net likelihood is highly probable, probable or possible.
 - b) Net impact is major, and the net likelihood is highly probable or probable.
 - c) Net impact is moderate, and the net likelihood is highly probable.
- 3 As at 31 May 2019, there were 27 risks on the corporate strategic risk register, one more than as at 31 December 2018. During this period, two risks were added, and one was removed. The following matrix categorises the strategic risks according to their net risk evaluation as at 31 May 2019. The number of risks as at 31 December 2018 is shown in brackets.

Corporate Risk Heat Map						
IMPACT	Critical	1 (1)		3 (3)		1 (1)
	Major		5 (5)	4 (4)		
	Moderate			10 (9)	2 (2)	
	Minor				1 (1)	
	Insignificant					
		Remote	Unlikely	Possible	Probable	Highly Probable
	Key risks	LIKELIHOOD				

4 Two risks were added during the latest review period:

- (a) *Potential violence and aggression towards members and employees from members of the public.* Several incidents of violence and aggression towards members and employees occur each year. There are various triggers, for example, the enforcement of regulations and consultation activity. Other potential factors include the current national and economic climate, and incitement through social media.
- (b) *Risk of suspension notice under Regulation 37, Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016, leading to a partial cessation of operations at Mountseth Crematorium.* With the aim of preventing this risk, officers are in ongoing communications with the supplier of the cremator to improve the arrangements for ensuring compliance with the Environmental Permitting Regulations. Servicing activities and performance of the equipment are being monitored closely.

5 One risk has been removed:

Potential adverse financial and operational impacts of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 on the Housing Solutions Service. All mitigating actions have now been implemented and the risk has been downgraded.

6 At a corporate strategic level, key risks to the Council, with their respective net risk evaluations shown in brackets, are:

- (a) If there was to be slippage in the delivery of the agreed MTFP savings projects, this will require further savings to be made from other areas, which may result in further service reductions and job losses (Critical / Possible);
- (b) There is significant uncertainty in relation to future funding settlements from government, which will be impacted by the upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review and the Fair Funding Review (Critical / Highly Probable);
- (c) Failure to protect a child from death or serious harm (where service failure is a factor or issue) (Critical / Possible);
- (d) Failure to protect a vulnerable adult from death or serious harm (where service failure is a factor or issue) (Critical / Possible).

7 The implementation of additional mitigation on several risks has enabled the Council to improve performance, decision-making and governance, and this is detailed in the relevant sections of the report.

- a) **Altogether Wealthier:** There are no key risks in delivering the objectives of this theme.
- b) **Altogether Better for Children and Young People:** *Failure to protect a child from death or serious harm (where service failure is a factor or issue).* Management consider it possible that this risk could occur which, in addition to

the severe impacts on children, will result in serious damage to the council's reputation and to relationships with its safeguarding partners. To mitigate the risk, actions are taken forward from Serious Case Reviews and reported to the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership. Lessons learned are fed into training for front line staff and regular staff supervision takes place. This risk is long term and procedures are reviewed regularly.

- c) **Altogether Healthier:** There are no key risks in delivering the objectives of this theme.
- d) **Altogether Safer:** *Failure to protect a vulnerable adult from death or serious harm.* Management consider it possible that this risk could occur which, in addition to the severe impacts on service users, will result in serious damage to the council's reputation and to relationships with its safeguarding partners. As the statutory body, the multi-agency Safeguarding Adults Board has a Business Plan in place for taking forward actions to safeguard vulnerable adults including a comprehensive training programme for staff and regular supervision takes place. This risk is long term and procedures are reviewed regularly.
- e) **Altogether Greener:** There are no key risks in delivering the objectives of this theme.
- f) **Altogether Better Council:**
 - i. *If there was to be slippage in the delivery of the agreed Medium Term Financial Plan savings projects, this will require further savings to be made from other areas, which may result in further service reductions and job losses.* Management consider it possible that this risk could occur, which will result in a funding shortfall, damaged reputation and reduced levels of service delivery. To mitigate the risk, a programme management approach for key projects has been established and embedded across the council. Monitoring by Corporate Management Team and Cabinet provides assurance over the implementation of the agreed MTFP savings projects. It should be recognised that this will be a significant risk for at least the next four years.
 - ii. *There is significant uncertainty in relation to future funding settlements from government, which will be impacted by the upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review and the Fair Funding Review.* Management consider it highly probable that this risk could occur, and to mitigate the risk, sound financial forecasting is in place based on thorough examination of the Government's red book plans. This will also be a significant risk for at least the next four years.

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**



22 October 2019

**Scrutiny Review of Attendance Management – Update
on Progress against Recommendations**

Report of John Hewitt, Corporate Director of Resources

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an update to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) with regard to:
 - (a) progress made against the recommendations from the 2015 Scrutiny review of attendance management;
 - (a) management support / interventions, training and other relevant updates.

Executive summary

- 2 A focus on improving attendance and the robust and consistent management of absence continues to be a high priority for the council. Progress updates continue to be reported to Corporate Management Team on attendance management performance and identifying hot spot areas and associated interventions.
- 3 Average days lost per FTE in the rolling year to 30 June 2019, stands at 10.17 days. This is an improvement when compared to the previous quarter at 10.25 days and also when compared to the same period last year at 11.10 days. It should also be noted, 59.13% of current employees have had no absences in the rolling year period to 30 June 2019.
- 4 In addition to the advice and support provided to services in managing individual cases, HR works closely with Corporate Directors and Heads of Service to determine actions required. HR will continue to engage with Service Management Teams such as facilitating case review groups where appropriate, delivering practical workshop sessions to managers and supervisors.

- 5 Workforce health and wellbeing is a strategic priority for the council, agreed by Cabinet, and as set out in the Director of Public Health Annual report 2018. The council has actively contributed to the wider public health priorities across County Durham with forward setting priorities, in terms of mental health at scale, promoting positive behaviours, high quality drug and alcohol services and a healthy workforce.

Recommendation

- 6 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is asked to:
 - (a) note the progress update on the recommendations of the Scrutiny review of attendance management;
 - (b) note the work to date on improving attendance within the council by way of robust management in accordance with the Attendance Management Policy / HR interventions and associated actions.

Background

- 7 Over the last eight years, sickness absence / attendance management has been the subject of two light touch reviews by COSMBs predecessor committee (Corporate Issues and Overview Scrutiny Committee (CIOSC)). The last update on progress against recommendations was considered in April 2017.
- 8 Following discussion of the Q3 2018/19 Performance Management report at the COSMB meeting of 18 March 2019, Members raised concerns around the level of sickness absence and requested more information around attendance management as well as an update on the outstanding recommendations.
- 9 It was agreed that COSMB would include the topic within the 2019/20 work programme and for Officers to provide an update report to Members in the autumn.

Action Plan Updates

- 10 Further progress has been made against the initial actions identified by CIOSC. An updated action plan is attached at Appendix 2 which details the last information provided to Committee on 24 April 2017 but also highlights the updated progress.
- 11 A summary of the updated position on the outstanding actions is detailed below:
 - (a) **Long Term Sickness Absence (LTSA)** – absences over 6 months are reviewed on a monthly basis by HR and reported to the Head of People and Talent Management to monitor actions and ensure they are progressed appropriately. As at September 2019, there are 21 LTSA cases between 6-12 months. As an organisation of this size, it is pleasing to report a small proportion of cases are between a period of 6-12 months. This indicates that cases are being progressed robustly each month.
 - (b) **Mandatory Training** – the Head of People and Talent Management has progressed a number of initiatives in order to begin to build a fit for purpose workforce development approach for the council. Cross council comprehensive learning and development programmes (formerly the Durham Manager Programme) to meet mandatory, corporate priorities and developmental training requirements were launched in May 2019.

- (c) **Council Wide Employee Survey** – the last employee survey was undertaken in 2017. The Valuing our Employees Strategy (2019-2022) recommends the council undertakes a further survey to ask specific questions in terms of feeling engaged, aware of council priorities, values and behaviours, inspire programme, learning and development and health and wellbeing.

However, a recent employee health and wellbeing survey took place in May 2019 which was associated with the Better Health at Work Gold Award; details of which will be reported in Q2 2019/20 Performance Management report.

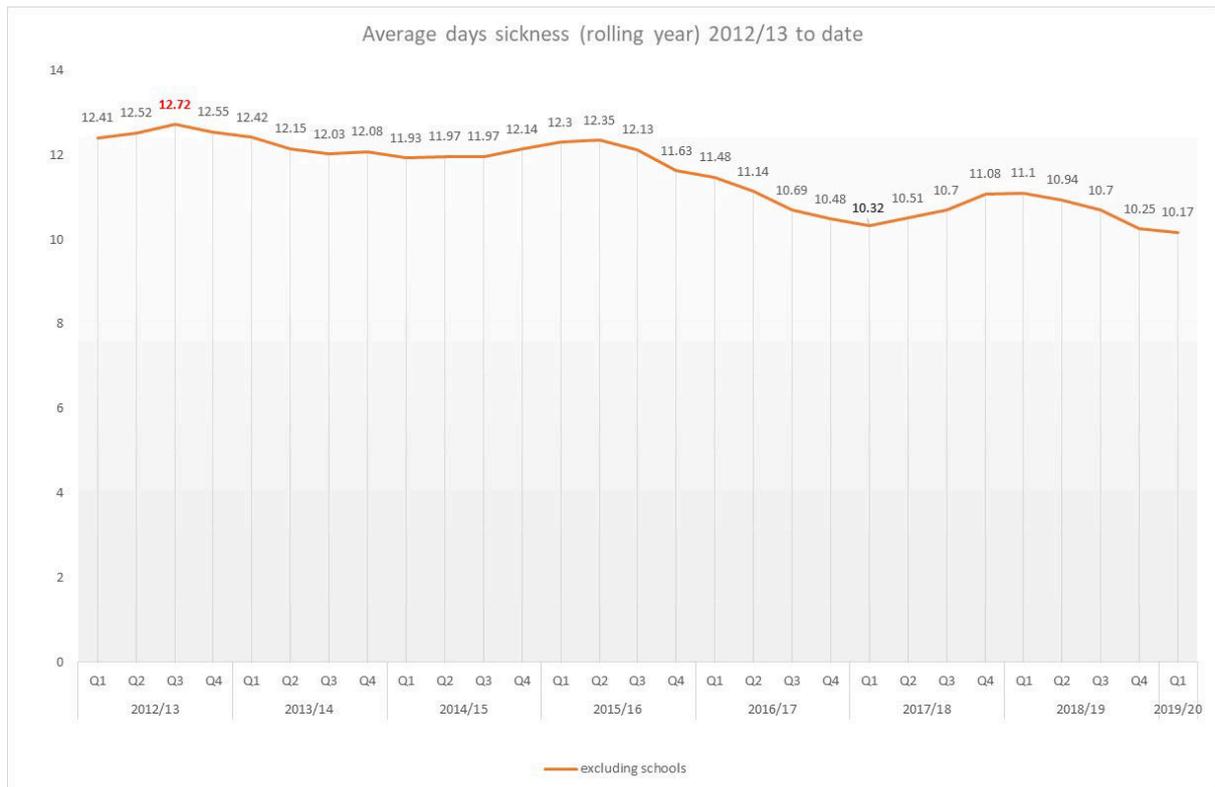
- (d) **Better Health at Work Award** – the council reviewed the employee health and wellbeing offer in 2016 and committed to achieving the better health at work award, starting with the bronze award status. The council is currently in the process of assessment for the gold award status, having achieved silver in November 2018. The council also signed the employer ‘time to change’ pledge in 2018 and this enhances the offer and commitment to employees.

Following an initial employee health and wellbeing survey in 2017, a second employee health and wellbeing engagement survey has been undertaken in 2019/20 as a requirement of the gold award application and will enable further interventions and initiatives to be undertaken in the year ahead. This will again form the basis of future workforce development activities. Activities and initiatives throughout 2018/19 have been based on the outcomes of the initial better health at work award employee engagement survey which were primarily associated with mental health/stress, physical activity, nutrition, alcohol consumption and musculoskeletal disorders.

- (e) **Automated Trigger Points / Business Alerts** – the Attendance Management Policy has been reviewed twice since the last update in 2017, in which all trigger points were reviewed as part of that process. As attendance management performance is continuing to improve, the trigger points will remain as they are, and will continue to be monitored as part of the Attendance Management Policy review cycle.

Current Absence Management Information

- 12 The graph below identifies the average number of days lost per FTE in the rolling year (excluding schools) per quarter since Q1 2012/13 to Q1 2019/20.



- 13 It is highly encouraging to see absence has continued to reduce for four quarters with absence now down to 10.17 days per FTE against a target of 11.20 days. It is important however, that absence continues to be a major priority for the council.

Outstanding Return to Work (RTW) Interviews

- 14 In line with the council's Attendance Management Policy, managers are required to undertake a RTW interview following every period of sickness absence, regardless of the duration, within 3 days of the return.
- 15 A total of 134 RTW interviews are outstanding (2%). HR will continue to target these service areas to stress the relevance of undertaking RTW interviews and provide support in relation to the quality of RTW discussions.
- 16 However, it should be noted that the overall total number of completed remains high at 5,970 (98%) (as at 18 September 2019).

Long Term Sickness Absence (LTSA)

- 17 The following table summarises the number of employees on long term sickness absence between 6-12 months and 12+ months from October 2018 to date:

Date	6-12 months	12+ months	Overall Total
October 2018	16	5	21
November 2018	17	2	19
January 2019	31	1	32
February 2019	18	3	21
March 2019	19	1	20
April 2019	22	0	22
May 2019	21	0	21
June 2019	25	0	25
July 2019	17	0	17
August 2019	23	0	23
September 2019	21	0	21

- 18 As an organisation of this size, it is pleasing to report a small proportion of cases are between 6-12 months (21 employees). This equates to 0.25% of employees, based on a headcount of 8,105 (excluding schools as at Q1 2019/20). There are no long term sick cases that are 12 months plus.
- 19 The management of long-term sickness cases over 6 months has been, and will continue to be, subject to careful monitoring by the Head of People and Talent Management on a monthly basis to ensure appropriate and timely action in accordance with the Attendance Management Policy.

Short Term Sickness Absence (STSA)

- 20 The following table shows the number of employees with 5 or more absences at Q1 2019/20 (in the rolling year):

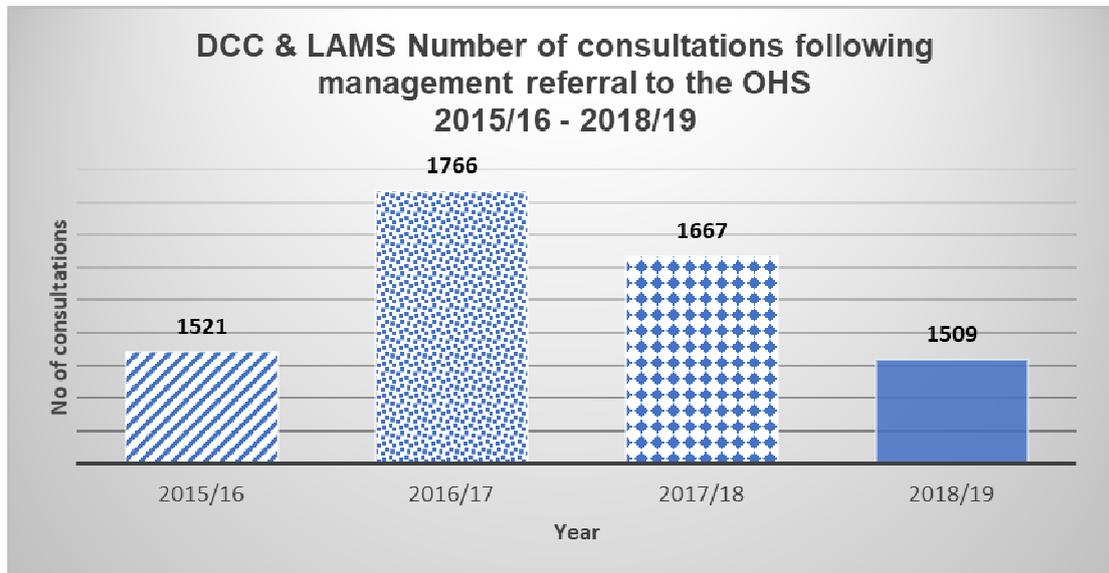
Short Term Absences	Q3 2018/19	Q4 2018/19	Q1 2019/20
DCC Total	68	71	88

- 21 HR continues to work closely with relevant service managers to develop an action plan for each of these cases, which will include mandatory target setting where there is no underlying and ongoing medical condition, and timely progression to hearings where required.

Management Referrals

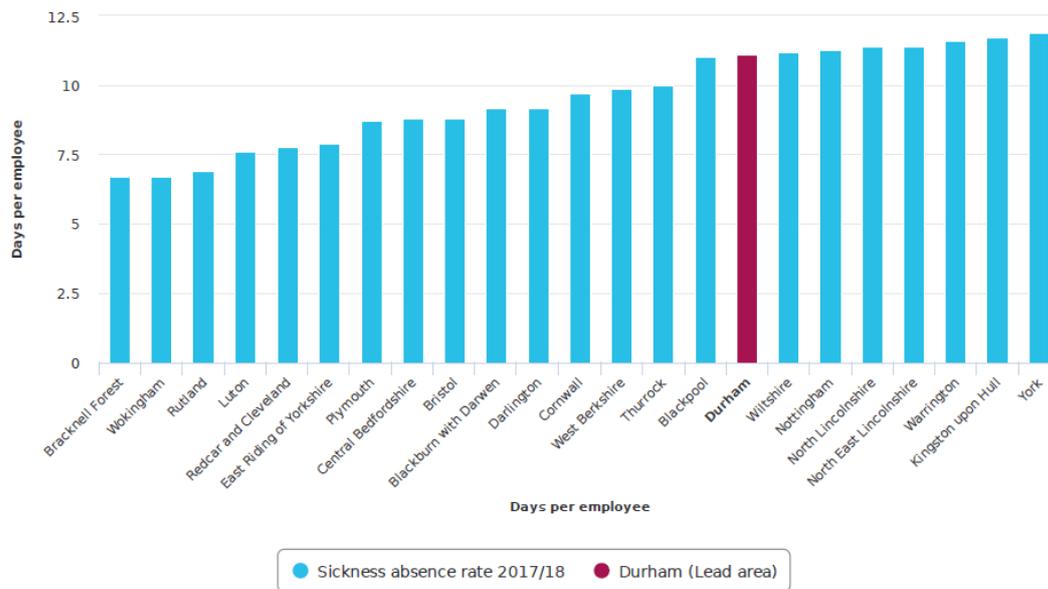
- 22 Managers refer employees to the Occupational Health Service (OHS) for advice relating to LTSA, STSA and re-referrals in accordance with the Attendance Management Policy. The OHS also encourages managers to engage with employees at an early stage and take proactive actions including referral of employees where their health may be affecting their performance or where their work may be affecting their health. This is categorised by the OHS as a management concern.

- 23 During 2018/19, a total of 1509 consultations were carried out by the OHS as a direct result of management referrals. The chart below shows the number of consultations' following management referrals over the past 4 years. This shows an increase of 16% from 2015/16 to 2016/17 which has been followed by a gradual decrease each year.



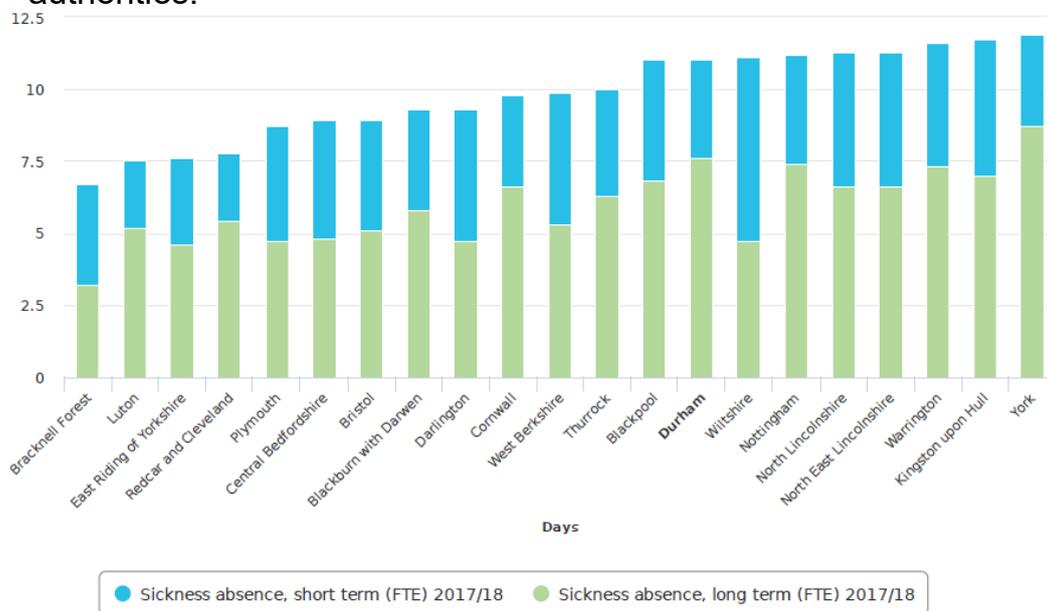
Local Government Workforce Survey 2017/18

- 24 The council contributed to the Local Government Association [2017/18 Workforce Survey](#) which provides information on key elements of the workforce within local authorities in England.
- 25 All Heads of Human Resources were asked to complete an online survey between February and April 2019. The final overall response rate achieved was 50% (174 councils responded out of 350 authorities).
- 26 It should also be noted that whilst all local authorities continue to monitor sickness absence, some have adopted their own measures which suit their needs and management systems.
- 27 Additionally, the characteristics of specific organisations can significantly impact on its absence levels e.g. where frontline, manual operations are delivered in-house. It is therefore difficult to make comparisons, and as a result, the benchmarking data should be treated with caution when comparing Durham County Council's sickness performance.
- 28 The chart below displays 2017/18 performance for sickness absence FTE days per employee for Durham in comparison to all English unitary authorities.



29 Upper Tier Councils reported a median of 9.2 days lost per FTE in 2017/18. The biggest cause of days lost to sickness in 2017/18 was stress, depression, anxiety, mental health and fatigue (26.7%), followed by other musculo-skeletal problems (14.9%) and infections (9.6%).

30 The chart below details 2017/18 short term sickness absence per FTE and long-term sickness absence per FTE for all English unitary authorities:



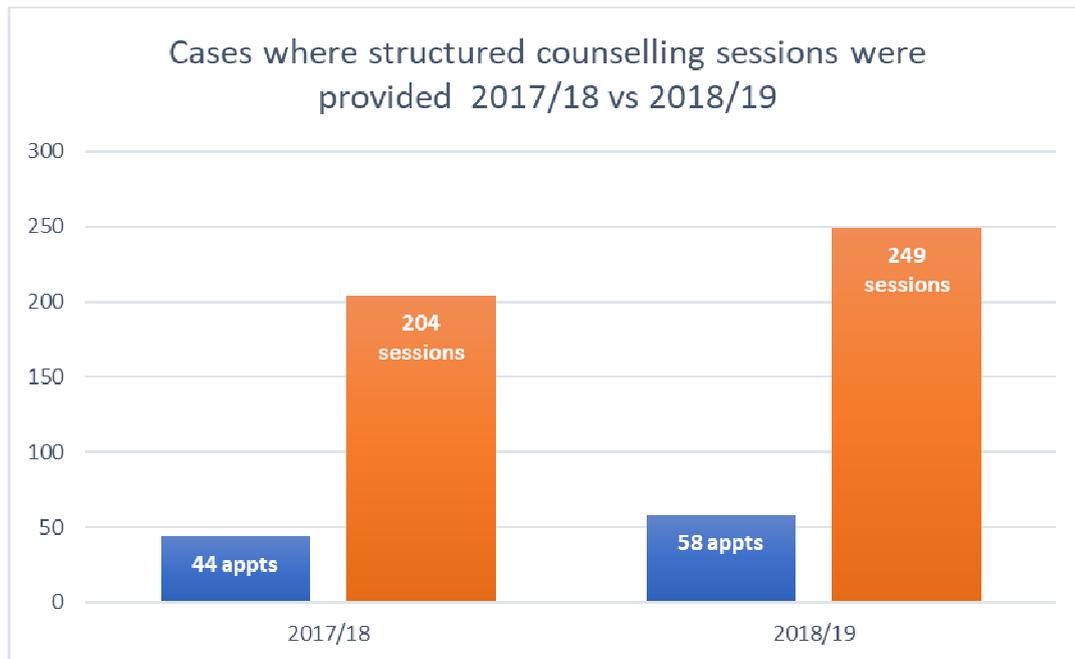
Review of HR Policy and Procedures

- 31 A number of key HR policies and procedures have recently been reviewed. The council's compassionate leave and bereavement policies have been revised to allow up to 5 working days to deal with an emergency e.g. domestic situation, serious illness of family member or to make arrangement for unexpected childcare problems. In terms of bereavement leave, up to 5 working days for the death of a dependant has been agreed and up to 3 working days for the death of a close relative.
- 32 The Attendance Management Policy was reviewed (including trigger points) and implemented in January 2019 with a view to simplifying the process and links to the council's overall strategy on promoting the health and wellbeing of employees. The revised policy now also features the council's commitment to the dying to work charter.
- 33 A summary below outlines the main changes and other work underway to support the new approaches to managing and improving attendance:
- (a) updated policy with core principles and clear responsibilities on the employer and employee;
 - (b) shortened simplified policy;
 - (c) separate managers guidance document;
 - (d) further clarity on managing cases of both long and short-term absence for an employee;
 - (e) how to deal with annual leave during sickness;
 - (f) the ability to bring a long-term sickness case to an end earlier if the individual agrees through pay in lieu of notice (PILON) and no notice to be worked;
 - (g) improved AMI and RTW forms and work underway to digitise these documents as part of ResourceLink developments.

Management Support / Interventions

- 34 A substantial amount of data is available to service managers in relation to managing attendance. As well as the Attendance Management Framework and quarterly workforce information performance reports, all managers up to and including Tier 5, have access to real time sickness data through the council's business intelligence (BI) system to support the administration and performance management of the attendance management framework across their area of responsibility.

- 35 Additionally, prompts are provided via ResourceLink BAM alerts to advise where RTW interviews and AMIs are required due to being up and coming or overdue. There are also BAM alerts issued that inform managers of open-ended absences (to ensure the return to work date is added).
- 36 HR Business Leads and the HR Advice and Support Team within People and Talent Management, provide a significant amount of day to day support to managers in relation to attendance management, as well as facilitating case review groups where appropriate, delivering practical workshop sessions to managers and supervisors and identifying hotspot areas and associated proactive interventions.
- 37 Service areas with the highest levels of sickness absence across the council have been identified with HR teams providing dedicated support to ensure required actions and associated interventions are put in place. It is important to continue this work with managers and continue to proactively target further hotspot areas.
- 38 A significant amount of work has been undertaken across three service areas. One within Adult & Health Services, Children & Young People's Service and Regeneration and Local Services over the past 12 months; working closely with Heads of Service and Strategic Managers.
- 39 For example, specifically to one service area within Adult and Health Services, the number of days lost per FTE (in comparison to September 2018 - September 2019) has a reduction of 9.38 days per FTE.
- 40 Following the promotion of the employee assistance programme (EAP) during 2018/19, there has been 1,626 access hits to EAP online services. Calls have increased by 64% in relation to access to counselling and various advisory services such as financial, bereavement, legal, health and relationship matters.
- 41 Furthermore, there has been a 32% increase from 2017/18 in cases where structured counselling sessions was provided following initial referral:



- 42 Other support mechanisms are also currently in place e.g. monthly sickness surgeries with Strategic Managers and their management teams, HR drop in clinics, HR presentations / briefing sessions and workshops with Strategic and Tier 5 Managers.
- 43 Additionally, all leaders and managers have been set an annual corporate objective that focuses on managing attendance and wellbeing as part of the PDR process.

Further Improvements

- 44 When an employee reports that they are not attending work as a result of sickness, this provides the first opportunity for a manager to discuss alternatives to remaining on sick leave e.g. although the employee may be unable to attend work, could they work from home / work a shorter day / work reduced hours or undertake different duties. This approach has been adopted successfully within some service areas but will generally be a cultural shift for the organisation and is supported by the council's new ways of working initiatives.
- 45 The RTW interview is a critical starting point for challenging short-term absence. Rather than simply recording the return to work, managers should use this to further highlight and discuss levels of short-term absence and consider options to support attendance moving forward. Employees should also be reminded during the RTW interview about requirements of the Attendance Management Policy and the potential consequences of repeated short-term absences and failing to meet the mandatory targets.

- 46 Quality Audits have been undertaken and data indicates that whilst short-term absences are in the main being managed, in some cases the management is not as robust as it should be i.e. target setting and progression to hearing stage.
- 47 Open conversations about mental health and wellbeing, and the support available through the council are being encouraged by managers through team meetings, one to ones and PDRs.

HR Actions

- 48 In view of the above matters that have been highlighted, the following actions have been agreed and are currently underway:
- (a) continued HR analysis of short-term absences to ensure progress through consistent and more robust management of such cases;
 - (b) in addition to policy changes and training with regard to changing the way we work, the current culture in relation to the management of attendance will continue to be challenged in the day to day HR advice and support provided. This will include encouragement of open conversations, consideration of alternatives to absence and support in relation to mental health and wellbeing;
 - (c) a refocus on HR led drop in sessions / to support the use of BI with managers, challenge the culture of absence management and target specific cases through individual action plans;
 - (d) the Head of People and Talent Management to continue to review all absences over 6 months on a monthly basis to ensure they are progressed appropriately;
 - (e) HR Business Leads to work with service areas to address the number of outstanding RTW interviews.

Employee Training

- 49 The 2019/20 Corporate Learning and Development programme for leaders / managers and all employees are based on mandatory and corporate learning and development priorities.
- 50 The aim of the programme is to ensure that mandatory training requirements are undertaken together with training on corporate priorities to support skills development, transformation and culture change.
- 51 Detailed below is an update specifically on mental health training intervention:

- **Mental Health Awareness for Managers** – this course is delivered by County Durham Wellbeing for Life. Since November 2018 this training has been rolled out to EMT, tier 4 and 5 managers. This is a mandatory course for all managers and a further 36 sessions have been scheduled from September 2019 to March 2020. This training is currently being considered for core employees;
- **Mental Health First Aid Training** – 102 employees have currently undertaken this training and a further 4 sessions will take place from July to November 2019;
- **Time for Change Champion Training** – 89 Time for Change Champions have been trained to date. The role of a Time to Change Champion encourages conversations about mental health, and spot early signs and symptoms of mental ill health;

Health Advocate Training – 49 Health Advocates have been trained to date. Health advocates play a vital role in supporting people in the workplace to make healthy choices and improve their health;

- **Connect 5 Resilience Pilot to Stress Training** – training was held in February 2019 for dedicated experts across service areas who can deliver resilience training to the workforce. The pilot is now concluded, which will now be rolled out more widely throughout 2019.
- **E-Learning courses** - are available to all employees to support initiatives for mental wellbeing such as mental health for life, mindfulness and zero suicide.

52 Specifically, for Leaders and Managers, there are mandatory E-Learning courses on recognising and managing stress in the workplace and attendance management as well as a one-day training course for managing people and performance.

53 All Strategic Managers and Tier 5 Managers are in the process of undertaking mandatory training on Managing People – New Approaches, which includes cultural changes in how we manage employees, including attendance.

54 There is also mandatory training on Health & Safety responsibilities for managers. This course has been delivered by the Health and Safety Team since November 2018 rolled out to Extended Management Team, tier 4 and 5 managers. An E-Learning course will be developed to be rolled out to all other remaining managers.

Occupational Health Service

- 55 The council currently provides a number of employee support services e.g. occupational health, counselling services, flexible working options and a number of general Health and Wellbeing events. These events will not only raise awareness and provide valuable information and support around some key 'health and wellbeing' themes such as time to change, breastfeeding awareness, Stoptober, they will also highlight the range of resources and facilities available to employees and managers through the council's Occupational Health Service, HR and our benefits providers.
- 56 The Occupational Health Service launched a new online referral system in March 2019 which enables managers to refer their employees for advice on employee sickness absence or other work-related concerns, replacing all previous paper referral methods. This online portal streamlines and simplifies the process for managers and the Occupational Health Service, enabling managers to access a live dashboard for tracking referral receipt, nurse appointments and accessing reports.
- 57 A two-year physiotherapy pilot project commenced within Direct Services in 2018 and is based on early intervention to improve muscular-skeletal health and reduce and/or remove avoidable absences associated with such conditions. To date, 193 employees have attended appointments with the Occupational Health Service for routine statutory health surveillance.

Other considerations

- 58 Whilst, the option of employees reporting to an external health adviser (rather than their manager) has been raised for consideration, initial observations from Officers was that this takes away management responsibility at a time we are looking for managers to be more proactive and accountable in relation to how they manage employees, including their attendance.
- 59 By way of background, this option was also considered by the council a number of years ago and was not subsequently pursued at that time based on there being no evidence that an absence management service is successful in reducing sickness absence.
- 60 The Senior Occupational Health Physician also advised that employees should not be medicalised by a nurse in the first instance as the majority of absences are lower level and do not require such attention.

- 61 However, the option of employees reporting their absence to an external health adviser has been further considered, with meetings held in December 2018 with a potential company who offer such a service. A quotation of £260,775 pa (based on a contract length of 3 years) was received.
- 62 Following discussions with Corporate Management Team, it was agreed that an absence management service should not be explored further.

Background papers

- Further progress against recommendations – CIOSC – April 2017
- Progress against recommendations - CIOSC - July 2016
- Sickness absence review – CIOSC – November 2015 and Cabinet – December 2015
- Sickness absence review – CIOSC – June 2012

Contact: Alison Lazazzera Tel: 03000 264473

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

Absence levels can have an impact upon budgets where short term cover needs to be put in place.

Staffing

Absence levels can have an impact upon staff wellbeing.

Risk

High levels of absence can be a significant risk to service delivery.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None

Climate Change

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Human Rights

None

Procurement

None

Disability Issues

None

Consultation

None

Legal Implications

None

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Progress Update

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale
<p>Recommendation 1 The Working Group recommends the adoption of the draft Attendance Management Policy.</p>	<p>Previously Completed in April 2017 Update</p>		
<p>Recommendation 2 The Working Group recommends that the Council continues to target long-term sickness absence.</p>	<p>Long-term sickness absence continues to be targeted as a priority area. The new Attendance Management Policy states: <i>'Before the employee reaches 6 months of continuous or aggregated absence within the rolling year, the manager must consider whether the absence can be sustained. At that point, the employee will be advised that any further assessment of their position will be made via a final stage interview. The manager must re-refer the employee to the OHS and have received their report prior to the final stage interview'.</i></p> <p>In 2015/16 56 employees were dismissed as a result of long term sickness absence. Key information is provided to Service Management Teams on the management of long-term sickness absence together with exception reporting to both service management teams and CMT for employees who have been absent longer than 12 months to ensure that the appropriate action is being taken.</p> <p>Update April 2017: A wide range of data is available to Service Management Teams on long term sickness absence through both the detailed quarterly attendance management reports and also through a suite of 'real time' sickness analytics via the</p>	<p>Head of People & Talent Management</p>	<p>Ongoing – on a monthly basis</p>

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale
	<p>Oracle Business Intelligence Tool (update provided below). HR Business Leads continue to work closely with managers to review and analyse data and agree appropriate strategies for intervention. Actions include performance clinics, workshops and manager events and work to ensure quality assurance and compliance with council policy.</p> <p>Long Term Sickness Absence (LTSA) continues to be given priority and targeted. As a result, there have been ongoing year on year increases in LTSA referrals to the OHS. Within the Council there was a 19% increase in the number of management referrals in cases of LTSA during 2015/16, compared to 2014/15. Although 2016/17 data is not complete as yet, it is forecast that there will be a further 11% increase in the number of management referrals made to the OHS as part of the LTSA procedures. Increases have also been noted in Local Authority Maintained Schools, with a 9% increase in 2015/16 and a further 18% increase forecast for 2016/17. This year to date (1 April 2016 – 28 February 2017) the OHS has carried out 465 consultations with employees of the Council following management referrals requesting advice in relation to the LTSA procedures, and a further 197 consultations relating to LA School based employees.</p> <p>Since the launch of the new Attendance Management Policy to date (6 April 2016 – 31 March 2017) a total of 69 employees have had their employment terminated at a Long Term Attendance Management Hearing.</p> <p>Update August 2019: LTSA over 6 months are reviewed on a monthly basis by HR and reported to the Head of People and Talent</p>		

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale
	<p>Management to ensure they are progressed appropriately. As at September 2019, there are currently 21 LTSA cases between 6-12 months.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 3 The Working Group recommends that upon approval of the draft Attendance Management Policy, compulsory training be given to all DCC managers on the application of the new policy and associated procedures, making the links to such training as stress awareness, manual handling, workstation assessment and annual appraisal awareness; that this is incorporated into the Durham Managers' Programme and that the percentage of managers trained be reported to Scrutiny at appropriate intervals.</p>	<p>The new Attendance Management Policy has been supported by training for managers through an E-Learning course. There are 1,413 managers/supervisors enrolled on the course and since the launch of the policy on 6 April 2016, 703 managers have successfully completed this training as at 6 June 2016.</p> <p>The course is mandatory for all managers/supervisors who are responsible for managing attendance and completion is monitored through a learning management system and on completion of the course, training records are automatically updated on ResourceLink. Reminders were sent to tier 4 managers in June 2016 to ensure any outstanding training is completed by their managers/supervisors. Bespoke sessions have been delivered by the HR Advice and Support Team to Service Management Teams to advise of the main changes to the policy and to identify support and initiatives to manage attendance within individual areas.</p> <p>Face-to-face attendance management training continues to be delivered as part of the Corporate Training Programme. An E-Learning course is also available to managers on recognising and managing stress in the workplace which has been promoted through attendance management groups. 209 managers had completed this training as at 6 June 2016. A requirement of this training is for managers to complete the Health and Safety Executive Line Manager Competency Indicator Tool to identify their own behaviours</p>	<p>Head of People & Talent Management</p>	<p>Complete</p>

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale
	<p>to help alleviate work related stress. This training provides a timely intervention for managers who have to deal with stress related issues in the workplace.</p> <p>Courses continue to be offered through the Durham Manager programme on health and safety together with softer skills such as dealing with difficult conversations. These courses support managers to deal effectively with employment related matters such as attendance management.</p> <p>Update April 2017: As at 4 April 2017, 85% of managers have successfully completed the Attendance Management training module. HR Business Leads previously provided all Service Management Teams with the details of their managers that had not completed the course for appropriate follow up and a final deadline was set of 31 March 2017.</p> <p>Update August 2019: As at 5 August 2019, 83% of managers have completed the E-Learning Attendance Management training module. HR Business Leads also undertake bespoke attendance management training in service areas. The Corporate Leadership and Management Development Programme was launched in May 2019 which provides a range of skills based courses to support managers to effectively manage their teams, a number of these courses are mandatory including Mental Health Awareness for Managers and Coaching as a Management Style.</p>		

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale
<p>Recommendation 4 The Working Group recommends that the current automated “reminder triggers” within the My View system be amended to send a reminder to managers after 20 calendar days that a Sickness Absence interview needs to be undertaken in the event that this has not already occurred and the escalation to senior manager e-mail after a further 7 days.</p>	<p>Previously Completed in April 2017 Update</p>		
<p>Recommendation 5 The Working Group recommends that a review of the current OHS referral process be undertaken to include establishing a target for referral into the OHS service of 30 calendar days; an analysis of the impact upon OHS of implementing this target and an immediate referral into OHS for those employees whose absence has been due to mental wellbeing.</p>	<p>Previously Completed in April 2017 Update</p>		
<p>Recommendation 6 The Working Group recommends that staff, managers and Trade Unions be engaged in the examination of suggested changes to the Attendance Management policy arising from this review in respect of My View Sickness Absence Interview reminders and the development of OHS referral targets.</p>	<p>Previously Completed in April 2017 Update</p>		
<p>Recommendation 7 The Working Group recommends that a more comprehensive Council wide staff survey be undertaken to inform organisational development, which would gather staff</p>	<p>An annual internal communications survey is currently undertaken which includes questions on appraisals and training and development. However, options are being explored for a Council wide survey to establish a baseline to identify areas for improvement.</p>	<p>Head of People & Talent Management / Head of Communications</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale
<p>opinions on such issues as Health and wellbeing; attendance management; appraisals; council policy; training and development and organisational culture with Councillors having direct input into the content of the questions via scrutiny.</p>	<p>An action outlined in the ACE and Resources Service plan is to undertake a council wide survey in line with agreed Scrutiny recommendation by September 2016. It is intended that survey information will be circulated to members of the CIOSC for information and comment prior to the council wide survey being undertaken.</p> <p>Update – April 2017: The annual internal communications survey was reviewed in the light of the additional topic areas suggested by Members. As part of this, officers explored best practice advice from other organisations including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on surveying staff on mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The HSE’s recommended standard methodology includes questions which address many of the issues Members had highlighted. It is a tried and tested methodology, which would potentially allow the council to compare and benchmark its performance against 136 other public sector bodies and staff opinions against those of other organisations and sectors.</p> <p>It was therefore suggested that the council augmented its existing internal communications survey with the HSE’s standard methodology to produce the more comprehensive staff survey requested by Members. Scrutiny Members were consulted on this at the end of January and no objections were received.</p> <p>The augmented survey referred to as the ‘Working Well’ survey was therefore conducted from 28</p>		

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale
	<p>February – 21 March, principally online but with hard copies distributed to employees who do not have access to computers. The survey responses will be analysed using the HSE’s analytic tool to produce organisational and service grouping related results which will enable further analysis of specific work-related causes of stress and implementation of appropriate interventions. There have been in excess of 3700 (40%) survey responses, with good representative information from all service groupings This response rate is significantly in excess of previous surveys.</p> <p>An action plan will then be developed by the Employee Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group which comprises of service group representatives.</p> <p>Update August 2019: The initial employee health and wellbeing survey, a requirement of the Better Health at Work Award criteria, was undertaken in 2017. A repeated employee health and wellbeing survey was undertaken again in May 2019 as a requirement of gold award status, details of which will be reported in Q2 2019/20 Performance Management report. The Valuing our Employees Strategy (2019-2022) recommends the council undertakes a further survey to ask specific questions in terms of feeling engaged, aware of council priorities, values and behaviours, inspire programme, learning and development and health and wellbeing which will be agreed by Corporate Management Team later in autumn. It is envisaged that the HSE’s stress management standards ‘Working Well’ employee survey will be repeated in 2020 following an intital survey undertaken in April 2017. This survey will compliment the findings of the employee</p>		

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale
	health and wellbeing surveys which have been undertaken as part of the Better Health at Work award criteria.		
<p>Recommendation 8 The Working Group recommends that that the Council review its current provision for the promotion of “Better Health at Work” and examine the potential to develop a more proactive and targeted approach to health and wellbeing promotion amongst its workforce.</p>	<p>A mental health and wellbeing task and finish group, represented by all service groupings, was formed in 2015 to evaluate the current interventions and assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if they enable the Council to evidence compliance with current legal requirements, national best practice and research; • if they are adequate and effective in relation to reducing sickness absence and current foreseeable mental health and wellbeing risk factors. <p>The current mental wellbeing intranet pages have been redesigned and were launched in quarter 4 of 2015/16. These pages provide improved guidance and information to managers and staff on mental wellbeing management, support, advice and guidance. They will also link all other council procedures and guidance which directly or indirectly impact on mental wellbeing.</p> <p>New mental health awareness training for managers has also been launched via E-Learning, which is being promoted through attendance management groups. This will be targeted at managers to raise understanding and awareness of mental wellbeing issues and how to manage them effectively.</p> <p>Update – April 2017 The employee health and wellbeing focus group, chaired by Interim Director Public Health has continued to meet and has completed its initial objective in relation to design and</p>	Head of Corporate Finance & HR	Ongoing

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale
	<p>delivery of an employee health and wellbeing survey. Further work will be undertaken via the group in terms of addressing more broader health and wellbeing challenges across the Council.</p> <p>The Council is proceeding with the registering for the Better Health at Work Award. The Better Health at Work Award recognises the efforts of employers who promote healthy lifestyles and consider the health of their employees. This award will recognise the achievements of the Council and help move forward in a structured and supported way. The next step is an assessment of Council activity against the bronze award criteria. The assessment identifies areas for taking work forward and building on existing activity. This includes the provision of healthy food choices, addressing employee welfare, monitoring sickness absence rates, promoting mental wellbeing and the delivery of health-related campaigns.</p> <p>Some of this work has already started for example, a standalone wellbeing strategy is being developed and healthier options in the canteen are being offered. It is envisaged that the Council will move quickly through bronze and progress to silver. It is essential that progress is corporately driven and all elements of the Council are engaged and contribute. Once the Council achieves the standards for the bronze award, which is through an assessment, the award would be granted.</p> <p>Update August 2019: The council reviewed the employee health and wellbeing offer in 2016 and committed to achieving the better health at work award, starting with the bronze award status. The</p>		

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale
	<p>council is currently in the process of assessment for the gold award status, having achieved silver in November 2018. As a result of the award requirements there has been a range of employee health and wellbeing initiatives introduced associated with mental health, physical activity, nutrition, no smoking, alcohol, cancer awareness, to name a few. The council also signed the employer 'time to change' pledge in 2018 and this enhances the offer and commitment to employees. To gauge the requirements of employees, there has been two employee health and wellbeing engagement surveys undertaken in 2017 and 2019 which have been utilised to focus resources. Interventions are also targeted proactively by utilising public health demographic data in terms of the key health risks and issues for the workforce, with the majority of employees living within county durham.</p> <p>The second employee health and wellbeing engagement survey has been undertaken in May 2019 as a requirement of the gold award application and will enable further interventions and initiatives to be undertaken in the year ahead. This will again form the basis of future workforce development activities. Activities and initiatives throughout 2018/19 have been based on the outcomes of the initial better health at work award employee engagement survey which were primarily associated with mental health/stress, physical activity, nutrition, alcohol consumption and musculoskeletal disorders.</p>		

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Responsibility	Timescale
<p>Recommendation 9 The Working Group recommends that following implementation of the Attendance Management Policy and in the event that attendance management performance has not shown improvement following sustained monitoring, a review of all trigger points within the policy be undertaken.</p>	<p>The new Attendance Management Policy was implemented on 6 April 2016 therefore, this review will be due to be undertaken when the Quarter 2 performance information is available as at 30 September 2016.</p> <p>Update August 2019: The Attendance Management Policy has been reviewed twice since the last update in 2017, in which all trigger points were reviewed as part of that process. As attendance management performance is continuing to improve, the trigger points will remain as they are, and will continue to be monitored as part of the Attendance Management Policy review cycle.</p>	<p>Head of People & Talent Management</p>	<p>Complete</p>

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**Corporate Overview and
Scrutiny Management Board**

22 October 2019



Update in relation to Petitions

Report of Corporate Management Team

Helen Lynch, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide for information the quarterly update in relation to the current situation regarding various petitions received by the Authority.

Recommendation(s)

- 2 Members are requested to note the update report on the status of petitions and e-petitions received by the Authority.

Background

- 3 Following the introduction of The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the administration of the petitions process was passed to Democratic Services.
- 4 Overview and Scrutiny Management Board have received update reports on petitions since September 2008, and this function has now passed to the new committee.
- 5 From the 15 December 2010, the Authority has provided a facility for members of the public to submit e-petitions on the Council's website.

Current Notice of Key Decisions

- 6 Since the last update nine e-petitions have been submitted, four of which were rejected. One related to a planning application, two of which we were not the responsible body and the other did not have the required number of signatures.

- 7 In addition, four new paper petitions have been submitted, all of which have now closed. A list giving details and current status of all active petitions is attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

Contact: Ros Layfield

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

None.

Consultation

Petitions which refer to a consultation exercise are reported to committee for information and forwarded to the relevant officer for consideration

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

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Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
<p>Petition 365</p> <p>Reduce the speed limit at Clough Dene, Stanley</p> <p>Petition received 14.6.19</p> <p>No. of signatures – 33</p>	<p>Michelle McIntosh Traffic Asset Senior Engineer</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to reduce the speed limit in the hamlet of Clough Dene, Stanley.</p> <p>Speed Management Strategy DCC have recently reviewed and updated the Speed Management Strategy which was approved by Cabinet on 14th November 2018 subject to public consultation.</p> <p>Speed Limits The Council is required to follow Department for Transport legislation and guidance to ensure that speed limits are credible with the aim that they become self-evident and enforcing by virtue of their surroundings. During the review process various factors and criteria are considered and evaluated such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing vehicle speeds; • Nature of the road and its surroundings; • Local needs; • Existing highway infrastructure; • Development; • Highway signs; • Road markings and street lighting; • The various road users; • The credibility of the speed limit; and • Accident history. <p>Having checked the accident recording database shared with Durham Constabulary, there has been no recorded ‘personal injury’ accidents in the vicinity of the built up area of Clough Dene in the past four years, this being the</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>standard search criteria. Compared to many other locations, this represents a favourable accident record. Although the petition mentions a fatality I can confirm that there are no fatal road accidents recorded on this section of B6173, based on available data which extends back to the year 2000.</p> <p>Following the release of new guidance from the Department for Transport on the setting of local speed limits, the B6173 was assessed in the early 2000s as part of a countywide programme of reviewing speed limits on 'A' and 'B' class roads. It is considered that the current 40mph speed limit remains the most appropriate for the road environment on the B6173 through Clough Dene, in applying the above criteria.</p> <p>A credible speed limit should be self-evident and enforcing by virtue of the surroundings. If the environment and its features do not validate the credibility of a lower limit then motorists are less likely to comply with it resulting in a significant proportion of motorists ignoring the limit and driving at even higher speeds.</p> <p>Police and Communities Together (PACT) Meetings As part of the partnership approach to improving road safety. All speeding complaints are directed towards Durham Constabulary and their Police and Communities Together (PACT) Meetings, enabling the appropriate level of intervention and action to be considered.</p>	

Petition Table – Active Petitions

Appendix 2

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
<p>Petition 367</p> <p>Save the Sink Hole</p> <p>E-Petition Petition received 25.6.19 No. of signatures – 43</p>	<p>Brian Buckley Strategic Highways Manager</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to consider saving the old bridge/tunnel that has just opened up in Blackhill next to Queens Road and re-open it as part of the Derwent Walk.</p> <p>DCC were aware of local interest in the potential to re-open this route as part of the cycleway network.</p> <p>At the time, a high level estimate to see what costs would be involved in doing so, was undertaken. This would develop into a major project and require significant funding. It was estimated that a project of this nature would cost in excess of £1m. The repair works undertaken are estimated to be approx. £80k.</p> <p>The Capital available in this austere climate to undertake what is a desirable, rather than an essential, scheme was not available as the more essential task of managing the existing highway infrastructure backlog of £170m would be addressed.</p> <p>Works to infill the structure would continue and the existing controlled crossing facility provides a safe crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists.</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>
<p>Petition 368</p> <p>Shotton Colliery Traffic Calming</p> <p>E-Petition Petition received 29.6.19</p>	<p>John Reed Head of Technical Services</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to implement a new 40mph speed limit before the 30mph is reached at the school entrance in Shotton Colliery.</p> <p>E-petition ran from 29.6.19 – 24.7.19 and closed with 23 signatures</p> <p>Paper petition received 23.7.19 with 349 signatures</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
<p>No. of signatures – 23</p> <p>Paper Petition received 23.7.19</p> <p>No. of signatures – 349</p> <p>Total - 472</p>		<p>The Council was aware of the concerns of local people in Shotton Colliery regarding vehicle speeds and road safety. In conjunction with Durham Constabulary, DCC have investigated the three roads mentioned, namely Station Road, Salters Lane, Bridge Road and also Front Street. These investigations resulted in reports which were made available through the Police PACT meetings.</p> <p>Accident History The Council receives more requests for road safety schemes than we are able to fund from our limited road safety budgets. Therefore, we have to prioritise schemes where there are proven issues with personal injury accidents and where engineering measures may mitigate the reasons the accidents are occurring.</p> <p>Having checked the accident recording database shared with Durham Constabulary, a total of two ‘personal injury’ accidents on the length of Salters Lane from the commencement of the 30mph speed limit in the north to Gore Burn in the south, and also including Station Road and Bridge Road have been reported in the past 4 years; this being our standard search criteria. In one incident which occurred on Salters Lane in November 2016, a motorist was driving in a reckless manner, crossed the carriageway and collided head on with vehicles coming the opposite direction resulting in a tragic fatal accident. The second incident occurred in January 2017 when a motorist who was impaired by alcohol turned from Bridge Road into</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>a side street and collided with a pedestrian who was crossing the road.</p> <p>Whilst we would prefer to see no accidents occurring on the public highway, when compared to many other locations within the county, this represents a favourable accident record. Therefore, the limited road safety budgets must be prioritised at locations with a proven record of personal injury accidents where engineering measures could be effective.</p> <p>Traffic Calming Measures The Department for Transport does not permit the installation of physical traffic calming measures such as road humps, speed cushions, pinch points, chicanes, etc. on the 'A' road network which should remain available for the expeditious movement of traffic. Likewise, in many cases 'B' roads can carry similar, if not greater numbers of vehicles than certain 'A' class roads as they provide main links between towns and villages. As such, highway authorities are not encouraged to introduce physical traffic calming measures on 'B' class roads where often we are unable to satisfy specific design standard requirements and best practice due to the overall traffic volume, usage by buses/HGVs, leading to issues for example with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution; • Congestion; • Noise; • Vibration; • Proximity of side road junctions; 	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private access; • Bus stops; and • Road Geometry • Speed limits greater than 30mph <p>DCC officers have been working closely with your local County Councillors to arrive at some measures which may assist in the area and that they may be able to fund from their allocated Neighbourhoods Budgets. These discussions are ongoing and it is hoped that a potential scheme may be progressed on Salters Lane near to Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School.</p> <p>At a recent meeting of the Residents Association, issues were discussed and an explanation given about the various aspects related to speed and road safety in the area.</p>	
<p>Petition 369</p> <p>Richardson Hospital</p> <p>Petition received 4.7.19</p> <p>No. of signatures – 684</p>	<p>Jenny Haworth</p> <p>Head of Performance</p>	<p>Petition asking the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to take into consideration to the views of local residents about the proposed closure of the out of hours service at the Richardson Hospital.</p> <p>Response from Chair of AWH OSC - A special meeting of the Council’s Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held on 12 June 2019 to consider the CCG’s proposals in respect of Enhanced and Extended Access to Primary Care which included the service provided at the Richardson Hospital and the results of the patient and stakeholder consultation process undertaken in association with the proposals.</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>The letter and its contents were circulated to the Committee and also read out in full. The Chair then asked the Director of Commissioning, DDES CCG to respond to the issues of concern raised in your correspondence. Specific reference was made to the importance of transport and accessibility of services as well as the potential role of the Home Visiting service in ensuring that patients and residents had access to out of hours urgent care services when necessary. To this end the Committee have asked for detail of the CCG’s amended transport eligibility criteria and the Home Visiting service to be provided back to the Committee.</p> <p>At the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s meeting held on 4 July 2019, receipt of the petition was reported to the CCG by campaigners and Teesdale residents opposing the proposed closure of the out-of-hours service at the Richardson Hospital and passed this to the Council’s Legal and Democratic Services Department for consideration under the Council’s agreed Petitions Process. As you will be aware, the decision in respect of the Enhanced and Extended Primary Care Access is to be made by the CCG at its Governing Body and was submitted to me as Chair of the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.</p> <p>The Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the concerns raised by you and local residents as part of their statutory role in scrutinising</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>the proposals for Extended and Enhanced access to Primary Care across the DDES CCG locality and have made recommendations to the CCG.</p>	
<p>Petition 371</p> <p>Speed humps, Rose Lea, Witton Gilbert</p> <p>E-Petition</p> <p>Petition received – 8.7.19</p> <p>No. of signatures – 29</p>	<p>Michelle McIntosh Traffic Assets Senior Engineer</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to improve road safety in Rose Lea, Witton Gilbert by adding speed humps and street signs, and the speed limit lowered to 20mph.</p> <p>At a meeting, arranged by local members for Witton Gilbert, a number of issues raised by residents were discussed. The meeting was also attended by officers from Durham County Council and Durham Constabulary.</p> <p>One of the main concerns discussed was the speed at which vehicles were travelling on Rose Lea and concerns raised by residents regarding pedestrian safety, especially children, crossing the street. It was acknowledged that while the parking did to a degree manage the speeds the informal priority arrangement created by the parking where with no opposing traffic, or the oncoming vehicle giving way, there was an opportunity for drivers to increase their speed.</p> <p>While a reduction in the speed limit was mentioned it was accepted that this alone was unlikely to change the situation as the issue was one of inappropriate speed where a vehicle is travelling too fast for the conditions but not contravening the speed limit.</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>It was agreed as a way forward that a traffic speed and volume survey would be carried out after the schools returned in September as data captured outside of term time is known to be different to non-term time due to holidays and changes to typical traffic patterns.</p> <p>Details of this survey and an update will be shared once the data is available</p> <p>In the interim time the issues discussed regarding anti-social driver behaviour can be raised at the Police and Communities Together meeting (PACT) or can be directed to the police on the non-emergency number 101 where details of vehicles, times and days can be offered as this intelligence is valuable to local police in being able to target offenders.</p>	
<p>Petition 373</p> <p>Change the Road Markings on Badgers Wood Beamishburn Road and erect a 'No Through Road' sign</p> <p>Petition received 7.8.19 No. of signatures – 39</p>	<p>Michelle McIntosh Traffic Assets Senior Engineer</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to change the road markings on Badgers Wood Beamishburn Road and erect a 'No Through Road' sign.</p> <p>Although changing the traffic priority onto Beamishburn Road was discussed there was a concern that such a change to the current road layout was likely to lead to confusion for drivers as this would require the creation of an unnatural break in the main Badger's Wood road. This could also result in higher traffic speeds on the early part of both roads.</p> <p>After reviewing the location and issues it was concluded that there were some minor changes that could be</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>actioned to assist drivers in travelling through this area. The agreed actions are as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although a give way sign is not generally used on estate roads and minor side roads it was considered that the addition of a give way triangle on the road would assist in drawing attention to the junction as you approach. It is proposed to add a give way triangle to both the A6076/Badger’s Wood junction and Badger’s Wood/Beamishburn Road junction and recover the existing give way lines; • It was mentioned that the traffic approaching the start of the Badger’s Wood properties, located on Beamishburn Road where the Public Right of Way starts, were travelling at inappropriate speeds. We will pass a request to our Clean & Green team to trim back the vegetation adjacent to the Public Right of Way which will allow pedestrians to see and be seen as well as hopefully offering more visibility of the start of the housing. New ‘SLOW’ road markings will also be provided on this approach; and • A ‘no through road’/cul-de-sac sign will be provided on a new post to denote that the length of Badger’s Wood beyond the junction with Beamishburn Road is not a through route. This will hopefully reduce the number of vehicles travelling up Badger’s Wood when they are looking for the properties/facilities located along Beamishburn Road. <p>These works will be ordered with our contractors and should be completed in the next few months. The road</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>markings are carried out by a different contractor to the sign so it is likely that the works will be completed at different times.</p> <p>The recent accident and proposed changes had been discussed with Durham Constabulary and they are supportive of the proposals.</p>	
<p>Petition 374</p> <p>Extra Bins</p> <p>E-Petition</p> <p>Petition received 9.8.19 No. of signatures - 16</p>	<p>John Shannon Strategic Waste Manager</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to provide extra waste and recycling bins for more families.</p> <p>E-Petition ran from 14 August to 19 September and closed with 16 signatures.</p> <p>The Council had considered the proposal however there will be no change to the Council’s existing Refuse & Recycling Policy, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) Scheme, which was introduced in 2012, across County Durham accepts recycling one week and refuse the other. This scheme offers residents additional recycling capacity compared to the former bag and box scheme which operated across County Durham up to 2009. Mixed recycling can be accepted for collection if placed loose and clean within the blue lidded recycling bin (providing 240 litre recycling capacity), glass is collected within a 45 litre box. This scheme provides residents with 285 litres in total of recycling capacity per fortnight and 240 litres of general refuse capacity far exceeding that which was available pre 2009. This scheme is very well received by our residents and has a high satisfaction rate. 	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council’s Refuse and Recycling Collection Policy (which was originally adopted by the Council’s Waste Board on behalf of the Authority in September 2011, prior to the countywide scheme roll-out from February 2012) states that households of six or more persons can have additional bin capacity with recycling taking preference. Through national benchmarking organisations it is confirmed that the majority of local authorities offer a standard 240 litre wheeled bin for recycling and a standard 240 litre wheeled bin for refuse, we therefore are already providing additional recycling capacity over and above that which most local authorities offer across England. It is recognised that on occasions, residents may have extra recycling, therefore the policy states that it can be bagged in clear bags (so collection crews can see what it contains) and placed next to the recycling bin on collection day. This is for exceptional circumstances and we are not encouraging this to be the norm. Ideally, we do not encourage or want plastic bags in our recycle. It has been found that a 240 litre bin has adequate volume for the majority of families recycling needs as part of an alternative weekly collection. Washing and squashing recycle particularly plastic bottles and tin cans ensures maximum use of the space available is achieved. We advise that excess or oversized cardboard is only placed out on collection day and is kept as dry as possible in order for it to be handled by our operatives, alternatively bulky household items can be taken to one of our network 	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>of household waste recycling centres located across the County, please visit http://www.durham.gov.uk/hwrc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For households in the Council area, the contents of the blue-lidded recycling bin and recycling box are sent to Durham County Council’s recycling contractor Biffa in Washington, Tyne and Wear. Here the materials are sorted into type, (for example plastics, paper, cardboard, metal tins and cans), any waste (contamination) is removed and the materials are baled, ready to be sent on to be reprocessed and recycled. The majority of materials collected from the kerbside collection scheme are recycled and made back into new products for example plastic bottles are made into new plastic bottles. Visit www.durham.gov.uk/recyclingmatters for more information. 	
<p>Petition 375</p> <p>Bus Services in Shildon</p> <p>Petition received 9.8.19</p> <p>No. of signatures – 20</p>	<p>Stuart Woods</p> <p>Passenger Transport Services & Network Planning Team Leader</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to reinstate bus services in Shildon.</p> <p>the petition in respect of the routing of Arriva services in Shildon and in particular the withdrawal of service from the northern section of Byerley Road in the evening and on Sundays.</p> <p>In common with most of the local bus service network most of the local bus services in Shildon are operated commercially, that is without subsidy from the Council, so we do not control the routes, times or fares of those services. That said, we do maintain a very real interest in people receiving a service that is both effective and punctual.</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>The changes made to bus routes in Shildon in February 2019 were principally designed to address punctuality issues but Arriva took the opportunity to simplify the network and remove some anomalies. However, one of the impacts of standardising service 1 so that evening journeys run the same route as the daytime journeys via jubilee Estate was the loss of evening and Sunday service on Byerley Road between it's junctions with Main Street to the north and Middleton Road to the south.</p> <p>There are two pairs of bus stops affected (Hippodrome which is approximately 112m from alternative stops on Main Street and Byerley Road approximately 350m from alternative stops on Middleton Road) and passenger data was requested from Arriva at the time the Council was advised of the changes. The data shows that on average there were 5 passengers boarding per evening from the affected stops spread across 12 journeys (assuming a similar number of passengers alighting this equates to less than one passenger boarding or alighting per journey).</p> <p>Whilst we do recognise that, especially at the southern end of Byerley Road, the walk to alternative stops is not insignificant and that some people were using the services and would be affected, the judgement reached was that more passengers would benefit from the change than would lose and the overall commercial sustainability of the services would be improved.</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>While the County Council does have the power to subsidise services where we have identified a social need, in the current economic climate you will I am sure appreciate we must target our limited resources to areas that would otherwise have no service at all. In line with the outcome of a public consultation exercise in 2011 when cuts to Council spending on local bus services were being made, Durham County Council does not currently subsidise any services on a Sunday.</p> <p>The above notwithstanding however, please be assured we will discuss your concerns with Arriva in our regular liaison meetings to see if there is something that can be done as they conduct their routine reviews of their network but In the meantime, during the daytime Monday to Saturday Byerley Road continues to have 2 buses per hour direct to Tindale Crescent, Bishop Auckland and Darlington whilst for local journeys of 5 miles or under, the Council’s Link2 dial-a-ride service might be a more useful alternative</p>	
<p>Petition 376</p> <p>Langley Moor High Street</p> <p>E-Petition</p> <p>Petition received 14.8.19</p> <p>No. of signatures - 43</p>	<p>Adrian White</p> <p>Head of Transport and Contract Services</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to make the A690 through Langley Moor High Street safer to cross.</p> <p>E-Petition ran from 14.8.19 – 25.9.19 and closed with 43 signatures.</p> <p>Many requests for additional crossing facilities where crossing the road can be problematic due to the volume of traffic, especially at peak times, have been received. Unfortunately, more requests for formalised crossing facilities are received than the Council is able to fund from</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>limited road safety budgets. In order to reduce casualty accidents, DCC prioritise the road safety funding towards addressing locations with known and proven accident problems.</p> <p>Having checked the accident recording database shared with Durham Constabulary, there have been no recorded ‘personal injury’ accidents associated with pedestrians during the past 4 years, this being the standard search criteria. These figures represent a favourable accident record compared to many other locations within the County, where future intervention by the Council would be beneficial to improve road safety.</p> <p>DCC have previously received requests for additional crossing facilities for the section of the A690 between Langley Moor and Meadowfield.</p> <p>Requests for formalised crossings such as a zebra crossing or traffic signal controlled crossing are assessed against a national criteria devised by the Department for Transport (DfT), which takes into account various factors including traffic flow and the number of pedestrians crossing the road within the busiest period. It has been proven that low pedestrian flows at formalised crossings results in more road traffic accidents whereby the motorist has failed to stop, hence the reason for the DfT guidance.</p> <p>In the case of Langley Moor, an assessment has been made based upon experience of completing surveys against the DfT’s criteria. Unfortunately, in this case, the national criteria could not be satisfied. This is partly because there is no overall “desire line” on what is a long section of road where pedestrians choose to cross where it is convenient for them rather than at a specific location. It</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>is for this reason that you typically see formalised crossing facilities in commercial town centres only where pedestrians have been “funnelled” to a particular crossing point.</p> <p>Following previous requests for crossing facilities in this location, the feasibility of providing a pedestrian refuge island has been investigated. However, this would not be possible due to a combination of insufficient road width and the need to accommodate turning movements for side roads, accesses and bus stops.</p>	

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**Corporate Overview and
Scrutiny Management Board**



22 October 2019

Notice of Key Decisions

Report of Corporate Management Team

Helen Lynch, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To consider the list of key decisions that is scheduled to be considered by the Executive.

Recommendation(s)

- 2 You are recommended to give consideration to items listed in the notice.

Background

- 3 New rules in relation to Executive decisions were introduced by The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force on 10 September 2012.
- 4 The regulations took away the requirement for the Executive to produce a Forward Plan of key decisions, however introduced that the decision maker cannot make a key decision unless a document has been published at least 28 clear days before the decision is taken, unless either a general exception or special urgency requirements have been met. The document which has to be published must state:
 - a) that the key decision is to be made on behalf of the relevant local authority
 - b) the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made

- c) where the decision maker is an individual, that individual's name and title if any and where the decision maker is a decision making body, its name and list of its members
 - d) the date on which or the period within which the decision is to be made
 - e) a list of the document submitted to the decision maker for consideration in relation to the matter of which the key decision is to be made
 - f) the address from which, subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure copies of, or extracts from any document listed as available
 - g) that other documents relevant to those matters may be submitted to the decision maker
 - h) the procedure for requesting details of those documents (if any) as they become available.
- 5 The requirements also apply to an exempt matter as previously it did not strictly have to be included in the Forward Plan. Now a publicity document must contain particulars of the matter, but may not contain any confidential exempt information or particulars of the adviser or political adviser or assistant.
- 6 Notices of key decisions that are being produced meet the legal requirements of publication, as well as continuing to provide information for a four month period. Members will therefore be able to consider key decisions as previously for the four month period.

Current Notice of Key Decisions

- 7 The notice of key decisions that is attached to the report at Appendix 2, is the latest to be published prior to the papers for the Board being dispatched to members. The notice complies with the requirements for Cabinet to be able to take key decisions at the meeting on 16 October 2019. It also contained information on those key decisions that are currently scheduled to be considered by the Executive up to 31 January 2020.

Contact:	Ros Layfield	Tel: 03000 269708
	Jenny Haworth	Tel: 03000 268071

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet. To publish the notice of key decisions in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Finance

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Consultation

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Climate Change

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Human Rights

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Crime and Disorder

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Staffing

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Accommodation

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Risk

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Procurement

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

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SECTION ONE - CORPORATE

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Overview and Scrutiny Involvement
CORP/R/19/01	11/12/19	Update on Planning of Budget and Development of Service Plans - Analysis of Comprehensive Spending Review/Autumn Statement		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services. Tel 03000 261946	Scrutiny members will have input into the formulation of MTFP 10 through Coporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meetings
CORP/R/19/01	15/01/20	Update on Planning of Budget and Development of Service Plans - Details of Provisional Finance Statement		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services. Tel 03000 261946	Scrutiny members will have input into the formulation of MTFP 10 through Coporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meetings

SECTION TWO - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Overview and Scrutiny Involvement
CYP'S/03/18	16/10/2019	Review of School Provision Wolsingham School and Sixth Form Future Options for Education in the Weardale Community - Update		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services		Richard Crane - Head of Education and Skills Tel: 03000 265731	

SECTION THREE - ADULT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Overview and Scrutiny Involvement
AHS/01/19	16/10/2019	Oral Health Strategy Update		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services		Gill O'Neill Deputy Director Public Health 03000 267696	An update report in respect of the Oral Health Strategy was considered by the Adults Wellbeing and Health OSC on 4 July 2019. At the meeting it was noted that any proposals regarding population approaches to improve oral health would require appropriate consideration by Overview and Scrutiny.

SECTION FOUR - REGENERATION AND LOCAL SERVICES

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Overview and Scrutiny Involvement
ReaL/05/19	13/11/19	Selective Licensing Business Case		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Assets		Lynn Hall, Strategic Manager for Housing Tel 03000 265728	The Economy and Enterprise OSC has received updates on the progress of the Selective Licensing Scheme with the last update provided to committee at the meeting on 24 September 2019. Included in the committee's work programme are further progress updates and an opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny members to comment on the proposed scheme at the special meeting on the 6 December with those comments being fed into the consultation.
ReaL/08/19	16/10/19	Habitats Regulations Assessment Developer guidance and Requirements in County Durham		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration		Stuart Timmiss, Head of Development & Housing Tel 03000 267334 Oliver Sherratt, Head of Environment, Tel 03000 269259	
ReaL/09/19	16/10/19	Future Residual Waste Procurement Arrangements		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships		Oliver Sherratt, Head of Environment, Tel 03000 269259	

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

22 October 2019



**Information update from the Chairs of
the Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

**Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and
Partnerships**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present to members an information update of overview and scrutiny activity from 13 September – October 2019.

Executive summary

- 2 It was previously agreed that a written report of chairs' updates would be presented for information only to all Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Boards.
- 3 This update covers the time period from 13 September – October 2019.

Recommendation(s)

- 4 Members are invited to receive the report and note the information.

Background

- 5 Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) are encouraged to get involved in any area of overview and scrutiny activity via thematic committees and talk to scrutiny committee chairs and overview and scrutiny officers on areas of project and overview activity.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report on for this period.
Scrutiny Review Activity	No scrutiny review activity to report this period.
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>COSMB on 13 September 2019 received reports on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1 June 2019: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn for Resources and Transformation and Partnerships • Update on the Delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan 8 • Medium Term Financial Plan 10 2020/21 to 2023/24 and Review of Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 • Review of the Council Tax Long Term Empty Premium Charges • Smarter Working • Notice of key decisions • Chairs Update

Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (AWH OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	Review of Suicide Rates and Mental Health Wellbeing in County Durham – An update report detailing progress made against recommendations was considered at the AWHOSC meeting held on 3 October 2019.
Scrutiny Review Activity	A Review of GP Services across County Durham is being undertaken and has completed its evidence gathering. Work is ongoing to identify key findings and recommendations.
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>AWH OSC on 3 October 2019 received reports and presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Issues • Skerne Medical Group • Shotley Bridge Community Hospital • Review of Suicide Rates and Mental Health Wellbeing in County Durham • Q1 Performance Management • Budget Revenue and Capital Outturn 2018/19 and Budget Revenue and Capital Forecast Q1 2019/20

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYP OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report for this period.
Scrutiny Review Activity	<p>A review of Private Children's Residential Care Homes is being undertaken jointly with Safer Stronger Communities OSC.</p> <p>The Review Group's report is due to be considered by Cabinet on 13 November 2019.</p> <p>A review of Elective Home Education is being undertaken and the meeting held on 30 September 2019 considered information sharing. A further meeting is scheduled for 21 October 2019 that will consider support to children and their families.</p>
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>The Children and Young People's OSC on 26 September 2019 received reports and presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Relations • Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2018/19 • Ofsted Education Framework 2019 • Consultation on High Needs Block funding for Special educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion Support • Q1 2019/20 Performance Management • Budget Outturn 2018/19 Q4 • Budget Forecast 2019/20 Q1

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (E&E OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report on for this period.
Scrutiny Review Activity	No scrutiny review activity currently identified.
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>The Economy and Enterprise OSC on 24 September 2019 received reports and presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media relations • North East Local Industrial Strategy • Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles • Selective Licensing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q4 2018/19 and Q1 2019/20 Revenue and Capital Outturn • Q1 2019/20 Performance Management • Minutes of the County Durham Economic Partnership held on 12 July 2019.
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Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (E&S OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report for this period.
Scrutiny Review Activity	Review of DCC's future allotment policy - The draft report is now going through the various reporting stages with the date for consideration by Cabinet currently planned for December 2019.
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>The Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC on 4 October 2019 received reports and presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Relations • Climate Emergency Update – Public Consultation • Single Use Plastics – From Pledge to Practice • Budget Outturn Q4 2018/19 • Budget Forecast and Outturn Q1 2019/20 • Performance Management Q1 2019/20 • Update on Review Activity • Durham Strategic Flood Group minutes

Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SSC OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report on for this period.
Scrutiny Review Activity	A review of Private Residential Children's Homes is being undertaken jointly with Children and Young Peoples OSC (see CYP OSC for further details).

	The Road Safety Strategy working group met on 10 October 2019 and considered road casualty statistics and partnership road safety activity in the development of a County Durham road safety strategy.
Overview reports/ Presentations	SSC OSC on 20 September 2019 received reports and presentations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Relations • Open Water Safety and City Safety Group • Alcohol and Drug Harm Reduction Strategy Group update • Q1 2019/20 Performance Management • Overview and Scrutiny review update • Police and Crime Panel

Performance/Budget/Work Programme Reporting

- 6 Information on both performance and budget outturn reports continue to be received and commented upon.

Regional Scrutiny

- 7 A meeting of the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham STP Joint Health Scrutiny Committee on 23 September 2019 received reports and scrutinised:
- Revised terms of reference and protocol for the Joint OSC to reflect the development of an Integrated Care System for North East and North Cumbria;
 - The development of an Integrated Care System for North East and North Cumbria and associated clinical priorities;
 - ICS Partnership arrangements;
 - ICS Communications and engagement update;
 - Workforce updates, and
 - Updated joint OSC work programme.
- 8 Meetings of the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the NECA & North of Tyne CA Joint Transport Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee were held on 19 September 2019.

- 9 The NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee received reports and presentations on:
- Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities
 - NECA Forward Plan and Scrutiny Work Programme
- 10 The NECA & North of Tyne CA Joint Transport Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee received reports and presentations on:
- Joint Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme
 - North East Transforming Cities Fund – Programme Development
 - Aviation 2050

Conclusion

- 9 This report contains the key issues considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the period 13 September – October 2019 and is provided for members information only.

Contact: Jenny Haworth

Tel: 03000 268071

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

N/A.

Finance

N/A.

Climate Change

Any climate change implications will be included in individual reports to the appropriate scrutiny committee.

Consultation

N/A.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

N/A.

Human Rights

N/A.

Crime and Disorder

N/A.

Staffing

N/A.

Accommodation

N/A.

Risk

N/A.

Procurement

N/A.

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