



## **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board**

**Date**            **Friday 18 June 2021**  
**Time**            **9.30 am**  
**Venue**           **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham**

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### **Business**

#### **Part A**

**Items which are open to the Public and Press**  
**Members of the public can ask questions with the Chair's agreement,**  
**and if registered to speak**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2021 (Pages 3 - 6)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Report on the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - Q3 and Q4 - Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Pages 7 - 10)
6. Q4 2020/21 Customer Feedback - Report of the Director of Resources (Interim) (Pages 11 - 28)
7. State of the County Report 2020/21 - Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Interim) (Pages 29 - 76)
8. Refresh of the Work Programme 2021/22 for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board - Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Interim) (Pages 77 - 90)
9. Overview and Scrutiny Annual report 2020/21- Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Interim) (Pages 91 - 118)

10. Update in relation to Petitions - Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Pages 119 - 132)
11. Notice of Key Decisions - Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Pages 133 - 142)
12. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

**Helen Lynch**  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
10 June 2021

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

Councillor C Martin (Chair)  
Councillor C Lines (Vice-Chair)

Councillors R Crute, A Batey, E Adam, P Jopling, L Maddison, R Manchester, B Avery, J Charlton, R Charlton-Lainé, J Cosslett, B Coult, J Elmer, D Freeman, O Gunn, C Hood, L Hovvels, J Howey, A Jackson, C Marshall, B Moist, K Shaw, M Stead, A Surtees and M Wilson

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**Contact: Lucy Gladders**

**Tel: 03000 269 712**

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## DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** held remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Tuesday 20 April 2021 at 9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor R Crute (Chair)**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors A Batey (Vice-Chair), E Adam, R Bell, D Boyes, B Kellett, R Manchester, C Martin, A Shield, H Smith, J Turnbull and M Wilkes

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Hopgood, L Maddison, A Savory, F Tinsley, A Willis and J Makepeace.

### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitutes.

### **3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 22 January and 11 February 2021 be confirmed as a correct record to be signed by the Chair.

### **4 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **5 Quarter Three, 2020/21 Performance Management Report**

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director Resources (Interim) which presented progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager provided an overview of how the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted upon council services, staff and residents and further provided details of key performance issues across the three externally focused results-based ambitions of the County Durham Vision

2035 alongside a fourth 'excellent council' theme contained within the Council Plan.

The Chair commented that there were real concerns as to how families were putting food on the table given the poverty issues reported and also added his concerns regarding female life expectancy and suggested that this may be something that the Board or thematic committee may wish to review in the new municipal year.

Councillor Wilkes added he had concerns regarding health performance and agreed that this should be kept under close observation. Moving on he referred to page 71 of the report, noting his frustration at the poor data available in this area of performance mainly as a result of the loss of staff resources as opposed to being as a direct result of COVID-19 as had been reported during the presentation.

Furthermore, he explained that with 50% of the councils A roads in poor condition and over a fifth of classified roads being in need of maintenance, including rural and estate roads he urged Cabinet to bring forward money in year for repairs before it was too late.

Councillor Boyes commented that he was not optimistic that crime was levelling and noted that in many areas local teams were witnessing a crime epidemic, he specifically referenced the major issues faced in the east of the County with fires and the pressures this was placing upon local services.

He further made reference to the issue of off-road bikes and suggested that pressure should be placed upon Cabinet to lobby government to review powers of the Police to allow them to tackle this issue effectively, as under current powers there was little they could do.

Further discussion ensued regarding confidence in the data presented regarding crime as it was acknowledged that a lot of crime went unreported.

In response to a number of the points raised, the Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager advised that he would seek to obtain figures on the number of women presenting at hospital with alcohol related illness, which may help when reviewing female life expectancy.

With regards to primary and secondary fires he acknowledged that this was a huge issue and suggested that this could be reviewed in the future by the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Moving on to overall crime data, the Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager advised that data should be standard across the country in accordance with Home Office Counting Rules, however acknowledged that there may be

disparities between crime recorded not through court and the Checkpoint programme of admitted guilt.

Councillor Bell commented that many of the issues raised would be hard to get a grasp on until the COVID fog had cleared, and he suspected that following this there would be a patchy recovery out of the pandemic. With such he felt that it would be hard to discern the true challenges until that time.

Further discussion ensued regarding the way in which crime data was recorded and noted that in some cases this could be a result of the way in which the call is interpreted by the call handler. In relation to fires, the Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager advised that he would seek clarification via Environmental Health regarding their enforcement powers on issues around burning of commercial waste. Members also discussed the timeliness of data available on maintenance of highways and footpaths. Councillor Adam suggested that this could be included on the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee future work programme.

**Resolved:**

That the content of the report be noted.

**6 Resources - Quarter 3 December 2020: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2020/21**

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director Resources (Interim) which provided details of the forecast revenue and capital outturn budget position for the Resources Service Grouping, highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget based on the position to the end of December 2020 (for copy see file of Minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the content of the report be noted.

**7 Notice of Key Decisions**

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

The Head of Strategy and Transformation advised that there was only one new item added to the Forward Plan regarding the proposal to amalgamate

Ox Close Primary and Ox Close Nursery Schools into one primary school in a replacement new build on the Durham Road site of the former Tudhoe Grange Comprehensive School from 1 September 2024.

**Resolved:**

That the content of the report be noted.

## **8 Refresh of the Work Programme**

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director Resources (Interim) which provided the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) with the opportunity to review and refresh the work programme for 2021/2022 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Strategy and Transformation advised that the report provided information for members to note activity undertaken by the committee during 2020/21 and enable discussion to suggest areas for review activity or agenda items to be included in the committee's work programme for 2021/2022.

Councillor Wilkes commented that whilst there was some excellent work in the plan, he did feel that the Board should include a review of COVID-19 and in particular the number of related care home deaths. The Chair noted Councillor Wilkes comments.

Councillor Bell noted that putting COVID aside, there was still a huge amount of uncertainty regarding future funding settlements and felt it would be important to ensure that the new council are trained appropriately in this area and fully understood the continuing uncertainties faced by the council.

Councillor Boyes commented that he also felt it was important to manage expectations as the council would undoubtedly face further austerity in the future.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the contents of the report and the proposed COSMB work programme in relation to the Council Plan 2020 – 2023 be noted.
- (ii) That a further report to agree the COSMB work programme for 2021/2022 will be submitted to the 18 June 2021 meeting.

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny  
Management Board**

**18 June 2021**



**Report on the Council's use of powers  
under the Regulation of Investigatory  
Powers Act 2000 - Quarter 3 & 4 -  
2020/2021**

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**Report of 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 October 2020 and 31 December 2020 (quarter 3) and 1 January 2021 and 31 March 2021 (quarter 4) to ensure that it is being used consistently with the Council's policy and that the policy remains fit for purpose.

**Executive summary**

2. Durham County Council, in exercising its use of powers under RIPA during quarters 3 and 4, did not seek authorisation for Directed Surveillance (DS) or Covert Human Intelligence Surveillance (CHIS) operations.
3. The Council's Senior Responsible Officer is satisfied that the Council's use of its powers under RIPA during quarters 3 and 4 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 periods 1 October 2020 and 31 December 2020 (quarter 3) and 1 January 2021 and 31 March 2021 (quarter 4).
  - ii. Resolve that the powers are being used consistently with the Council's policy and that the policy remains fit for purpose.

## **Background**

5. 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.
6. 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).
7. The Local Authority is able to rely upon the information obtained from those surveillance activities within court proceedings.

## **Quarter 3 and 4 Activity**

8. During quarters 3 and 4 there were no RIPA directed surveillance or CHIS authorisations presented to the Court.
9. For information the comparison of authorisations granted for the previous year in quarter 3 was one directed surveillance authorisation and three CHIS authorisations. For the previous year in quarter 4 there was one directed surveillance authorisation and no CHIS authorisations.
10. Members will note that there has been a downturn in the number of RIPA authorisations. This has been explained due to the restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst this report primarily deals with RIPA authorisations it is important to bring to members attention that there has not been a correlating downturn in non-RIPA related work.

## **Background papers**

- None.

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**Contact:** Kamila Coulson-Patel

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## **Appendix 1 Implications**

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### **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, 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**

**18 June 2021**

**Quarter Four, 2020/21  
Customer Feedback Report**



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**Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources (Interim)**

**Councillor Susan McDonnell, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Digital  
and Customer Services**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To present to Members the Customer Feedback Report for quarter four, 2020/21 (full report attached at Appendix 2).

**The impact of COVID-19**

- 2 2020/21 has been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the world more than 115 million people have been infected and more than 2.5 million have died.
- 3 Following confirmation of its first cases in January 2020, the UK government subsequently put in place restrictions to contain the virus, minimise deaths and prevent health and social care systems being overwhelmed. Those restrictions, in varying forms, have impacted our everyday lives, our health and the economy ever since.
- 4 At the beginning of quarter four, in response to a huge increase in COVID-19 cases and the discovery of a faster spreading variant, restrictions were tightened with a third national lockdown. At the same time, the national vaccination programme<sup>1</sup> continued to be rolled out.
- 5 The subsequent fall in infection rates allowed the government to implement plans for a [gradual and phased route out of lockdown](#). The

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<sup>1</sup> started on 8 December 2020

first step, centred around children and students returning to face-to-face teaching, was enacted in March.

- 6 In line with these developments, alongside our continuing public health role and work with other agencies on the local resilience forum (covering both County Durham and Darlington) to protect our communities and support those affected by the pandemic, we are also developing plans for future recovery.
- 7 The COVID-19 surveillance dashboard can be accessed [here](#).

## **Executive Summary**

- 8 This report brings together a wide range of information collected from our customers which describes their experiences of using our services.
- 9 It includes an overview of contact through our Customer Services team; 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.
- 10 We 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.
- 11 We are continuing to improve the consistency and quality of the data in this report, as well as increase the range of customer feedback. As 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, we are working with teams across the authority to expand the report to better reflect the entire council.
- 12 Unless otherwise stated, all information relates to the 12 months ending 31 March 2021, compared to the same period last year.

## **Recommendation**

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

## **Background**

- 14 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.
- 15 Attached to this report at Appendix 2 is the Customer Feedback Report for quarter four, 2020/21.

## **Background papers**

- None

## **Other useful documents**

- Previous Customer Feedback reports presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

## **Author**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **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**

None

### **Human Rights**

None

### **Crime and Disorder**

None

### **Staffing**

None

### **Accommodation**

None

### **Risk**

None

### **Procurement**

None

# Customer Feedback Report

Quarter Four,  
2020/21

# AN EXCELLENT COUNCIL: Are our resources being managed for the best possible outcomes for residents & customers?

## Summary<sup>2,3</sup>

### Digital Channels

24% of contact, up 9%

	do it online	web chat**	e-mail	social media
contacts	280,526	5,127	58,235	6,502
% of total	19%	0.5%	4%	0.5%
+/- to last year	+102,864	n/a	+9,362	+3,336

### Non-digital Channels

76% of contact, down 9%

Calls answered		
19/20	20/21	change
94%	96%	+2pp

	telephone	face-to-face <sup>3</sup>
contacts	1,113,926	0
% of total	76%	0%
+/- to last year	-109,218	-116,711

### Digital Skills Survey\*

94% use the internet at home

90% said the pandemic has not prevented them using our services

37% would use digital facilities within council buildings to go online. Of these...

43% visiting building anyway

10% have poor internet connection at home

7% have no data left on phone / want to save data

5% have no online facilities at home

respondents felt they would benefit from extra help in relation to ...

data security	printing	scanning
9%	7%	5%

uploading / attaching documents

6%

<sup>3</sup> face-to-face data is not comparable as Customer Access Points (CAPs) have been closed since March 2020

\* 7 December 2020 to 29 January 2021 – 647 respondents

\*\* October 2020 to March 2021

## Customer Contact and Service Development

- 1 The arrival of COVID-19 in the UK in March 2020 led to major changes in our service delivery. Within a very tight timeframe, we fundamentally changed our ways of working, made plans to maintain essential services without compromising the safety of our workforce or residents<sup>4</sup>, and set up new delivery models to meet the additional needs of residents shielding or self-isolating.
- 2 We were able to develop digital alternatives to face-to-face contact<sup>5</sup> for some services impacted by the closure of council buildings, which allowed those services to continue. However, some services were required to close due to government restrictions, for example leisure centres, cafes, and theatres. Whilst we successfully redeployed some workers from these services to support our response to the pandemic, a small number (equating to 2.7% of our total workforce, excluding school staff) were furloughed.
- 3 However, as the bulk of affected sites have now reopened under the government's roadmap to recovery, most furloughed employees now returned to work.
- 4 Despite the pandemic, we continued to drive service improvements across customer services by standardising, harmonising, and unitising our first point of contact (our integrated customer services initiative).
- 5 Our improved digital offer means almost 200,000 residents now have an online account, and since its launch in June 2020, customers have used webchat more than 5,000 times to access service support and advice across more than 20 web pages.
- 6 As agents can support two concurrent chats and chat times are lower than alternative channels, the conversion of telephony contact to web chat is driving significant capacity creation which will support reallocation of resource to other priority services. 95% of customers are satisfied with this contact method.
- 7 To help us understand the impact of COVID-19 on our residents' ability to access services, we carried out a survey about digital skills between 7 December 2020 and 29 January. The survey showed most respondents<sup>6</sup> to be

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<sup>4</sup> Included introducing short term contracts for ex-employees or students, sourcing additional staff to support frontline care services, and maintaining a pool of casual staff.

<sup>5</sup> e.g. live streaming council meetings on [YouTube](#), online consultation events, virtual appointments, option to upload and return documents online

<sup>6</sup> Of the 647 respondents – 455 were online (71%), 131 were by telephone (20%) and 61 were via paper (9%)

digitally enabled. However, this could be a consequence of COVID-19 restrictions reducing our ability to engage with our non-digital target audience.

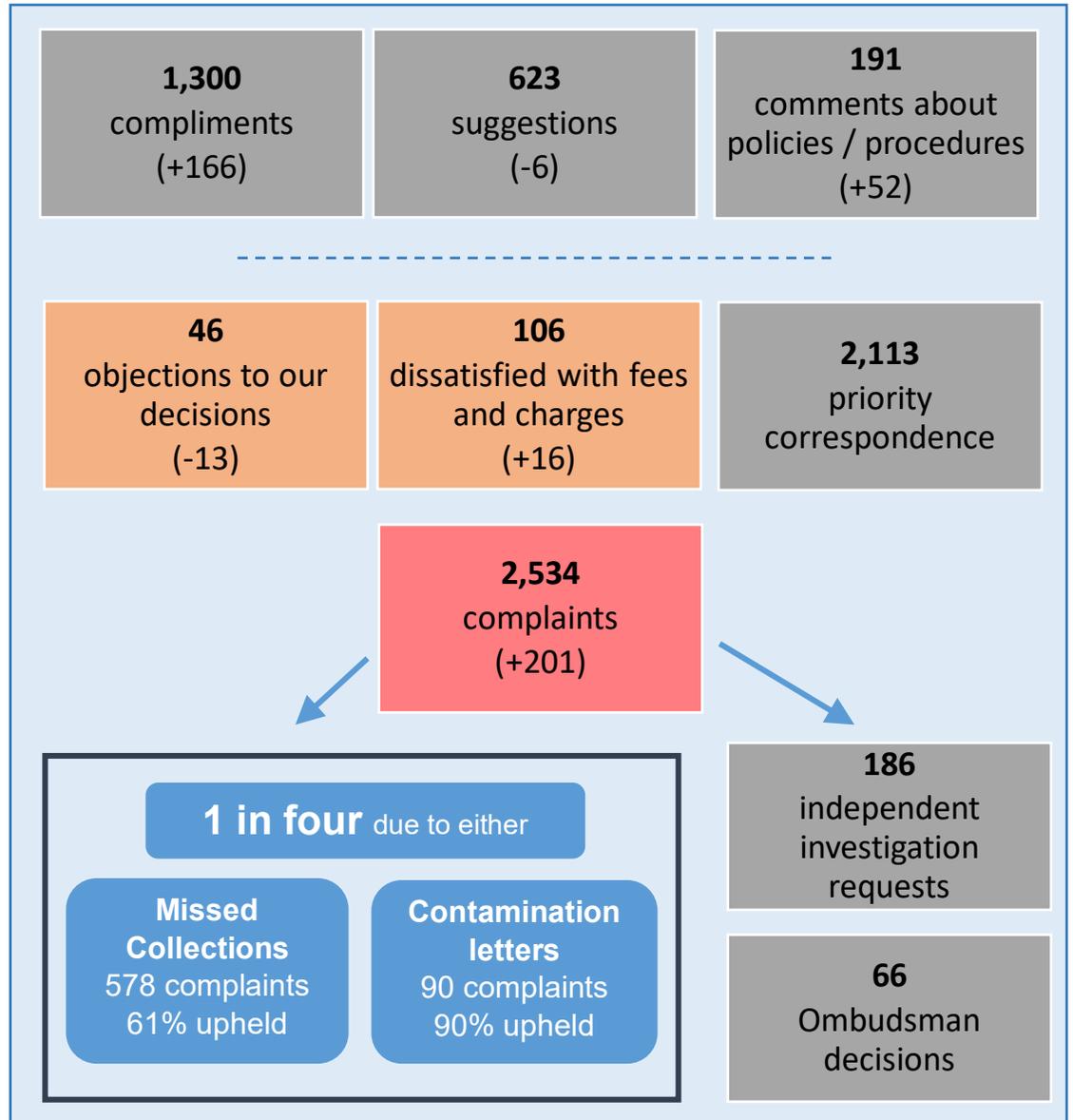
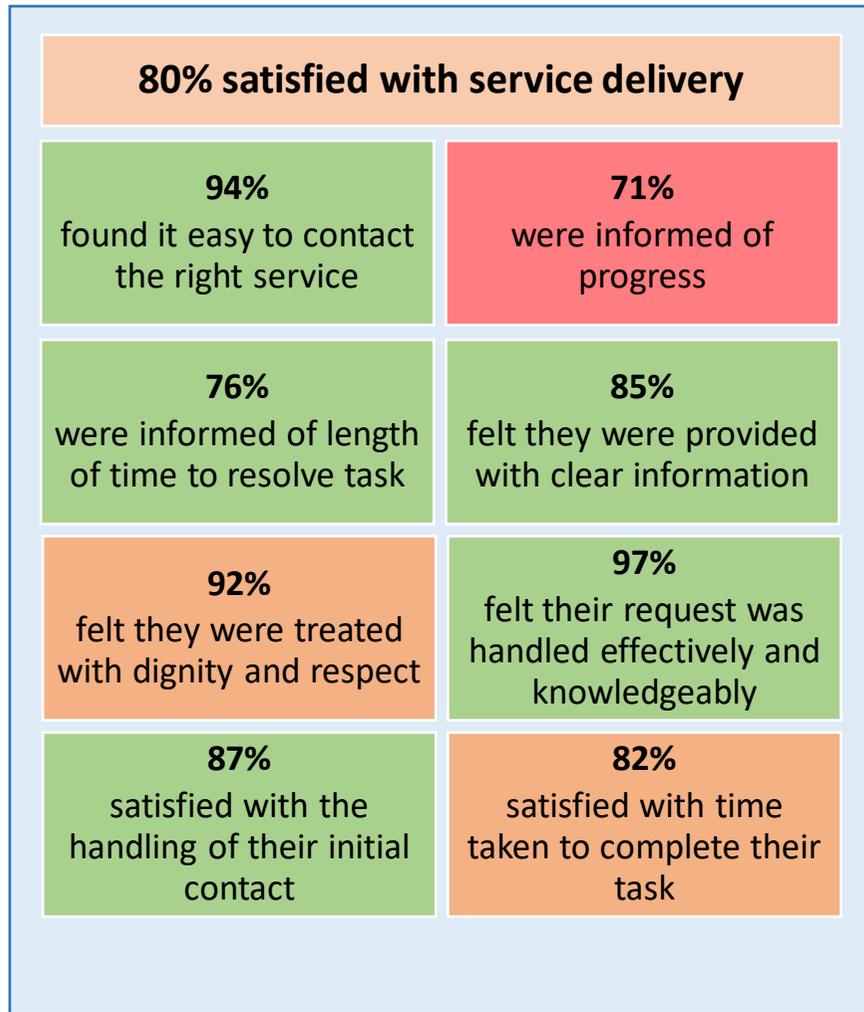
- 8 Of those respondents who stated they preferred to access services using the telephone or online self-serve (the majority), most were able to undertake activities online, having access to devices and connectivity to the internet. A small number of customers, who stated their preference for accessing services was face-to-face, were unable to access services during the pandemic period. We plan to reopen our Customer Access Points on 21 June 2021.
- 9 12% of respondents said they would like additional help to access online support, advice and services.
- 10 We have extremely limited data for calls received outside our Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system<sup>7</sup>. By migrating telephone lines to the ACD systems, we can view demand and performance statistics, and thereby identify opportunities to improve the customer experience.
- 11 Therefore, when viewing our telephone statistics, it is important to remember that they only include data from our ACD system. As we migrate lines from non-ACD sources, not only does the overall call volume increase, but as there is no back data associated with the transferred lines, any comparisons with previous time periods can be misleading as it appears as if telephone calls to the council are increasing.
- 12 Although latest data shows overall contact by telephone has increased, detailed analysis carried out during the quarter shows there has been a reduction in telephone contact – but it has been masked by the additional call volume from lines transferred to the ACD system over the last 18 months. We estimate that overall call volume is around 20% lower than we would have expected.
- 13 However, some reductions in call volume are due to digital advancements. More customers are using our virtual Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) system to self-serve so our general enquiries team is handling fewer calls.

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<sup>7</sup> Broadly speaking, we receive telephone calls either through our Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system, which routes calls to groups of agents in line with 'first-in-first-answered' criteria, or directly to a telephone extension (non-ACD).

# CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

## Summary<sup>8,9</sup>



worse than last year
better than last year
similar to last year
Not comparable

Page 19  
<sup>8</sup>(data relates to the 12 months ending 31 March 2021, compared to the previous year where applicable)  
<sup>9</sup>Satisfaction data is from the CRM closure process (based on 13,260 responses)

## Customer Satisfaction

- 14 Over the last 12 months, we received more than 13,260 responses to our automated customer satisfaction survey (from the CRM closure process), which we acknowledge is a relatively small proportion of overall service delivery. We continue to explore options to increase the response rate (including improved capture of email addresses and exploration of other contact channels) to expand the range of customer feedback and insight received.
- 15 Of those who did respond, the main reason for dissatisfaction with service delivery continues to be not resolving the issue long-term.
- 16 Four services accounted for more than half of the responses received:

	Found it easy to contact the right service	Were informed how long it would take to resolve task	were informed of progress	were satisfied with service delivery
Missed Collection (4,327)	95%	83%	58%	76%
Fly-tipping (1,015)	98%	73%	83%	86%
Council tax account (863)	96%	77%	92%	96%
Street lighting (790)	96%	83%	77%	86%

- 17 We believe the variation in number of responses and satisfaction levels is due to the emotiveness of the issue, with more emotive requests encouraging greater participation.

## Customer Compliments

- 18 In line with previous reports, most of the 1,300 compliments received relate to satisfaction with service provision. Others related to the actions of specific individuals.
- 19 A small sample of the 334 compliments received during quarter four, 2020/21 is attached at Appendix 1. Of these compliments, 50 thanked us for maintaining service provision (mainly bin collections and gritting) throughout the period of wintery weather.

## Customer Suggestions

- 20 During the 12 months ending 31 March, we received 629 suggestions, almost one-third of which related to our household waste collection service.
- 21 However, although we receive a considerable number of suggestions, the majority have been addressed previously and/or considered as part of service development.

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

- 22 More than half of this feedback related to two areas:

	No. of comments received	% of feedback
HWRC Policies and Procedures	76	25%
Refuse and Recycling Policy (not collecting side waste /not emptying contaminated bins)	72	23%
Objections to operational decisions (waste collection, highway works)	19	6%
Waste charges	19	6%

## Customer complaints

- 23 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

## ADULT AND HEALTH SERVICES

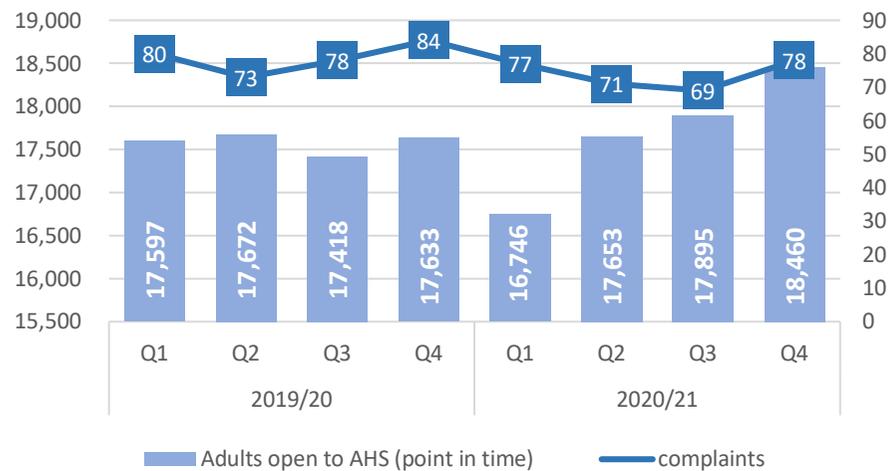
**78**  
complaints

**-3**  
(down 4%)

**11.5% upheld**  
**22% partially upheld**

**100%**  
completed within  
timescale

Trend - Service users and complaints



## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

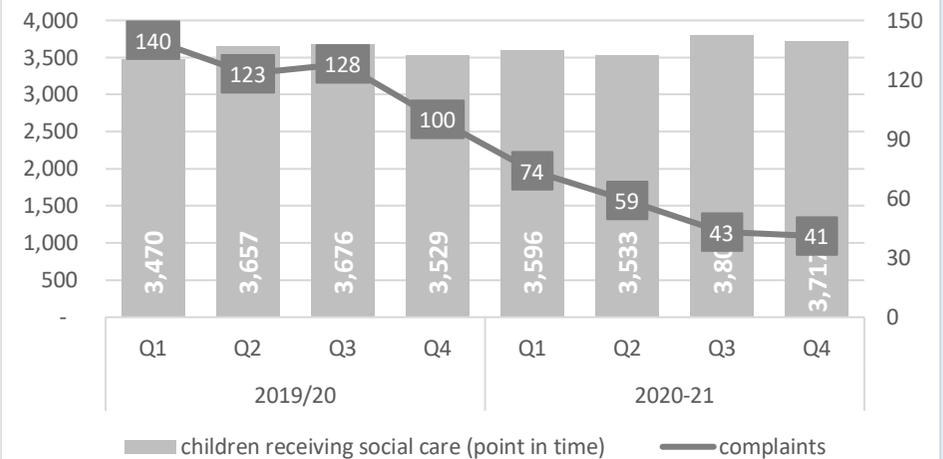
**41**  
complaints

**-59**  
(down 59%)

**7% upheld**  
**24% partially upheld**

**73%**  
completed within  
timescale

Trend -Service users and complaints



## **Statutory complaints**

- 24 As at 31 March 2021, Adult and Health Services were supporting more than 18,000 people, and Children and Young People’s Services were supporting approximately 3,700 children and young people.
- 25 Each service has their own distinct and separate statutory complaints procedures, so the complaints made under each of these procedures are not directly comparable. Generally, users of Adult and Health Services have voluntarily requested access to the service so that their eligible social care and support needs can be assessed and met, whilst the involvement of Children and Young People’s Services is primarily due to a child or young person being in need or at risk of significant harm.

### ***Adult and Health Services***

- 26 Of the 78 complaints received, 29% related to the older people/physical disabilities/sensory impairment service area (23 complaints), 20% to the learning disabilities/mental health/substance misuse service area (16 complaints) and 23% to external providers linked to the commissioning service (18 complaints). Most notably, the category of “COVID-19 related”, added at the start of the pandemic as a reason for making a statutory social care complaint, had the highest number of submissions (21).
- 27 During quarter four, in response to complaints received, we:
- (a) considered how social workers or nurses can check that service users have felt supported throughout the review process and reaffirmed that reviews should be carried out with service users.
  - (b) checked a care provider was adhering to COVID-19 procedures which reduce virus spread and control infection when residents test positive.
  - (c) refreshed training for all frontline staff who deal with the estates of deceased service users.

### ***Children and Young People’s Services***

- 28 51% of complaints related to disputed decisions (21 complaints).
- 29 Of the complaints received during quarter four, one was partially upheld. This complaint related to a manager’s comments, made within a professionals-only meeting, the notes of which were subsequently shared with a carer as part of a Subject Access Request. Staff will be reminded of the need to record information accurately and sensitively, as records can be requested by service users at any time.

## Corporate Complaints

- 30 In line with previous reports, half of all corporate complaints received during quarter four related to our waste collection service. Of these, half related to missed bin collections. However, it is important to note that of the 13 million bins collected each year, fewer than 0.2% of households submit a complaint.
- 31 To help reduce this type of avoidable customer contact, we are continuing to inform households via text message (where we are able) when crews are unable to collect their bin (due to, for example, access issues, inclement weather).
- 32 Crews have been reminded of the importance of checking addresses before logging contamination – to help reduce the number of complaints across this area.

## Corporate complaints subjected to independent investigation

- 33 During the 12 months ending 31 March 2021, 186 complainants were dissatisfied with the response to their complaint (44 during quarter four) and asked for it to be escalated to independent investigation by the Customer Feedback Team.



*\*all investigations aim be completed within 30 working days*

- 34 Throughout 2020/21, we completed complaint investigations within 21 days on average, compared to 28 days in 2019/20. This followed the transfer of the complaint telephone line into the Corporate Contact Centre, which streamlined our first point of contact service delivery and created additional capacity within the customer feedback team to support more complex complaint investigations.
- 35 Details of complaints upheld by independent investigators during quarter four are included in Appendix 2.

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

36 During 2020/21, the Ombudsman delivered decisions relating to 66 complaints. Conclusions were reached based on details supplied by complainants, and in some instances, supplemented with contextual information from council officers.

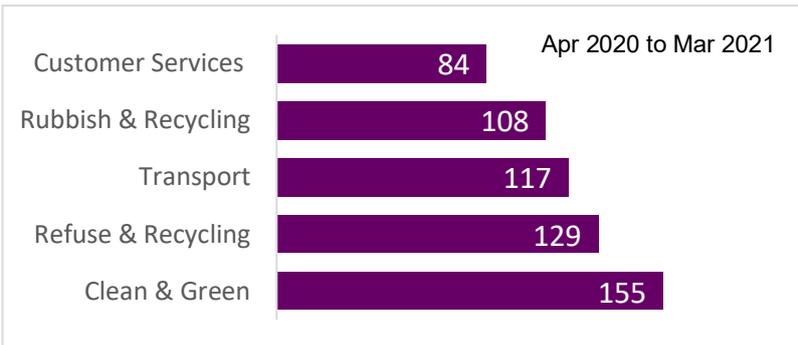
37 The 20 decisions delivered during quarter four are shown below:



38 Details of complaints upheld by the Ombudsman during quarter four are included in Appendix 3.

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

## Appendix 1: Sample of compliments received during quarter four, 2020/21



Care Connect don't get enough praise for all the support they have done over this last year, during the pandemic they have been into peoples' houses caring for them and getting the help they needed, fantastic job all of you.

thank you so very much for helping with the flooding in the street. The lads worked very hard and very late to help clear the access water coming from a nearby farmers field

Thanks to officer from welfare rights for their extremely efficient , polite and patient assistance

I would like you to recognise the excellent customer service I received from a lovely lady this afternoon. She was most helpful and was grateful to her. She was outstanding..

Customer would like to pass on a massive thank you to the gentleman that cleans the parks on a Monday. He had gone out of his way to put a slab down and empty the dog bin even through it was flooded. This meant it was still usable

Amazing service looked after my mam when she needed the help.

Christmas tree collected today – thanks for the service.

very appreciative of swift service.

Thanks for the help they gave his wife during the night. He stated they were highly professional. And they arrived promptly.

extremely polite and helpful and went that extra mile to sort query.

Swift action in the removal of fly-tipping, please pass on my thanks

the officer was fantastic, explained their situation to them and made them feel much more in control of the situation

Would like to pass on his gratitude for being so helpful and giving a thorough explanation about his benefits and regarding the overpayments. it was dealt with very quickly and efficiently.

thank you for the new lights - nice and bright and neighbours feel a lot safer

the determination of the refuse collectors this morning on our estate was nothing but amazing. From shortly after 7am they arrived on the estate with 3-5cm of snow. Built on a hillside it is difficult to leave or access when it's icy or snowing. Several attempts later he has made it to the upper most part of the estate. The determination of the team this morning was tremendous. Many would have given up at the first hurdle. You should be proud to have such determined colleagues within your organisation.

thanks for gritting the paths and the road where Brandon Lane Surgery is. The whole path going up the hill and the road had been done, which really removed the stress of having to go to the practice to take elderly family for jabs. They did a great job.

a huge thank you to the 2 guys who helped my daughter get to work today. Her car was stuck on the bank and she was on late shift at Sunderland Hospital. Not only did these guys plough the bank but also helped her dig her car out.

**Appendix 2: Independent investigations by Customer Feedback Team where corporate complaints were upheld**

<b>Complaint upheld</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Customer dissatisfied that the garden waste bin was not emptied on a number of occasions	Refund of garden waste subscription. Apology for the time taken to resolve the matter.
Customer dissatisfied that we did not collect their bulky waste when stated.	Refund of the bulky collection fee.

<b>Complaint partially upheld</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Customer dissatisfied with outcome of complaint regarding privacy distances between dwellings not being adhered to.	Apology to customer. £250 payment for the upset and inconvenience caused
Customer dissatisfied with outcome of planning decision which was not consistent with previous local applications.	Apology to customer for failing to provide a timely response.
Customer dissatisfied with the lack of response to correspondence to ensure new disabled resident would access council services.	Apology for not acknowledging correspondence.

### Appendix 3: Complaints upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman)

Ombudsman's final decision	Agreed action
The council was at fault for not ensuring the provision in Section F of an Education, Health and Care Plan was secured from 2016 onwards.	To apologise and to pay £1,000 for the distress and time and trouble taken to pursue the complaint, and £7,200 for the lost provision of special educational support.
The council was at fault for the poor care service provided by its commissioned care provider.	To apologise, to pay £500 to the complainant, and monitor the contractor's future performance.
The council was at fault in how it investigated the complaint at Stage two of its complaints procedure.	To apologise for the fault identified, and to pay £150 in recognition of the avoidable distress caused.
The council was at fault following fully upholding a complaint but failing to offer any remedy for the injustice or properly explain how the situation arose.	To pay £500 in recognition of the injustice caused.

**Corporate Overview and  
Scrutiny Management Board**

**18 June 2021**

**State of the County Report, 2020/21**



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**Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources (Interim)**

**Councillor Amanda Hoggood, Leader of the Council**

**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.

**The impact of COVID-19**

- 2 2020/21 was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the world more than 115 million people have been infected and more than 2.5 million have died.
- 3 Following confirmation of its first cases in January 2020, the UK government put in place restrictions which would contain the virus, minimise deaths and prevent health and social care systems being overwhelmed. Those restrictions, in varying forms, have impacted our everyday lives, our health and the economy ever since.
- 4 At the beginning of quarter four, in response to a huge increase in COVID-19 cases and the discovery of a faster spreading variant, restrictions were tightened with a third national lockdown. At the same time, the national vaccination programme<sup>1</sup> continued to be rolled out.
- 5 The subsequent fall in infection rates allowed the government to implement plans for a [gradual and phased route out of lockdown](#). The first step, centred around children and students returning to face-to-face teaching, took place in March.

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<sup>1</sup> started on 8 December 2020

- 6 In line with these developments, alongside our continuing public health role and work with other agencies on the local resilience forum (covering both County Durham and Darlington) to protect our communities and support those affected by the pandemic, we are also developing plans for future recovery.
- 7 The COVID-19 surveillance dashboard can be accessed [here](#).

## Performance Reporting

- 8 This report is structured around the three externally focused results-based ambitions of the [County Durham Vision 2035](#) which is shared by all partners on the County Durham Partnership alongside a fourth 'excellent council' theme contained within our [Council Plan](#)<sup>2</sup>. It also includes an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on council services, our staff, and residents.

## More and Better Jobs

- 9 The impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt in the UK economy – with GDP contracting by 9.8% in 2020, the largest annual fall on record<sup>3</sup>. Latest figures suggest a broadly stable jobs market with early signs of recovery. However, there are 772,000 fewer payrolled employees than pre-COVID, with the hospitality sector, those aged under 25, and those living in London<sup>4</sup> impacted the most.
- 10 Across County Durham our employment rate remains static, but as the government is continuing to support one in eight eligible jobs through the furlough scheme and six in ten self-employed people through the self-employment income support scheme, we are expecting it to deteriorate in the future. That said, the increase in universal credit has levelled off which suggests local and national support measures are helping to create economic resilience.
- 11 We remain concerned about the longer-term impacts of the pandemic. The economic situation is contributing to financial pressures across the county, with increased levels of children eligible for free school meals and many households at risk of falling into poverty. And although educational attainment is broadly in line with performance across the country, the longer-term impact of COVID-19 will affect the futures of our young people.
- 12 To mitigate against these economic challenges, we are continuing to provide financial support to residents and businesses, are moving

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<sup>2</sup> approved by Council in October 2020

<sup>3</sup> Office of National Statistics: [GDP quarterly national accounts, UK: October to December 2020](#)

<sup>4</sup> Office of National Statistics: [Labour Market Overview, UK: May 2021](#)

forward with significant investment projects which will create new infrastructure and transform our towns and villages, and are helping people back into work particularly through self-employment or by moving into job sectors experiencing increasing demand, e.g. food retail, delivery.

## **Long and Independent Lives**

- 13 Latest data (pre-COVID) shows that across the county people are living longer. Better working conditions, reduced smoking rates and improved healthcare have all contributed to increasing life expectancy from generation to generation – our residents are now living on average three years longer than 20 years ago with the gap between men and women narrowing.
- 14 However, although healthy life expectancy (years lived in good health) for men across the county has increased over the last ten years, albeit at a slower rate than overall life expectancy, the opposite is true for women. The steady decline of healthy life expectancy for women across the county means that although women are living longer than men, they live fewer years in good health. In addition, with the exception of male healthy life expectancy, the gap in life expectancies between County Durham and England is widening.
- 15 We are continuing to support people to live longer healthy lives. Focused activity across mental and physical well-being, physical activity for children, smoking quitters (particularly pregnant women and new mothers) and breastfeeding is continuing to make a difference to the lives of our residents. More smoking quitters and a greater percentage breastfeeding compared to the same period last year.
- 16 Throughout 2020/21, we continued to successfully improve outcomes for vulnerable children and their families with services which are joined up and responsive to their needs, and we remain on track to achieve 'significant and sustained outcomes' for around 6,000 families as part of our stronger families programme.
- 17 Poverty pressures remain a major issue and we expect the situation to deteriorate over the coming months. Increases in basic living costs and additional expenditure incurred due to school closures (meals, heating and equipping children for online learning) has hit those with little disposable income hard - especially as their normal coping strategies are no longer available to them, e.g. eating at friends and families, accessing the internet at their local library, buying clothes at charity shops. We are concerned about large numbers of pupils who are eligible for free school meals but are not claiming them.

- 18 The detrimental impact on mental well-being of these financial stresses, as well as increasing isolation and loneliness, is causing great concern and has led more people (across all age groups) to seek support through primary and secondary mental health services. Although this is impacting people across all age groups, recent data suggests that it is under 18s who are suffering most.
- 19 However, a positive picture has emerged from our health services, with 89% of residents and 74% of staff across our care homes, having received their second COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Connected Communities – Safer focus**

- 20 Although crime has fallen across all crime categories, the reduction is more noticeable in theft-related offences, which fell by a third, and reflects people spending more time at home, there being fewer opportunities for theft in public spaces and the closure of non-essential retail and the night-time economy.
- 21 However, we remain concerned about domestic abuse, which is associated with one in every five crimes, specifically the increase in those categorised as ‘violence against the person’ crimes. And as victims are unable to access their normal coping mechanisms, such as leaving the home or staying with others, it is likely the intensity of the situation is driving the additional demand for our specialist support services. In addition, clients are presenting with more complex issues, especially mental health, so cases are taking longer to resolve.
- 22 Conversely, anti-social behaviour (ASB) has increased. Environmental ASB has increased due to a spike in reported fly-tips between April and June (which coincided with the closure of the Household Waste Recycling Centres), residents spending more time at home (thereby witnessing and reporting events, as well as driving increases in areas such as noise) and the enforcement of COVID-19 restrictions.
- 23 We continue to perform well in relation to the timeliness of processing statutory referrals to children’s social care (first contact) and single assessments and are carrying out audits to ensure quality of assessments remains consistently high.
- 24 However, we are continuing to experience budget and placement pressures as demand for children’s social care remains high, with a comparatively high number of children on a child protection plan and the highest recorded number of children looked after (CLA). Although safeguarding referrals remain lower than expected, which reflects the national picture, those relating to children in danger of significant harm remain static.

## **Connected Communities – Sustainable Communities focus**

- 25 Latest data shows that we have reduced carbon emissions by 51% compared to the 2008 baseline, and we are now implementing a range of projects to further reduce to 70% by March 2025. However, it is worth noting that this data relates to a period influenced by COVID-19 restrictions (2019/20), specifically business closures, reduced road traffic levels and more people staying at home, all of which had a positive effect on carbon emissions but are unlikely to be sustained as lockdown eases.
- 26 Another consequence of COVID-19 has been the generation of additional tonnages of household waste due to people spending more time in their homes. However, although we collected more household waste, the proportion recycled reduced – mainly due to closure of the recycling markets early in the pandemic (which have now re-opened) and contamination of kerbside recycling bins remaining high.
- 27 Across this section, we are concerned about the lifting of the eviction ban as lockdown eases. More households are already living in temporary accommodation, and for longer, due to a shortage of suitable properties, a consequence of action taken to house rough sleepers during the pandemic. We are sourcing additional properties to help alleviate the problem.

## **An Excellent Council**

- 28 Since the start of the pandemic, we have continually adapted our service provision and ways of working to help slow the spread of COVID-19, prevent our health and social care systems being overwhelmed, and protect our residents and staff.
- 29 Within a very tight timeframe, we fundamentally changed our ways of working, made plans to maintain essential services without compromising the safety of our workforce or residents, and set up new delivery models to meet the additional needs of residents shielding or self-isolating.
- 30 To safeguard our employees, all staff continue to work from home where possible, and we continue to manage and control transmission risks for those essential employees who need to attend the workplace.
- 31 Although service provision and ways of working continue to be impacted and some non-essential services remain closed or are being delivered remotely, most services have now reopened under the government's roadmap to recovery. We are continuing to expand our online alternatives to face-to-face contact which are encouraging more customers to liaise with us digitally.

- 32 Our community support hub remains in place to help our most vulnerable residents through the pandemic and we continue to provide financial assistance to both residents and businesses – proactively encouraging those struggling financially to engage with us to access potential support mechanisms.
- 33 We continue to face significant financial pressure from the pandemic. The additional costs incurred and loss of income for 2020/21 are forecast to be £101 million, which we expect to be broadly covered by government funding. Additional costs and loss of income continue to be incurred in 2021/22, and this position is being closely monitored and compared with the funding provided by government. Any 2020/21 collection fund loss from reductions in council tax income can be spread over three years (2021/22 to 2023/24) with the government providing a partial grant to cover this loss. We, alongside all local government representative bodies, will continue to lobby government for additional financial support during 2021/22 if this is required.

### **Risk Management**

- 34 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. The latest report can be found [here](#).

### **Recommendation**

- 35 That Cabinet considers the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter four performance, the impact of COVID-19 on performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of underperformance including the significant economic and well-being challenges because of the pandemic.

### **Author**

Andy Palmer

Tel: 03000 268551

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **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.



# Durham County Council

# State of the County Report

## 2020/21

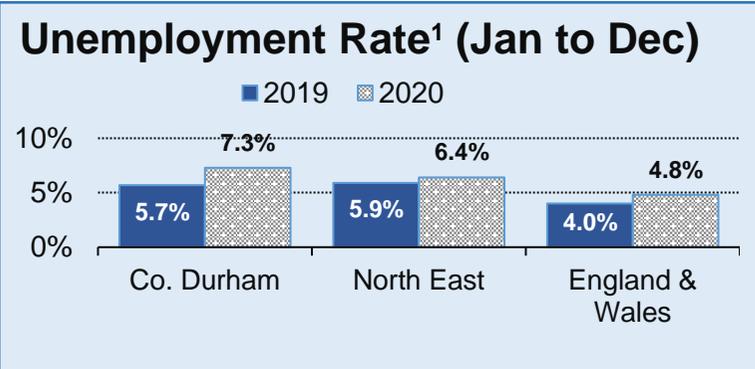
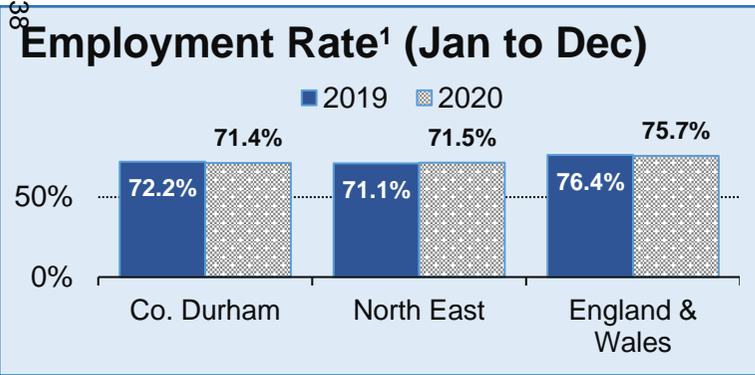


## Vision for County Durham 2035 and Council Plan

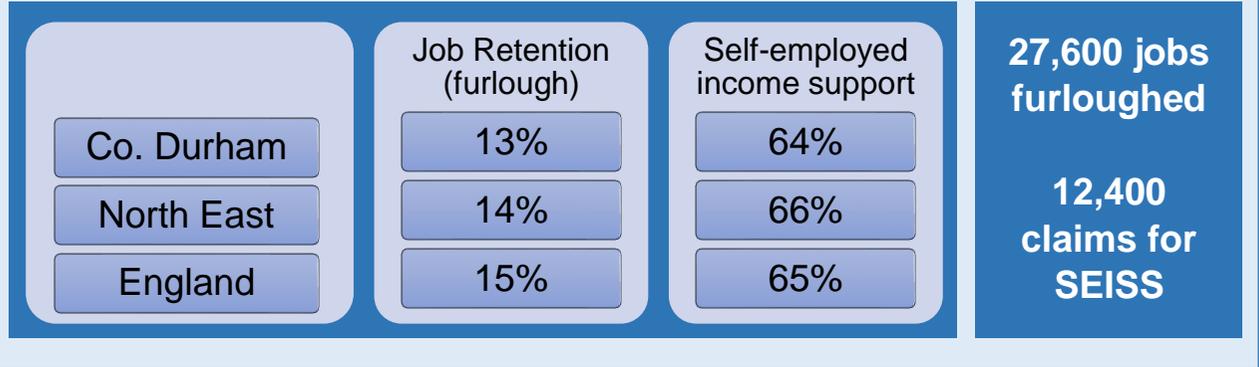
- 1 The Vision for County Durham 2035 was developed following extensive consultation with residents – more than 30,000 individual feedback responses were received and analysed which significantly shaped the final vision. It is a partnership vision which was signed off by each partner organisation before being agreed by the County Durham Partnership in October 2019. It is written around three ambitions for the county and its residents being:
  - (a) More and better jobs
  - (b) Long and independent lives
  - (c) Are communities well connected and supportive of each other
- 2 The Council's corporate plan, the Council Plan, for 2021-2023 adopts the ambitions and objectives set out in the vision and supplements them with a fourth ambition - to be an excellent council.
- 3 This report summarises the status for County Durham against these four ambitions and their objectives using a set of key macro measures which present to members a summary of some of the challenges facing the county.
- 4 Further detail on these indicators can be found on our intelligence, research and knowledge base Durham Insight (<https://www.durhaminsight.info>) which is a web-based platform which provides easy to access information on County Durham. This is used extensively by the council and its partners to inform policy development and decision making.

# MORE AND BETTER JOBS: Do residents have good job prospects?

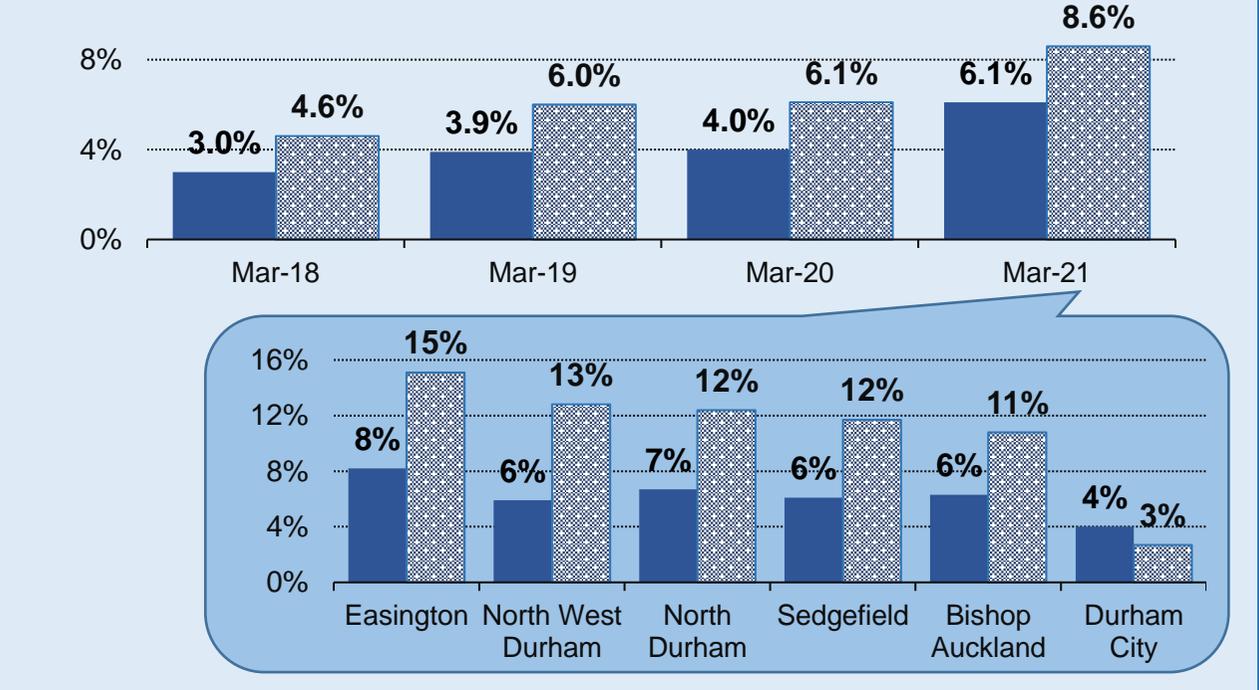
## Summary<sup>5</sup>



### Support Schemes (as at 31 Mar)



### Claimant Count (as at Dec-20)



<sup>5</sup> Employment / Unemployment Rates: Annual Population Survey Jan-20 to Dec-20

## **More and Better Jobs**

- 5 The ambition of More and Better Jobs is linked to the following key questions:
- (a) Do residents have good job prospects?
  - (b) Is County Durham a good place to do business?
  - (c) How well do tourism and cultural events contribute to our local economy?
  - (d) Do our young people have access to good quality education and training?

### **Do residents have good job prospects?**

- 6 Although our employment rate has dropped slightly, it has yet to see any significant impact of the pandemic. However, we expect this to change once the government removes the available support packages (furlough and self-employment income schemes).
- 7 The unemployment rate has been increasing since June 2020, and at a greater rate than nationally. However, the rate is an estimate from a sample survey, and as it is within the estimated confidence intervals, it is possible that the latest increase is due to random sample variation.
- 8 Following a significant rise in people claiming employment benefits between March 2020 and May 2020, the claimant count has continued to remain relatively static throughout 2020/21 and now stands at 6.1%. This trend is reflected both regionally and nationally.

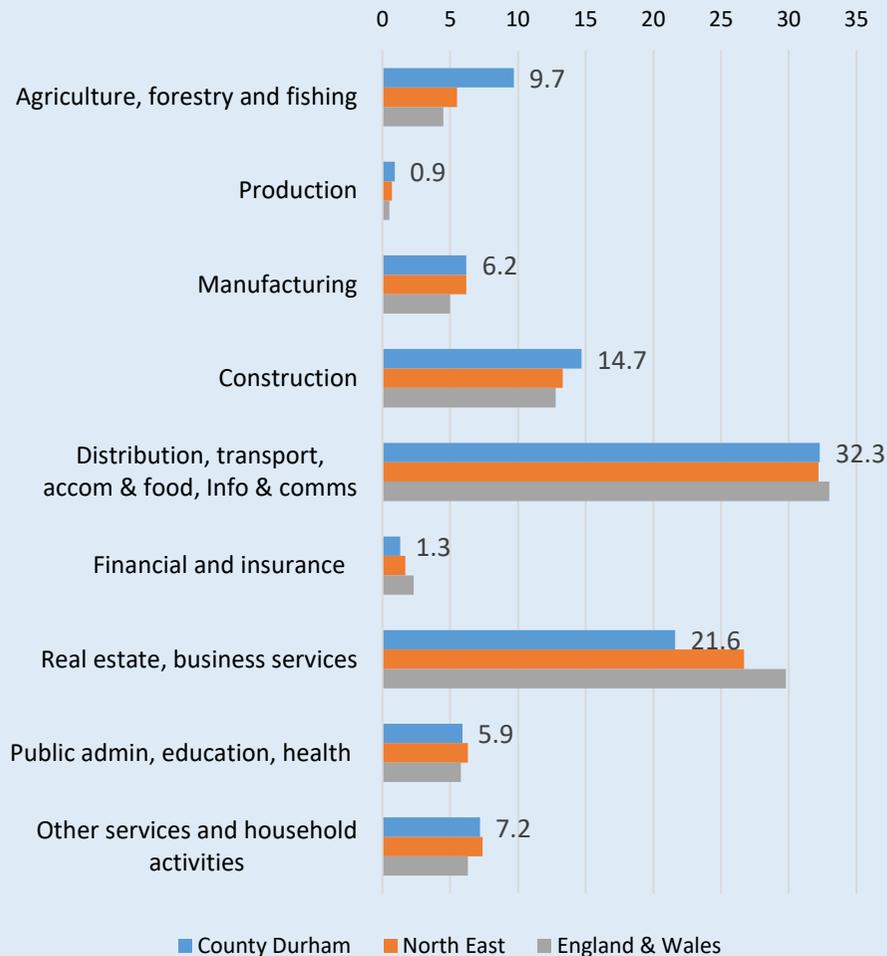
## MORE AND BETTER JOBS:

Is County Durham a good place to do business?  
**Summary<sup>6</sup>**

How well do tourism & cultural events contribute to our local economy?  
**Summary<sup>7</sup>**

### Business Enterprises by Industry Proportion (%) 2020

Source: Durham Insight



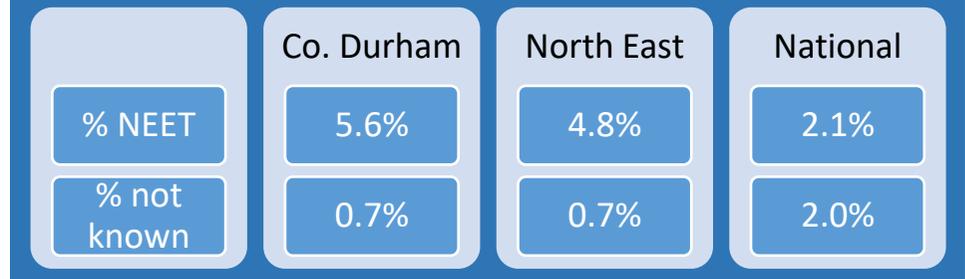
### Top 10 Employment Sectors in County Durham, 2019

Source: Business Register of Employment Survey, 2019



Do our young people have access to good quality education and training?

### 16-17 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) (Jan-Mar 2021)



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

## Is County Durham a good place to do business?

- 9 County Durham has rebuilt its economy since the decline of its historical key industries of coal mining and steelmaking. The industrial economy is a strength for the county and provides a significant source of employment alongside a strong public sector.
- 10 In 2020, there were 14,105 business enterprises in County Durham. This represents 266 businesses per 10,000 population which is significantly lower than the England and Wales average of 420 per 10,000 population. Since the recession of 2010, the number of businesses within the county has increased by 2,660 or 23.2%. However, this increase is lower than that seen regionally (27.9%) and nationally (32.3%.)
- 11 In terms of employment numbers, manufacturing and health are the county's most prominent employment sectors accounting for 13.7% of employment with 25,000 each.
- 12 The largest growth areas of growth in employment between 2009 and 2019 has been the arts, entertainment and recreation industries (50% or 1,500 jobs) and education (+14% or 2,500 jobs.) The largest declines in the same period have been in finance and insurance (-26%) and public administration and defence (-24%).
- 13 The pandemic impacted our ability to deliver employability programmes during 2020/21. Although, we moved programmes online when face-to-face contact ceased, some people were reluctant to engage, especially as Jobcentre Plus no longer mandated participants to complete job search activity and there were fewer job opportunities. However, there have been successes with participants becoming self-employed or moving into job sectors experiencing increased demand, e.g. food retail, delivery drivers.
- 14 Significant national and local support packages have been provided to businesses whose activities have been impacted by the pandemic with the council often acting as the conduit for national schemes. Support to local businesses included implementing immediate supplier payments and rent deferrals for our commercial tenants; distributing £100 million of grant payments to around 9,000 businesses and £49 million of business rate reductions to more than 2,200 businesses; providing an extra £5 million for small businesses not liable for business rates; increasing funding for social care providers by 10% and paying £13 million upfront to help with funding and cashflow issues.
- 15 There is a national issue of high street decline with the growth of online shopping which is seeing a programme of store closures by major retailers. This has been going on for some time but has been exacerbated by the impacts of COVID-19

with many non-essential shops being closed during the height of the pandemic. Nationally, the Office for National Statistics reports that internet sales as a percentage of all total retail sales stood at 19% in February 2020, rising from 2.5% in 2006. The latest available figure which as for April 2021 was 29.4% with it being as high as 36.3% around the Christmas period. The visible effects of store closures, empty shops and fewer shoppers was highlighted as an issue for the county by residents in our consultation on the county vision. Our high streets and town centres retain an important place in our society, but they will need to adapt to ensure that they remain as vibrant and attractive social hubs that people want to use.

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

- 16 The tourism sector continues to be impacted by the pandemic, missing out on the recent Easter season which is one of the most profitable times of the year, along with Christmas.
- 17 Although many attractions and venues have been closed due to lockdown restrictions, outdoor spaces such as parks and gardens have been open for exercise. Throughout the year we have seen a significant increase in the number of visitors at Hardwick Park and a good level of take up of our online sessions and Love Exploring app which offers activities such as trails and games.
- 18 A refreshed café, library and exhibition offer has been completed at Bishop Auckland Town Hall, and will launch when cultural venues re-open in May. Durham Town Hall will remain closed until the summer to allow conservation and restoration work on the building to be completed.
- 19 Killhope Lead Mining Museum opened on 17 May with a new cultural programme and improved café.
- 20 In preparation for Lumiere 2021, the creative commissioning scheme BRILLIANT was launched in January. The scheme will commission six new pieces of work to feature at the event.
- 21 We plan to reinstate both the Seaham and Bishop Auckland Food Festivals, in August and October respectively.
- 22 Work on the Durham History Centre is expected to start this spring, be complete by autumn 2022 and open to the public in 2023. It is anticipated that the centre will attract in the region of 70,000 visitors each year with its modern search rooms, innovative digital facilities, dedicated spaces for learning, exhibiting and interpreting, and café.

- 23 During quarter four, Durham County Record Office's online programme of talks, family history courses, school workshops and exhibitions was extended to include children's holiday archive craft activities and a special online talk about the role played by the Durham Light Infantry in the liberation of Belsen Concentration Camp (part of our holocaust memorial programme).

## **Do our young people have access to good quality education and training?**

- 24 The pandemic and school closures meant that Ofsted suspended its school inspection programme during the year. On 4 May they reinstated some inspection including Section 8 monitoring visits to schools graded 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' at their last two inspections. Following eight of these Section 8 monitoring visits by Ofsted (which were not graded), all schools received the judgement that 'leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances. The quality of remote education and support for children and young people returning to school are the focus for further action.
- 25 Educational attainment at Key Stage 4 compares favourably with the North East and our most similar group of local authorities but is lagging behind in comparison with national figures. Examinations were cancelled last year due to the pandemic and replaced by centre assessed grades which pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds fair badly in comparison with their peers.
- 26 Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds fair less well in terms of their educational attainment than their peers. The gap in educational attainment between disadvantaged pupils as measured by those eligible for free school meals and their peers in terms of the average Attainment 8 score at Key Stage 4 is -14.4 which is higher than the national figure (-13.5) but lower than the North East average (-15.5.)
- 27 Across County Durham, the proportion of young people (aged 16-24) Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) is 5.6%, which equates to 596 young people from a cohort of 10,683. [DurhamWorks](#) continues to offer intensive and individualised support, and to date have helped more than 8,200 young people, 86% of whom progressed to employment, education, training or gained an accredited qualification on leaving.
- 28 Nationally, COVID-19 has increased the number of young people who are NEET. Across the North East, there has been a 16% increase compared to last year, nationally the increase is 5.4%. However, the whereabouts of 2% of the national cohort is not known compared to 0.7% across the North East and County Durham.

- 29 Across County Durham, 5.1% of young people aged 16-17 are undertaking an apprenticeship, significantly higher than the 3.8% national average. However, the overall proportion in apprenticeships has reduced due to COVID-19 with more of those aged 16-17 year continuing in full time education or training as opposed to employment.
  
- 30 Throughout 2020/21, chrome books and WIFI routers have been provided to support remote learning and facilitate contact between vulnerable children and professionals. Almost 2,000 chrome books and 600 routers have been provided to vulnerable children, in addition to the 5,000 devices allocated to local schools.

## MORE AND BETTER JOBS: Do young people have access to a good quality education and training?

Indicator	2019/20 comparators			
	County Durham	North East	Most Similar Group	National
Average Attainment 8 score per pupil at Key Stage 4	48.8	48.4	48.5	53.1
Average Point Score per A-level entry in state funded schools	39.9	38.3	38.7	39.5
Gap between Attainment 8 score for disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils	-14.4	-15.5	-14.5	-13.5
% primary schools judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted	89	91	88	87
% secondary schools judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted	64	60	67	76

Our Performance is ■ better ■ similar ■ worse

## Long and Independent Lives

- 31 The ambition of Long and Independent Lives is linked to the following 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 our services improving the health of our residents?
  - (d) Are people who need adult social care supported to live safe, healthy and independent lives?

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

- 32 Having already achieved more than 400,000 successful family outcomes, the national Troubled Families programme (known as '*Stronger Families*' in County Durham) continues to deliver significant and sustained outcomes with families.
- 33 The government has now renamed the programme '*Supporting Families*' and made £165 million available to fund it nationally. The programme will continue to support the most vulnerable families and address complex issues such as anti-social behaviour, crime, school attendance, worklessness, domestic abuse and mental health.
- 34 Across County Durham, we achieved our 2020/21 target of 730 successful family outcomes, including 146 'Continuous Employment' outcomes which was the second highest nationally. Our target for 2021/22 is to turn around 761 families.
- 35 We have completed our 'one year on' review of our 'Locality Early Help Conversations'<sup>8</sup>, a multi-agency group supporting professionals who have worries about families. Feedback from professionals was extremely positive and the new process will continue with recommendations for further improvements the focus of the Prevention and Early Help Partnership for 2021.
- 36 The Royal College of Psychiatrists has published a [report](#) stating that almost 400,000 children sought help for mental health problems during the pandemic. Data from NHS Digital shows that whilst the crisis is affecting people of all ages, it is under-18s who are suffering most.

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<sup>8</sup> Copies can be obtained by emailing [performance@durham.gov.uk](mailto:performance@durham.gov.uk)

- 37 The Royal College of Psychiatrists' analysis found that between April and December 2020:
- more than 80,000 additional children and young people were referred to mental health services - more than 372,000 in total - 28% more than 2019.
  - more than 600,000 additional treatment sessions were given to children and young people - almost 3.6 million in total - 20% more than 2019.
  - more than 18,000 children and young people needed urgent or emergency crisis care - including assessments to section because they or others are at harm - 18% more than 2019.
- 38 Our early help provision, such as the Young Adult Support Café (YASC), continues to operate online alongside existing online support (such as Rollercoaster and Kooth).
- 39 Having focused on promoting the YASC during quarter four, enquiries from professionals, parents and carers have significantly increased. However, this has not impacted on the number of young people accessing YASC provision.
- 40 Although young people not previously engaged in the face-to-face YASC offer are struggling to access the emotional well-being peer support being delivered virtually, we are continuing to meet young people one to one either virtually or socially distanced to support them to access the project.
- 41 Young people accessing YASC have been working with Investing in Children and Rollercoaster Family Support to engage in the United Voice agenda which supports discussions in relation to service development of both the Prevention Admissions work and the Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust 16-25 service. There are clear links between United Voice and the Durham Youth Council to ensure a joint approach to young people engaging in discussions that inform the mental health agenda.
- 42 In the lead up to Time To Talk Day, Self-Harm Awareness Day and Eating Disorders Week young people created a series of social media campaigns to raise awareness, provide links to local support services and challenge stigma associated with mental health. These campaigns were shared via Investing in Children and Stamp It Out social media as well and circulated through local networks including the Emotional Well-being Locality Forums.
- 43 Young people have expressed how challenging they have found the national lockdown - feeling socially isolated with limited face to face interaction with peers which includes most young people being unable to access their education setting. In the last quarter, three young people who access YASC were admitted to hospital due to mental ill health (all admitted to Adults Services).

- 44 Investing in Children are currently agreeing a venue for the East YASC project which was launched on 19 May for the first face-to-face YASC session since March 2020.
- 45 Young people continue to support planning of future campaigns. The year's significant campaign was Mental Health Awareness Week (10-16 May) with a theme of 'Nature'.
- 46 Young people from YASC continue to link in with United Voice and are supporting work relating to the Neurodevelopmental Pathway, understanding the mental health commissioning process, and discussions relating to Self-Harm and Eating Disorders Paediatric Admissions.
- 47 Pupils eligible for free school meals shows a strong correlation with income deprivation and poverty and is therefore used as a measure of child poverty in the county. 29.4% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals over the last six years which amounts to over 21,000 children and young people. This proportion is in line with the North East average of 29% but higher than the national rate (22.8%.)
- 48 National lockdown has resulted in delays to all services contributing to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). However, the Department for Education counting rules make allowances for significant disruption to the assessment process, and the definition regarding timeliness in relation to the 20 weeks has also changed. Given the disruption to schools, the allowance relating to schools closed for four weeks or more during the advice gathering stage has been considered for all EHCP assessments. Therefore, provisional compliance to the 20-week target for the year so far is 50%.

### **Are our services improving the health of our residents?**

- 49 Since January 2021, County Hall has been used as a COVID vaccination centre. This has enabled our frontline health and social care workers to be vaccinated rapidly alongside those working for partner organisations. The wider vaccination programme has also made significant progress, with over 68% of all those eligible aged 16+ in County Durham having received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. According to [Durham Insight](#), over 98% of those aged 55+ had received a first dose, while almost 89% of care home residents had received a second dose vaccine.
- 50 Public Health has also supported the roll-out of the coronavirus asymptomatic testing programme across County Durham, using lateral flow devices (LFDs). This began with regular testing for our frontline staff, with results provided within an hour. During quarter four, the programme was widened to include business employees, school children, staff and parents and it has recently been expanded

further to the whole community. County Hall continues to be used as a testing site for both LFDs and the lab-processed PCR tests and everyone is encouraged to participate in the testing programme.

- 51 The estimated smoking prevalence in County Durham is 17% ( $\pm 2.5\%$ ) which is comparable with the North East region but is higher than the England average of 13.9% ( $\pm 0.4\%$ .) The smoking prevalence among residents in County Durham has reduced significantly over recent years but is still somewhat short of the ambitious target of 5% by 2025.
- 52 Plans are also underway for Smokefree County Durham staff to become embedded within hospital settings in the coming months and this is expected to result in an increase in the number of smokers referred from secondary care.
- 53 The service continues to support many smokers with complex physical and mental health conditions, many of which have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. An updated service improvement plan and an 'easing of lockdown' plan have been finalised in quarter four. These focus on workstreams to ensure that the high-quality service delivery is both maintained and further developed, as the service returns to face-to-face delivery.
- 54 Public Health and the Stop Smoking Service worked to promote the benefits of stopping smoking on national No Smoking Day (10 March). This outlined new research confirming that ex-smokers feel happier and more positive than when they were still smoking, alongside the additional risks that COVID-19 places on those who smoke.
- 55 Provisional data provided by County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) show that 14.1% of women were smoking at the time of delivery (SATOD) in quarter four. This is below the target (14.7%) and is considerably lower than achieved in quarter three (16.9%)<sup>9</sup>.
- 56 Despite reductions over time, SATOD remains high in County Durham. Following emerging evidence that smoking increases the risks of developing life-threatening complications from COVID-19, alongside the already known risks of smoking during pregnancy we supported the regional campaign #Quit4Covid encouraging women and their significant others' to reduce their risks by quitting smoking.
- 57 In County Durham, we developed bespoke materials for pregnant women who smoke which were distributed across maternity services in the area.

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<sup>9</sup> These data only relate to women who delivered a baby within a County Durham hospital and are subject to change following the publication of the data that captures women who deliver outside of the county.

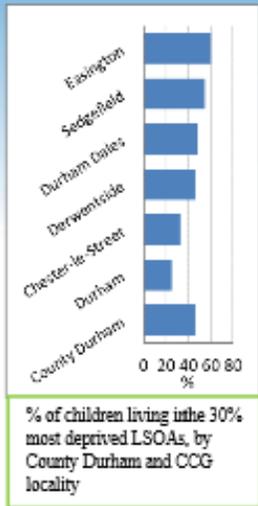
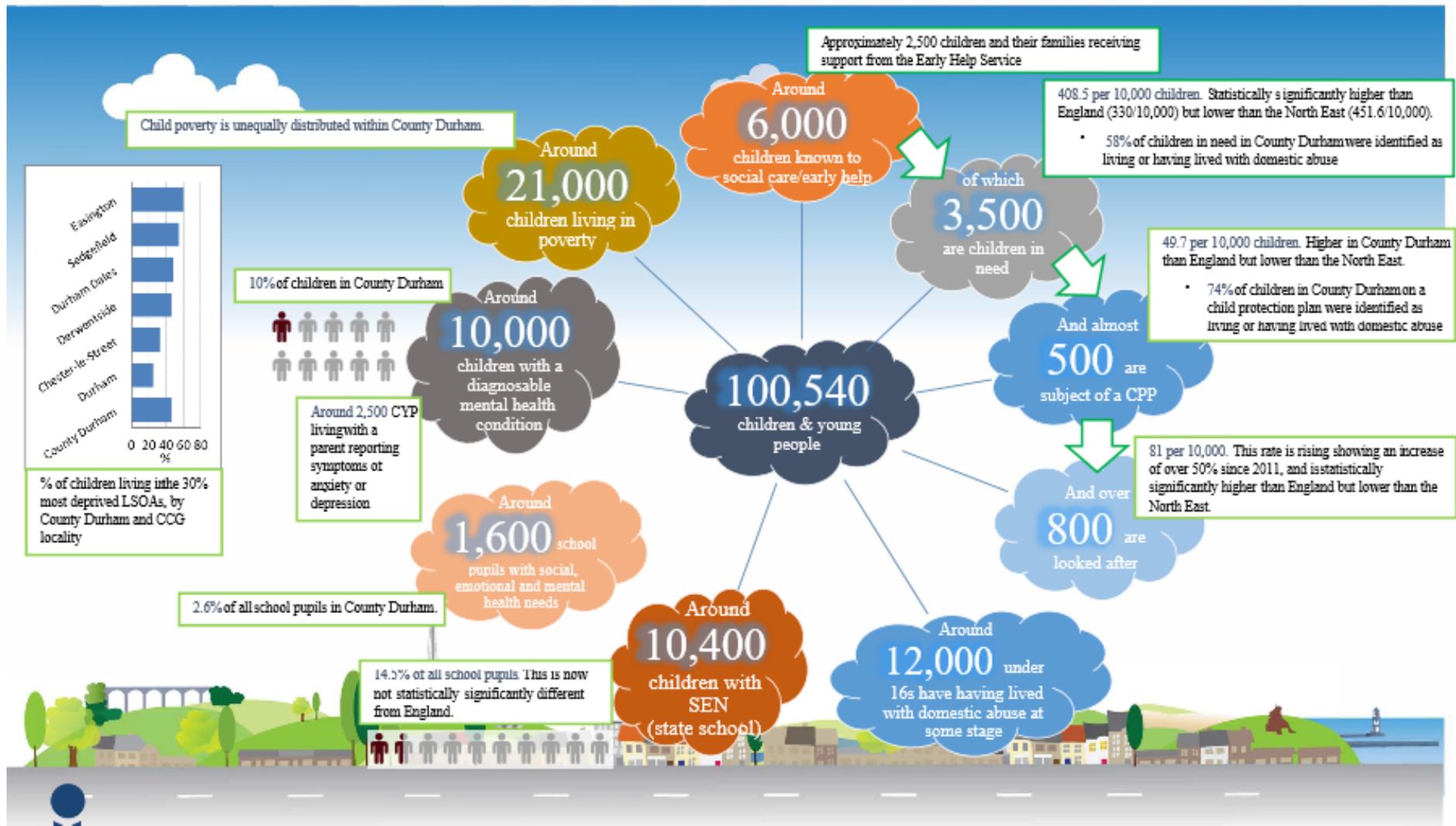
- 58 The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected our ability to drive down SATOD rates, but the work being reinstated at both a regional and local level will help us to more effectively support pregnant women and their significant others to stop smoking including:
- reintroduction of Carbon Monoxide (CO) monitoring and seamless pathways to support
  - digital based support for pregnant women who do not want to engage in services
  - enhanced support for pregnant women through Smokefree County Durham
  - a focus on relapse prevention postpartum
  - wider tobacco control work focusing on smoke free homes and second hand smoke.
- 59 Breastfeeding initiation and prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth remains significantly lower in County Durham the national average and work continues to raise awareness of the many health benefits to both mother and child from breastfeeding.
- 60 The 0-25 family health service infant feeding team continue to provide advice and support to parents on all infant feeding related issues and concerns. The team have been creative in providing support both during face-to-face contacts (if required), and through online, social media and telephone enquiries. The breastfeeding champions role is being strengthened and they are working alongside their community breastfeeding peer supporter to support families.
- 61 One in four children in County Durham are measured as overweight or obese at Reception Year age rising to one in three at Year 6. The proportion is nearly two in three in adulthood.
- 62 Public Health continues to support the Active 30 campaign including supporting resource development, communications, and equitable support to increase physical activity in schools and communities. By March 2021, 60 schools had pledged to work with the programme and work is ongoing to promote further sign-up across County Durham. Specific messaging has been developed to target schools in areas of most need, based on excess weight and deprivation data to encourage sign up.
- 63 To support the Holiday Activities with Healthy Food programme, a new website has been created to promote physical activity within the community. This aims to ensure that physical activity quality standards are embedded, with a planned timetable of resources to support activities. This supported the development of activity during the 2021 Easter holidays.

- 64 During quarter four, the new Suicide Prevention Alliance action plan and training resources were shared with the Suicide Prevention Alliance for comments and feedback. This will support the final plan for work for the forthcoming year.
- 65 Public Health is also working with regional partners to consider the development of a self-harm social media project, which will provide resources for clinical staff. The team is also working on a regional recovery plan linked to mental health, with areas of focus including mental well-being for all, workplaces and vulnerable groups and communities. Rates of suspected suicide in County Durham have been lower in quarter four, compared to the same quarter in both 2019 and 2020.
- 66 Research continues to demonstrate the impact of the pandemic on people's mental health. To support council staff, a Well-being Portal has been launched which provides resources, advice, and guidance for staff to support both their own and other colleagues' mental health. Public Health and our Time to Change Champions also promoted 'Time to Talk Day' on 4 February 2021, to highlight the importance of talking with others about mental health. This included the key messages of checking-in, listening and asking questions about how people are feeling.
- 67 In line with the government's Roadmap to Recovery our leisure centre gyms and pools re-opened on 12 April. Additional outdoor fitness classes, including bootcamps have been added to the programme at some leisure centres. The Mywellness app will continue to be free to use while the leisure centres operate a reduced programme. The app includes daily workouts, challenges and on demand and live fitness classes.

### **Are people who need adult social care supported to live safe, healthy and independent lives?**

- 68 At the end of March 2021, our Operational Pressures Escalation Levels (OPEL) tracker showed that most of our older people care homes had no significant issues with either COVID-19 infection, PPE or staffing. We are, however, closely monitoring this and other data as lockdown restrictions start to ease.
- 69 A virtual event for social workers (and the social care professionals who work alongside them) across Adult and Health Services and Children and Young People's Services was held on 16 March 2021 to support World Social Work Day. This provided examples of and updates on the important work that social workers have been delivering, particularly during the pandemic. It also highlighted tips on productivity, well-being, and self-care.
- 70 Permanent admissions to residential and nursing care remain lower than in previous years with admission rates for 2020/21 significantly below the rate for the previous year.

Vulnerability: The scale of the challenge



## Connected Communities - Safer

- 71 The ambition of Connected Communities – Safer is linked to the following key questions:
- (a) Are children, young people and families in receipt of social work services appropriately supported and safeguarded?
  - (b) Are we being a good corporate parent for children looked after?
  - (c) How effective are we at tackling crime and disorder?
  - (d) How effective are we at tackling anti-social behaviour?
  - (e) How well do we reduce misuse of drugs and alcohol?
  - (f) How well do we tackle abuse of vulnerable people, including domestic abuse, child exploitation and radicalisation?
  - (g) How do we keep our environment safe, including roads and waterways?

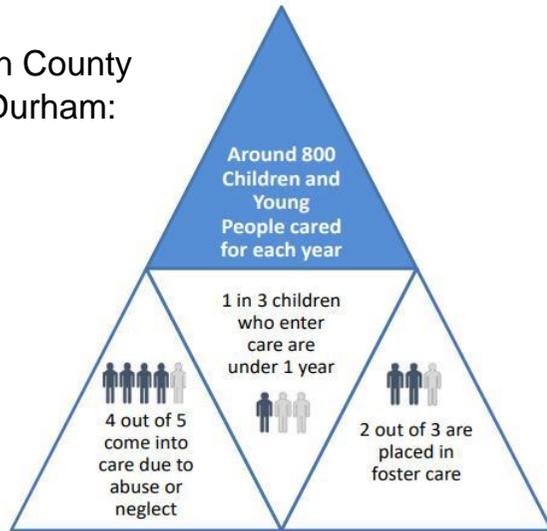
### **Are children, young people and families in receipt of social work services appropriately supported and safeguarded?**

- 72 A recent Public Accounts Committee report [into support for children's education during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) highlighted that referrals to children's social care services were significantly lower than average during the period when schools were closed. This national trend has also been seen in County Durham.
- 73 However, detailed analysis has shown referrals relating to children suspected of or likely to be suffering significant harm has remained static, despite the overall decrease. The analysis also highlighted that we are seeing fewer children with multiple referrals – our re-referral rate, a key area for improvement, has reduced bringing us in line with national benchmarks and is a reflection of improved and sustained outcomes for the children and families we work with.
- 74 The complexity of the referrals to Children's Social Care is increasing and COVID-19 has prevented us closing some cases as we have been unable to complete actions identified in children's plans, for example parental attendance at domestic abuse perpetrator courses as the courses are not running.
- 75 This has impacted on the caseloads of social workers. However, the newly qualified social workers recruited earlier this year will soon be able to hold more cases as they progress which will have a positive impact on caseloads.
- 76 Our social workers continued to maintain face-to-face visits with children and families, particularly for those we are most concerned about. In addition, they have seen most children and young people within five days of a referral decision date, and the timeliness of key areas of work, such as assessments and Initial Child Protection Conferences, have been maintained and in some instances improved.

# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES SAFER: Are we being a good corporate parent to Children Looked After (CLA)?

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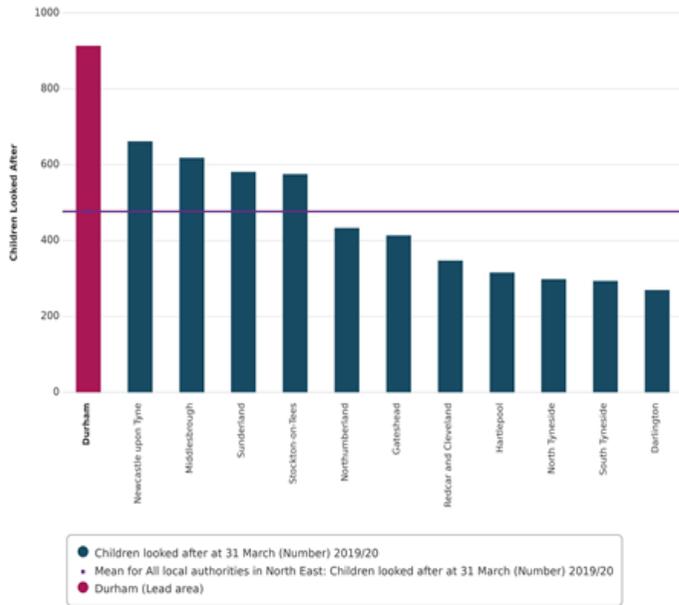
## In County Durham:



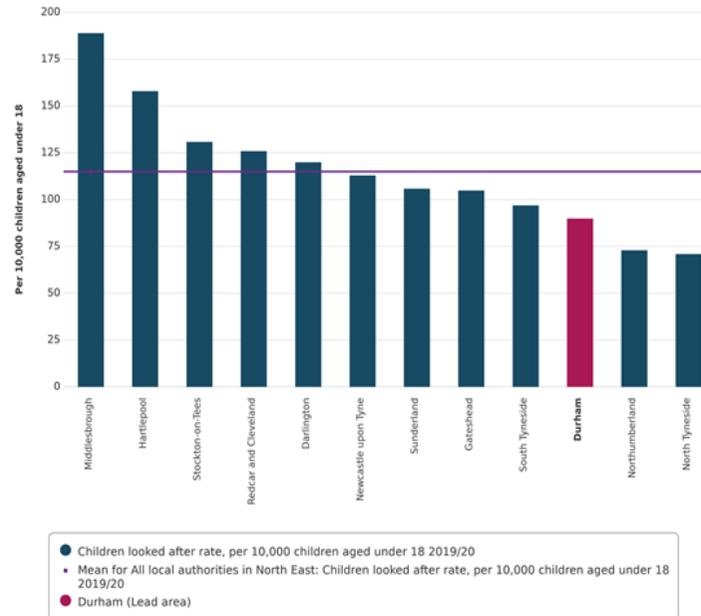
## National research indicates:

- 4x** • more likely to have mental health difficulties than their peers
- 44%** • more likely to have other health problems (asthma, allergies, weight loss)
- 66%** • of CLA have an identified special educational need or disability
- 62%** • become looked after following experiences of abuse or neglect
- 60%** • CLA in England have emotional and mental health problems
- 2x** • more likely to have drug and/or alcohol problems
- 25%** • more likely for girls leaving care to become pregnant within a year

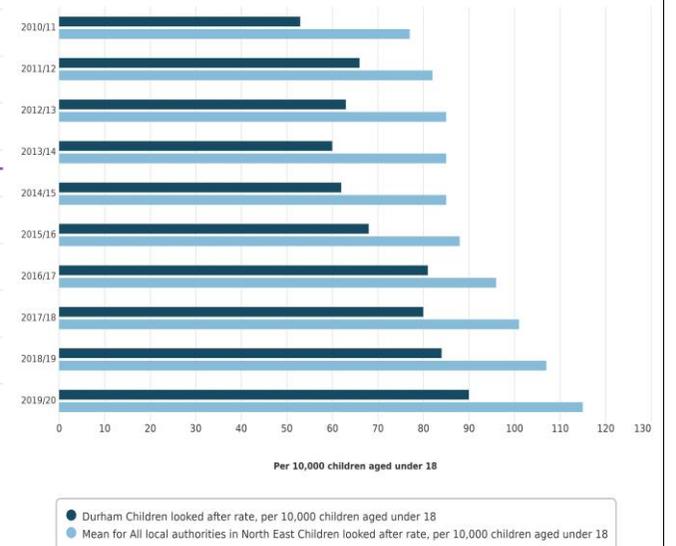
Number of children looked after at 31 March by LA (2019/20) for All local authorities in North East



Children looked after rate, per 10,000 children aged under 18 (2019/20) for All local authorities in North East



Children looked after rate, per 10,000 children aged under 18 (from 2010/11 to 2019/20) for Durham



Source: Department for Education

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

- 77 There is strong evidence that children in care are at a higher risk of poor health, education and social outcomes than their peers and that these disadvantages persist into adulthood.
- 78 An increase in the number of children looked after during COVID-19 has been experienced during the pandemic and this was predominantly due to the closure of/delays in court proceedings, rather than an increase in children starting to be looked after. This trend started to reverse during quarter four as the courts re-opened. However, there is a long-term rising trend in CLA across the county which is being closely monitored.
- 79 The higher numbers of CLA is reflected nationally, and has led to placement and budget pressures. Since the first lockdown, our in-house foster care capacity has reduced, primarily due to some foster carers de-registering or taking a break due to the pandemic. New recruitment campaigns are due to begin.
- 80 We are progressing with our Residential Care Transformation Programme, having opened one small children's home this year and planning to reconfigure / develop homes for children and young people with complex needs through to 2023.

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

- 81 Throughout 2020/21, there was a 12% decrease in recorded crime compared to 2019/20, equating to more than 6,000 fewer crimes. Although, reductions were across all crime categories, the decrease was more noticeable across theft-related offences, including vehicle crime, burglaries and shoplifting, which have reduced by a third. The decreases reflect people spending more time at home, being fewer opportunities for theft in public spaces and the closure of non-essential retail/night time economy.
- 82 During the same period, ASB increased by 13% which equated to more than 4,000 additional incidents. The increase in environmental ASB was mostly driven by a 22% increase in reported fly-tips, which mainly occurred between April and June and coincided with the closure of the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). The increase in nuisance ASB was a combination of residents spending more time at home, not only witnessing and reporting events but also driving increases in areas such as noise complaints, and the enforcement of COVID-19 restrictions.
- 83 Although 23% of all ASB incidents reported to the police during 2020/21 were flagged as COVID related, it is important to remember some of these incidents,

e.g. those relating to parties, might have been reported even if COVID restrictions were not in place.

- 84 During 2020/21, deliberate fires relating to road vehicles and rubbish increased slightly. The latter coincided with a period in which increased levels of household waste were generated, HWRCs were closed and other COVID restrictions were in place.

### **How well do we reduce misuse of drugs and alcohol?**

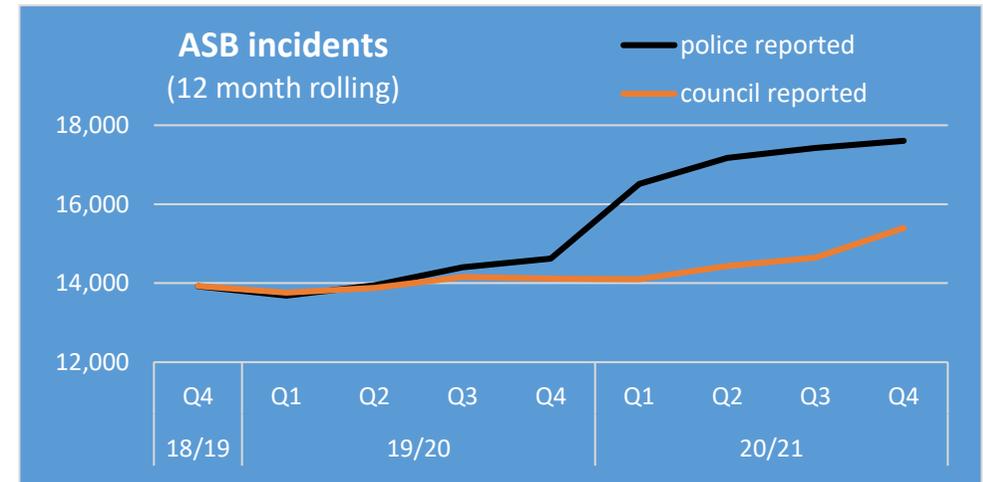
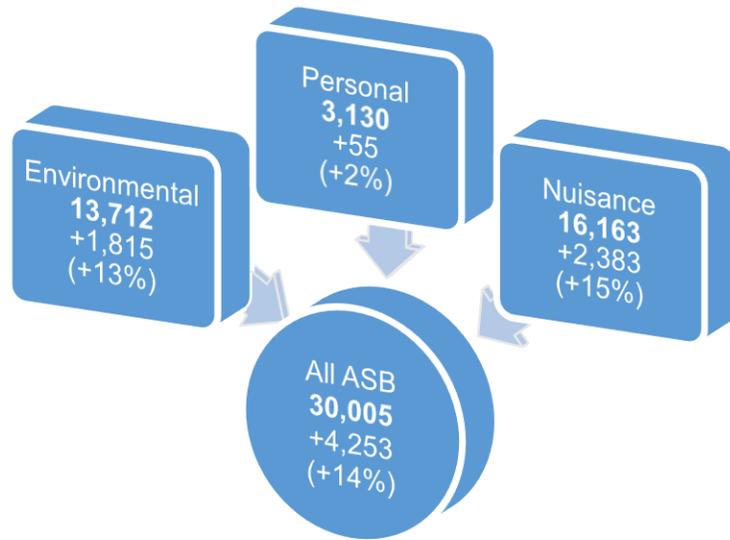
- 85 The Drugs Review conducted by Public Health England in 2017 indicated that for every pound spent on drug treatment, there is a £2.50 social return on investment recouped in crime, health and social care costs.

- 86 Alcohol is a contributory factor in many incidents of violent crime including incidents of domestic abuse, sexual violence and child sexual exploitation. It is also a significant factor in child neglect and child protection. Alcohol misuse also causes harm to people's physical and mental health and can impact on families of affected individuals and the wider community.

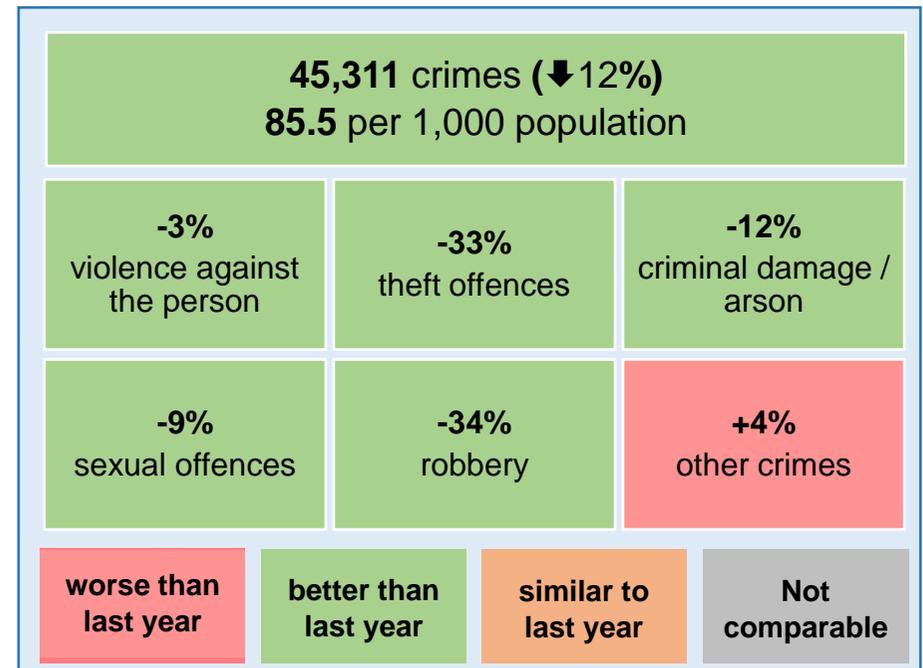
- 87 The council, through its public health role, commissions drug and alcohol recovery services in County Durham which can be accessed through a GO, other health or social care professional or by self-referral. Successful treatment outcomes are monitored by the council and the Safe Durham Partnership which is the statutory community safety partnership for the county. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, drug and alcohol recovery services have been operating with reduced hours and with some clients being supported via remote provision.

# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES SAFER: How effective are we at tackling crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour?

Police and council reported ASB



		2019/20	2020/21	Change	
Deliberate primary fires <sup>1</sup>	all	466	468	2	0%
	relating to road vehicles	283 (61%)	317 (68%)	34	12%
Deliberate secondary fires <sup>2</sup>	all	1,763	1,737	-26	-1%
	relating to rubbish	1,030 (58%)	1,052 (61%)	20	2%



<sup>1</sup> more serious fires that harm people or damage property  
<sup>2</sup> generally small outdoors fires

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

- 88 In line with the national picture, we noted increases in domestic abuse incidents (up 1.4%), 'Violence Against the Person' crimes (VAP) involving domestic abuse (up 5%) and alcohol-related VAP involving domestic abuse (up 12%), In addition, the number of individual victims increased by 6%.
- 89 It is likely the increase is due to increased reporting as people spend more time at home, rather than an increase in prevalence, and is likely a reflection of the intensity of the abuse as victims are no longer able to access their normal coping mechanisms, such as leaving the home, staying with family or friends, attending counselling.
- 90 This situation has increased demand for victim support services. Harbour, our specialist provider, recorded quarter on quarter increases throughout 2020/21 – with an annual increase in adult referrals of 26%. In addition, clients are presenting with more complex issues, especially mental health, so cases are taking longer to resolve.
- 91 On 29 April, the [Domestic Abuse Bill 2021](#) was signed into law. It aims to protect and support victims, transform the justice process, improve performance and promote awareness. It
- provides a legal definition of domestic abuse – for the first time ever - incorporating abuses beyond physical violence, for example, psychological, emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour, and economic abuse
  - offers new protections and support so, for example, abusers can no longer cross-examine victims, and special courtroom measures will be taken to prevent intimidation such as protective screens, evidence via video link
  - gives new police powers of Protection Notices (so victims have immediate protection) and Protection Orders (so perpetrators take steps to change their behaviour, e.g. seeking mental health support or drug/alcohol rehabilitation)
  - extends the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse
  - explicitly recognises children as victims if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse
  - places a duty on local authorities to support victims in refuges and other safe accommodation
  - automatically priorities eligible homeless victims for homelessness assistance
  - places the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme ('Clare's law') on a statutory footing.
- 92 Daily multi-agency screening of all domestic abuse incidents continues to be jointly undertaken by children's services, child health and police staff from the

multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). Sharing information and decision making reduces any delay for children who need to be safeguarded.

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

- 93 There has been significant reductions in all road user casualties since 2009 with the number of casualties falling at a national, regional and local level. The UK has one of the best road safety records in the world but more can always be done to prevent death and serious injury from road traffic accidents.
- 94 Many of the engineering interventions we can make to ensure that roads are safer and to eliminate accident hotspots have been carried out. Much of the work now involves helping to educate and change the attitudes and behaviours of road users, particularly around the fatal four of speeding, drink/drug driving, mobile phones and seat belts/restraints.
- 95 A lot of road safety training and community initiatives, for example, community speed watch have been curtailed due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- 96 Both water safety forums, responsible for managing water safety in the city centre and countywide, met during 2020/21.
- 97 The main focuses for the City Safety Group was addressing the various challenges of student induction week alongside the risks associated with COVID-19.
- 98 Countywide, an extensive open water safety campaign targeted 10 to 16 year olds during periods of warm weather, and featured the five-year anniversary of the death of Cameron Gosling. The campaign was an alternative approach to previous years which involved sessions in school assemblies and other young people's settings.

# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES SAFER: How well do we reduce misuse of drugs and alcohol?

09 e

	Alcohol specific mortality per 100,000 population 2017-19		
	All	Male	Female
England	10.9	14.9	7.2
County Durham	14.7	19.3	10.4
North East	16.0	21.3	11.0

Our Performance is ■ better ■ similar ■ worse

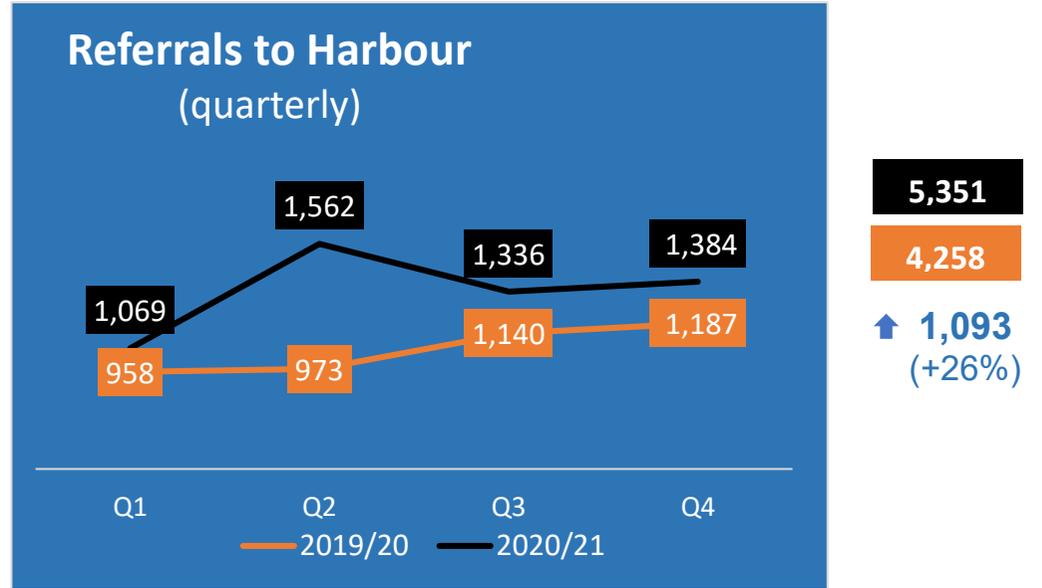
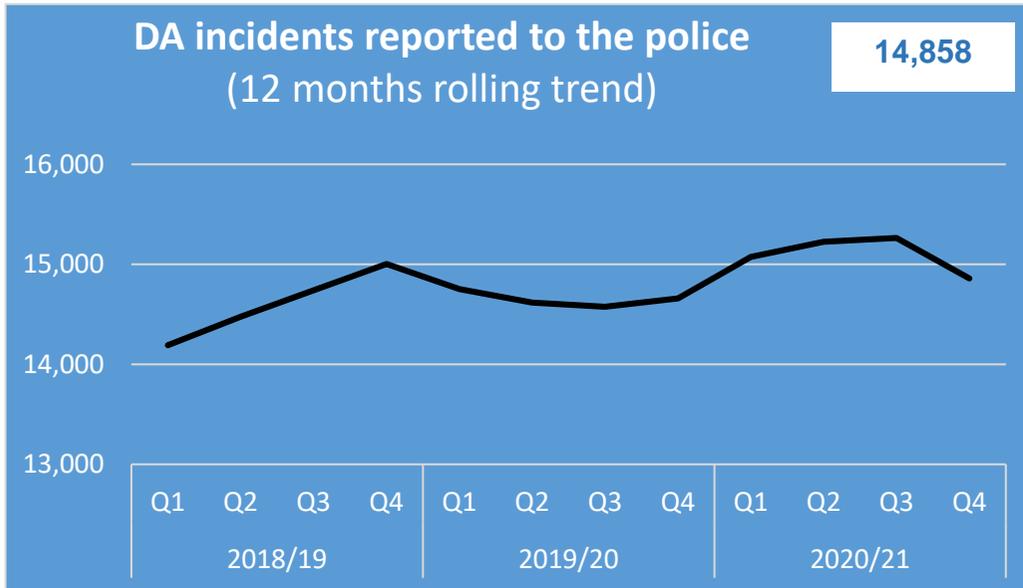
	Deaths from drug misuse per 100,000 population 2017-19		
	All	Male	Female
England	4.7	6.8	2.6
County Durham	7.4	10.4	4.4
North East	9.1	13.4	5.1

Our Performance is ■ better ■ similar ■ worse

Hospital admission episodes for alcohol specific conditions (under 18s) per 100,000 population			
	All	Male	Female
England	30.7	24.9	36.7
County Durham	52.8	38.6	64.4
North East	55.4	47.4	64.1

Our Performance is ■ better ■ similar ■ worse

# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES SAFER: How well do we tackle abuse of vulnerable people?



## Violence against the person crimes – Domestic Abuse

	2019/20	2020/21	Change
<b>All</b>	<b>8,124</b>	<b>8,526</b>	<b>402 ↑5%</b>
<b>alcohol related</b>	<b>3,434</b>	<b>3,864</b>	<b>430 ↑12%</b>

# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES SAFER: How do we keep our environment safe including roads and waterways?

page 62

Killed

Seriously injured

Slightly injured

All casualties  
2020/21  
(2019/20)

15  
(19)

149  
(203)

464  
(659)

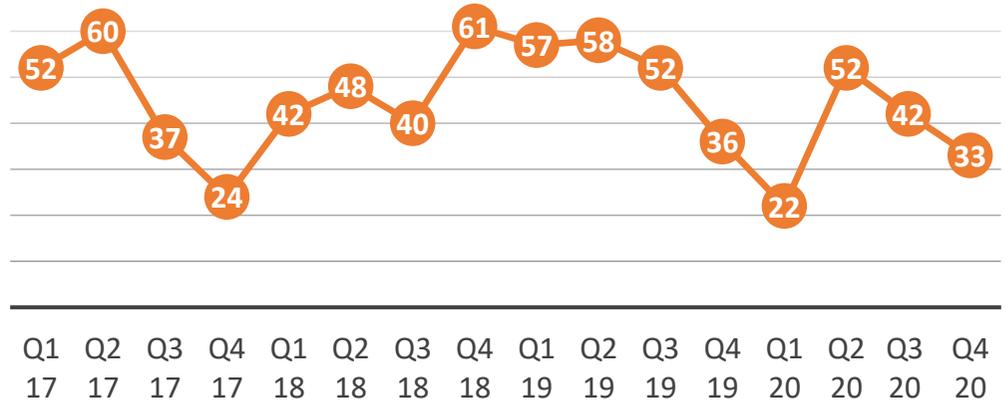
Children  
2020/21  
(2019/20)

0  
(0)

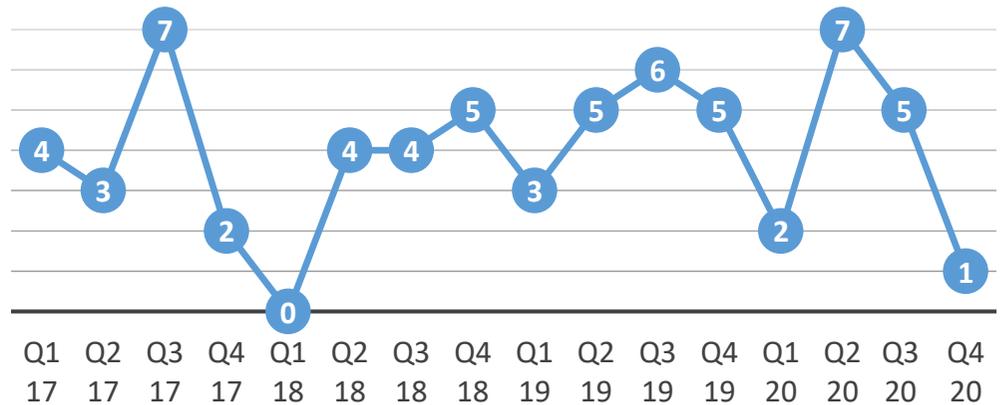
16  
(31)

10  
(53)

## Serious Injuries



## Fatalities



## Connected Communities - Sustainability

99 The ambition of Connected Communities – Sustainability is linked to the following key questions:

- How clean and tidy is my local environment?
- Are we reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change?
- How effective and sustainable is our collection and disposal of waste?
- Do residents have access to decent and affordable housing?
- Is it easy to travel around the county?

### How clean and tidy is my local environment?

100 During 2020/21, reported fly-tipping incidents increased by 22%. The increase, which mainly occurred between April and June, coincided with the closure of Household Waste Recycling Centres. However, incidents are now starting to return to pre-COVID levels.

101 Throughout 2020/21, to help deter fly-tipping, our neighbourhood wardens carried out enforcement activity including over 2,000 investigations, deploying CCTV cameras at fly tipping hotspots and issuing duty of care warning letters and fixed penalty notices.

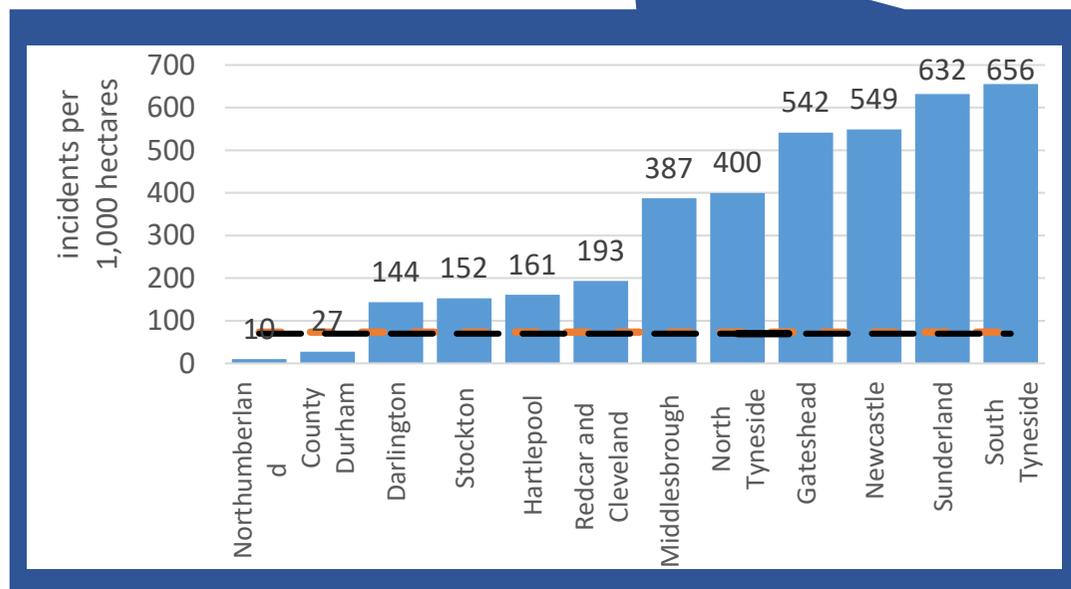
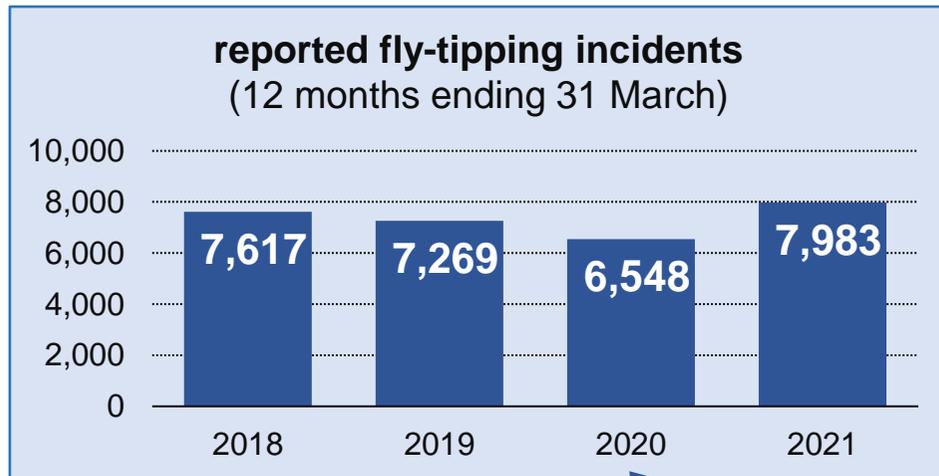
102 Our Community Action Team recently focused on rubbish accumulations, dog fouling and anti-social behaviour in Shildon, working with communities and elected members to identify issues of concern and serving legal notices, where appropriate.

103 Our [2020 Environment Awards](#), 'rewarding great design, environmental guardianship and community spirit in County Durham' were held virtually in February and broadcast on the Council's YouTube site.

## CONNECTED COMMUNITIES (SUSTAINABILITY):

How clean and tidy is my local environment?

### Summary<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup> (data relates to the 12 months ending 31 March 2021, compared to the previous year where applicable)

## **Are we reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change?**

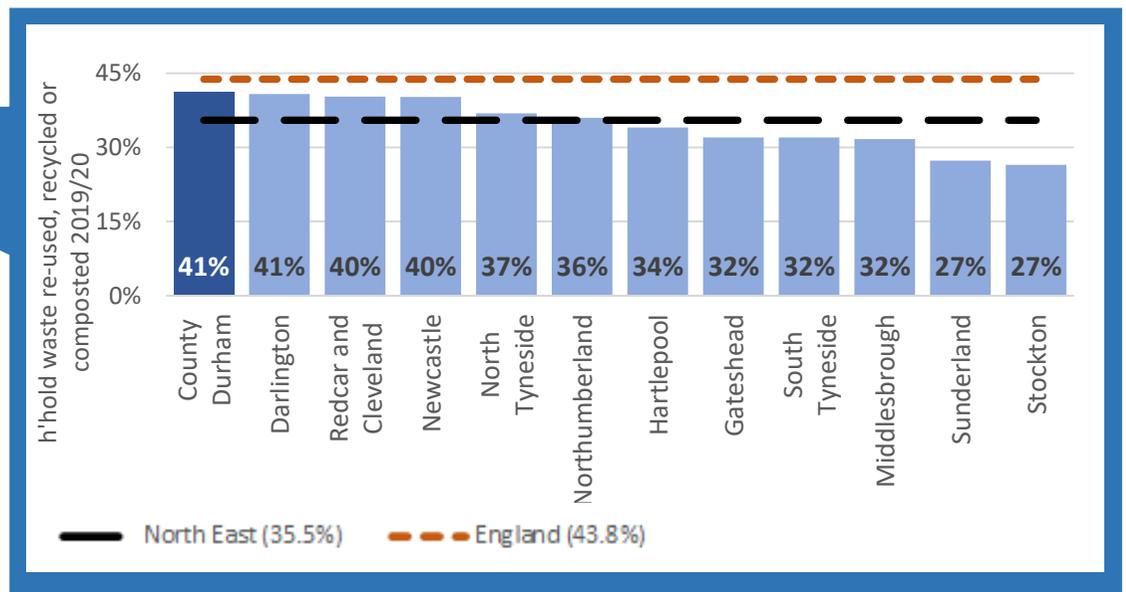
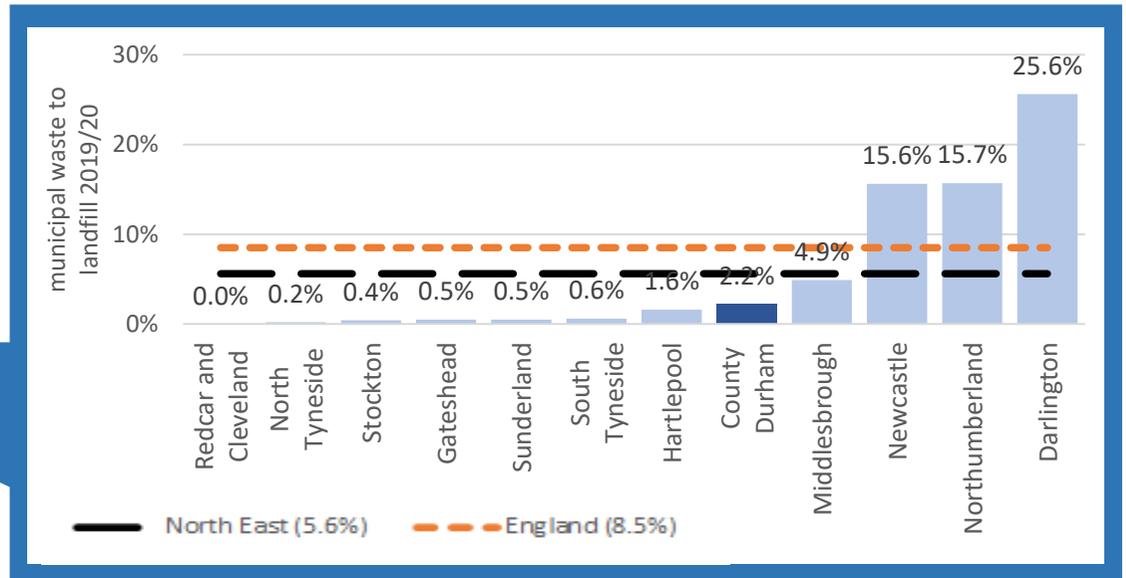
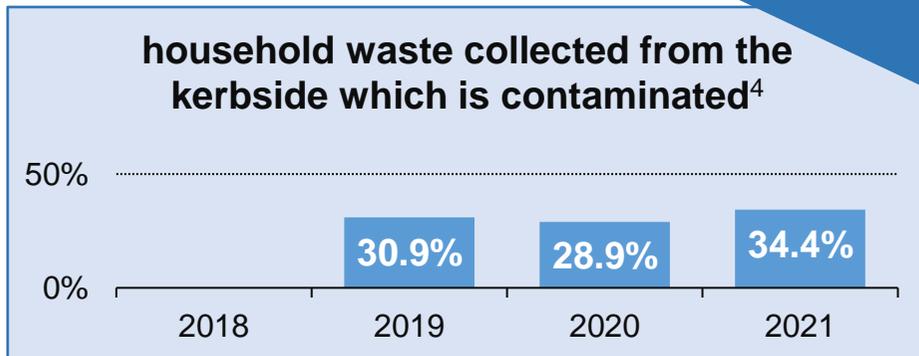
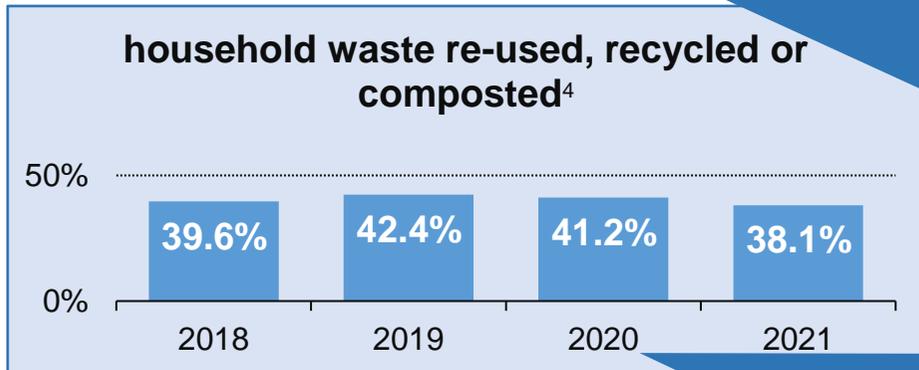
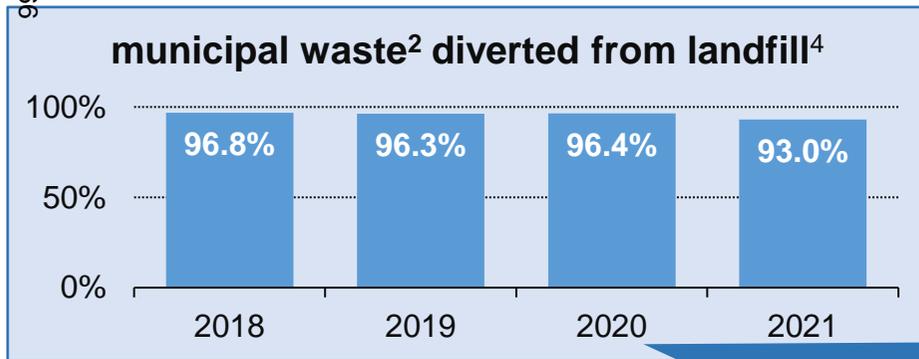
- 104 In 2019/20, we reduced carbon emissions by 51% (from the 2008 baseline) and are now working towards a 70% reduction by 2024/25. Although, carbon emission figures for 2020/21 will not be available until quarter two of 2021/22, we are aware of the significant impact of COVID-19. However, although the council has used 20% less electricity, 14% less gas and experienced a 6% reduction in fleet use, all of which inevitably reduced carbon emissions, most of this was due to building and service closures. As we hope to re-open later in 2021, these reductions are not expected to be sustained in the longer term.
- 105 We are moving forward with a £8.3 million project to create a solar farm at our Morrison Busty depot, in Annfield Plain. The solar farm will power the whole depot, including electric vehicle charge points for our fleet. The project is part of a wider refurbishment to improve energy efficiency including new cladding, windows and doors and LED light installation.
- 106 The flood prevention scheme at Chester-le-Street was completed during quarter four. The scheme, which opened up a 90-metre stretch of the Cong Burn within the town's market place, has not only reduced flooding risk, it has allowed us to create a more attractive public area with new seating and open spaces.

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

- 107 Throughout the pandemic, due to people spending more time in their homes, we have been collecting increased tonnages of household waste. Although this has resulted in greater tonnages sent for recycling, the proportion of waste recycled has reduced.
- 108 Contamination of kerbside recycling bins remains high but as COVID-19 restrictions ease our Recycling Assistants will re-start targeting areas of low recycling performance. Tonnages of glass sent for recycling continues to surpass the three-year average with latest data showing a 22% increase.
- 109 Although there continues to be an improvement in the HWRC's landfill diversion rate following the re-opening of recyclable markets and increased capacity within the refuse system, the quarter four rate is below the 3-year average of 86%, at 79%.

# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES (SUSTAINABILITY): How effective & sustainable is our collection and disposal of waste?

## Summary<sup>11,12,13</sup>



<sup>11</sup> municipal waste is all data collected by the authority for disposal. It includes household waste, business waste, street cleaning and rubble

<sup>12</sup> Waste data is reported a quarter in arrears

<sup>13</sup> data relates to the 12 months ending 31 December 2020, compared to the previous year where applicable

- 110 Having completed its first full season, and accepted almost 17,000 tonnes of garden waste, the composting pad at Coxhoe has now achieved accreditation which will allow the waste to be used as a soil improver.

### **Do residents have access to decent and affordable housing?**

- 111 Although COVID-19 restrictions initially reduced the number of net homes completed, build rates are now returned to pre-COVID levels.
- 112 During quarter four, we approved phase one of a new programme to build 500 council houses over five years. This initial phase will deliver 155 homes, mainly family accommodation and bungalows for older people at seven locations across the county, with the first homes being ready around May 2023.
- 113 More households accessed Housing Solutions during quarter four, following a drop at quarter three. Contact, predominately relating to housing advice and private landlord tenancies, was in part driven by the lifting of the eviction ban in January. As landlords are required to give a six-month eviction notice, clients are not classed as 'threatened with homelessness'. However, we are working with clients to provide advice and early intervention through the [Stop B4U Serve scheme](#).
- 114 A combination of the eviction ban and action taken to house all rough sleepers and those at significant risk of rough sleeping has reduced the number of available properties. This in turn has increased both the number of households in temporary accommodation and the length of their stay compared to last year.
- 115 We continue to prioritise individuals/households for any available properties, review every placement to ensure all options are explored and work closely with landlords to facilitate moves to long-term accommodation. We are also continuing to source additional accommodation, for example, a two-year 9-bed complex needs scheme welcomed its first residents in February, and five one-bed flats at Wheatley Hill, reserved for homeless clients for the next 30 years, will be complete by 30 June 2021.
- 116 The number empty properties brought back into use has fallen short of the annual target. This is because COVID-19 restrictions prevented non-essential work being carried out, caused a lag on supplies/ ability to secure contractors, and reduced public confidence to meet with staff and/or invest in properties.
- 117 Uptake of fuel poverty grants has increased. During quarter four, additional publicity targeted households experiencing reduced incomes due to COVID-19.

## **Is it easy to travel around the county?**

- 118 Construction of Durham City's new bus station commenced during quarter four. The £10.3 million project will increase the overall space for passengers in a light and airy setting and improve visibility and safety for buses leaving the station. There will also be increased facilities including parent and child toilets and a changing places toilet, as well as improved seating and space in the passenger waiting area.
- 119 Free parking after 2pm has been introduced in all council car parks to help support the economic recovery from COVID-19. The scheme will be reviewed every three months.
- 120 We have agreed to extend our cycle parking scheme 'ParkThatBike' for a further three years. To date the scheme has provided more than 500 cycle stands at locations such as shops, offices, cafes, pubs, churches and dentist and GP surgeries.

## **An Excellent Council**

- 121 The ambition of an excellent council is structured around the following key questions:
- How well do we look after our people?
  - Are our resources being managed for the best possible outcomes for residents and customers?
  - How good are our services to customers and the public?

## **How well do we look after our people?**

- 122 Following the announcement of the first lockdown on 23 March 2020 where the Prime Minister ordered people to stay at home, we fundamentally changed our ways of working. Many services and council buildings have remained closed in line with government regulations and we have either furloughed employees or redeployed staff to other areas of the organisation.
- 123 For those able to work from home, we provided practical support such as advising how to set up home workstations or access essential equipment such as chairs, desks, and ICT related equipment.
- 124 Those continuing to work, but unable to do so from home, were kept safe through the effective use of PPE and robust risk assessments which were continually updated to reflect the changing situation.

- 125 Throughout this period, as a consequence of working from home, both work-related health and safety incidents and days lost to sickness fell. However, although our year-end sickness rate is at its lowest level since 2010/11, mainly driven by a reduction in days lost to musculo-skeletal problems, stress, flus and colds over the last 12 months, we remain concerned about the impact of the pandemic on the mental well-being of our staff. Anxiety, social isolation, home schooling and caring responsibilities, alongside more upsetting and challenging work situations have all taken their toll, and we have noted an increase in sickness associated with anxiety, particularly within our Adult Care service.
- 126 Therefore, in addition to protecting the physical health of employees through a range of initiatives<sup>14</sup>, we have also been working to increase emotional resilience and protect the mental health of our teams.
- 127 Throughout 2020/21, our leadership and management teams regularly promoted the support mechanisms available to our staff – some already established<sup>15</sup>, others developed in response to COVID-19<sup>16</sup>. And although we took the decision, early in the pandemic, to suspend our Performance Development Review (PDR) process due to increased pressures on services and changes to our staffing structures (through furlough, redeployment, shielding, illness and self-isolation), plans are now in place to reinstate the process, starting October 2021. In the meantime, managers have been using existing PDRs as an ongoing support tool, maintaining regular online catch-ups and structured one to one/supervision meetings, reiterating the support mechanisms available and offering flexible working arrangements to any staff who need them.
- 128 We expanded our staff support networks throughout 2020/21 (Black and Asian, those with a disability and LGBT+) and are now looking to connect these to other established networks such as the carers. Agreed work plans include HR policy reviews (particularly new ways of working and return to workspaces), staff training and staff awareness raising initiatives and events.
- 129 Our latest gender pay gap report shows that although the mean and median pay rates for women remain lower than men, the gap is narrower than some other sectors and is positive when compared to regional and national levels<sup>17</sup>.
- 130 Despite COVID-19 and the challenges it presented during 2020/21, we continued to engage with our staff and provide them with required training. Initially we moved all training online, and found many positives with this method, but we

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<sup>14</sup> e.g. vaccination centres, arranging COVID-19 tests (PCR and Lateral Flow), outbreak management, advice and guidance through Occupational Health, free flu vaccinations and access to specialist COVID-19 services for recovering staff.

<sup>15</sup> e.g. [employee well-being guide](#), [Employee Assistance Programme](#), 'mental health awareness for managers' training

<sup>16</sup> Our wellbeing portal, CMT vlogs, e-learning courses (including building personal resilience; how to be effective, productive and maintain your resilience; managing remote teams; leading and managing dispersed teams; working at home in extraordinary circumstances)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.durham.gov.uk/genderpaygap>

found some learning and development is more effectively delivered face-to-face. Therefore, we have moved forward with a new blended approach to learning and development and are incorporating within our 2021/22 programme new courses which focus on supporting individual resilience and digital skills.

- 131 Our apprenticeship programme continued to flourish during 2020/21, with 47 new apprentices joining the council and 47 existing employees enrolling on an apprenticeship programme to expand their skills and knowledge.
- 132 We continue to support the government's kickstart scheme for young people (aged 16-24) claiming Universal Credit and have approved 91 job placements across the council. The placements provide opportunities to build confidence, increase skills in the workplace and gain meaningful work experience – thereby increasing their likelihood of going on to find long-term, sustainable work.
- 133 Toward the end of 2020/21, as COVID-19 restrictions began to ease, we started planning a gradual and phased return to our workplaces. We acknowledge that some employees have struggled with home working over the year, whilst others have found the experience beneficial with reduced travel, greater productivity, and an improved work-life balance.
- 134 We therefore intend to permanently change working arrangements, in line with the principles of our transformation programme, by adopting a hybrid model. This location-flexible arrangement will empower our office-based employees to split their working hours between offices and home in the most appropriate manner.

### **Our resources being managed for the best possible outcomes for residents and customers?**

- 135 The arrival of COVID-19 in the UK in March 2020 led to major changes in our service delivery. Within a very tight timeframe, we fundamentally changed our ways of working, made plans to maintain essential services without compromising the safety of our workforce or residents<sup>18</sup>, and set up new delivery models to meet the additional needs of residents shielding or self-isolating. This included introducing short term contracts for ex-employees or students, sourcing additional staff to support frontline care services, and maintaining a pool of casual staff.
- 136 We were able to develop digital alternatives to face-to-face contact, for some services impacted by the closure of council buildings, which allowed those services to continue. For example, live streaming council meetings on YouTube, online consultation events, virtual appointments, option to upload and return documents online. However, some services were required to close due to government restrictions, for example leisure centres, cafes, and theatres. Whilst

we successfully redeployed some workers from these services to support our response to the pandemic, a small number (equating to 2.7% of our total workforce, excluding school staff) were furloughed.

- 137 However, as the bulk of affected sites have now reopened under the government's roadmap to recovery, most furloughed employees now returned to work.
- 138 Throughout the pandemic, we maintained vital support to our most vulnerable residents through the County Durham Together Community Hub. In addition to proactively supporting those who are vulnerable, experiencing hardship, self-isolating, or socially isolated, the hub is now also a single point of contact for triage, response and escalation of all COVID-19 related enquiries (linked to both local and national restrictions).
- 139 We also increased engagement with our communities through our COVID Community Champions who helped reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our communities by sharing the latest information and guidance, and letting us know what our communities are thinking. For example, during December our champions shared information relating to self-isolation and Christmas bubbles, and fed back that the public were confused by local tier rules – which gave us the opportunity to provide further clarification.
- 140 Since the onset of COVID-19, we have also supported residents and local businesses with financial advice and assistance, and have proactively encouraged those struggling financially to engage with us to access potential support mechanisms, such as discounts and exemptions, benefit checks and debt advice.
- 141 We also provided financial support to our most vulnerable residents by increasing the Welfare Assistance Scheme by £1 million, providing £300 council tax relief and deferred council tax payments, extending our Council Tax Reduction scheme into 2021/22, making direct awards of food vouchers to parents and carers of children eligible for free school meals, providing funding to help redistribute surplus food<sup>19</sup>, and distributing £1.5 million for the community response to COVID-19 through our Area Action Partnerships.
- 142 In addition, more than 19,000 children and parents/carers<sup>20</sup> benefited from our holiday activities with healthy food programme, which although universally accessible is targeted at vulnerable children on free school meals over the five school holiday periods<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> The Bread and Butter Thing: hubs at Horden, Bishop Auckland, Ushaw Moor and Crook distribute £35 of groceries for £7.50.

<sup>20</sup> From 115 of the 185 projects allocated funding - some project examples and feedback can be seen in the YouTube clip.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xilXRtZs&feature=youtu.be>

<sup>21</sup> Easter 2020, Summer half-term (May 2020), Summer 2020, Autumn half-term (October 2020), Spring half-term (February 2021)

- 143 Despite the pandemic, we continued to drive service improvements across customer services by standardising, harmonising, and unitising our first point of contact (our integrated customer services initiative).
- 144 Our improved digital offer means almost 200,000 residents now have an online account, and since its launch in June 2020, customers have used webchat more than 5,000 times to access service support and advice across more than 20 web pages.
- 145 As agents can support two concurrent chats and chat times are lower than alternative channels, the conversion of telephony contact to web chat is driving significant capacity creation which will support reallocation of resource to other priority services. 95% of customers are satisfied with this contact method.
- 146 We are aware some people are reluctant to use our online services, but our recent survey about digital skills showed most respondents<sup>22</sup> to be digitally enabled. However, this could be a consequence of COVID-19 restrictions reducing our ability to engage with our non-digital target audience.
- 147 We have extremely limited data for calls received outside our Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system<sup>23</sup>. By migrating telephone lines to the ACD systems, we can view demand and performance statistics, and thereby identify opportunities to improve the customer experience.
- 148 Therefore, when viewing our telephone statistics, it is important to remember that they only include data from our ACD system. As we migrate lines from non-ACD sources, not only does the overall call volume increase, but as there is no back data associated with the transferred lines, any comparisons with previous time periods can be misleading as it appears as if telephone calls to the council are increasing.
- 149 Although latest data shows overall contact by telephone has increased, detailed analysis carried out during the quarter shows there has been a reduction in telephone contact – but it has been masked by the additional call volume from lines transferred to the ACD system over the last 18 months. We estimate that overall call volume is around 20% lower than we would have expected.
- 150 However, some reductions in call volume are due to digital advancements. More customers are using our virtual Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) system to self-serve so our general enquiries team is handling fewer calls.

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<sup>22</sup> Of the 647 respondents – 455 were online (71%), 131 were by telephone (20%) and 61 were via paper (9%)

<sup>23</sup> Broadly speaking, we receive telephone calls either through our Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system, which routes calls to groups of agents in line with 'first-in-first-answered' criteria, or directly to a telephone extension (non-ACD).

## How good are our services to customers and the public?

- 151 We use information provided by our customers (in relation to satisfaction and general experience) to improve customer experience and further develop our services. However, as much of this information is extracted from our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, and in most cases relates to our Customer Services Team, we are working with teams across the authority to expand the report to better reflect the entire council.
- 152 Over the last 12 months, we have received more than 13,000 responses, across 111 different service requests, to our automated customer satisfaction surveys at CRM closure. However, we acknowledge this is a relatively small proportion of overall service delivery, and are continuing to explore options to increase the response rate (including improved capture of e-mail addresses and exploration of other contact channels) and thereby expand the range of customer feedback and insight received.
- 153 There is variation in number of responses and satisfaction levels across service areas, with four service areas accounting for more than half of all the responses received. We believe this is partly due to the emotiveness of the issue, with more emotive requests encouraging greater participation.

	Found it easy to contact the right service	Were informed how long it would take to resolve task	were informed of progress	were satisfied with service delivery
Missed Collection (4,327)	95%	83%	58%	76%
Fly-tipping (1,015)	98%	73%	83%	86%
Council tax account (863)	96%	77%	92%	96%
Street lighting (790)	96%	83%	77%	86%

- 154 The main reason for dissatisfaction with service delivery continues to be not resolving the issue long-term.
- 155 In line with previous reports, most of the 1,300 compliments received related to satisfaction with service provision - 50 were thanking us for maintaining service

- provision (mainly bin collections and gritting) throughout the period of wintery weather. Others related to the actions of specific individuals.
- 156 The main reason for dissatisfaction with service delivery continues to be not resolving the issue long-term.
- 157 In line with previous reports, most of the 1,300 compliments received related to satisfaction with service provision - 50 were thanking us for maintaining service provision (mainly bin collections and gritting) throughout the period of wintery weather. Others related to the actions of specific individuals.
- 158 Of the 2,534 complaints received, two thirds related to our waste collection service, predominantly missed collections and correspondence issues surrounding contaminated bins. However, it should be noted that this highly visible frontline service completes more than 13 million waste collections annually, and issues almost 14,000 contamination letters.
- 159 To help reduce this type of avoidable customer contact, we are continuing to send text messages to households (where we are able) when crews are unable to collect a bin due to, for example, access issues, informing them of the situation and what we will do to resolve it. Crews are also checking addresses before logging contamination.
- 160 We are also liaising more frequently with service areas to reduce the percentage of upheld complaints – we recognise some areas remain high and are carrying out targeted work in those areas.
- 161 National Customer Services Week (5-9 October) gave us a week-long opportunity to raise awareness of customer service and the vital role it plays. A summary of highlights from the week is available [here](#)<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Also available by emailing [performance@durham.gov.uk](mailto:performance@durham.gov.uk)

# AN EXCELLENT COUNCIL: Are our resources being managed for the best possible outcomes for residents & customers?

## Summary<sup>25,26</sup>

### Digital Channels

24% of contact, up 9%

	do it online	web chat**	e-mail	social media
contacts	280,526	5,127	58,235	6,502
% of total	19%	0.5%	4%	0.5%
+/- to last year	+102,864	n/a	+9,362	+3,336

### Non-digital Channels

76% of contact, down 9%

	telephone	face-to-face <sup>37</sup>
contacts	1,113,926	0
% of total	76%	0%
+/- to last year	-109,218	-116,711

Calls answered		
19/20	20/21	change
94%	96%	+2pp

### Digital Skills Survey\*

94% use the internet at home

90% said the pandemic has not prevented them using our services

37% would use digital facilities within council buildings to go online. Of these...

43% visiting building anyway

10% have poor internet connection at home

7% have no data left on phone / want to save data

5% have no online facilities at home

respondents felt they would benefit from extra help in relation to ...

data security  
9%

printing  
7%

scanning  
5%

uploading / attaching documents  
6%

<sup>25</sup> data relates to the 12 months ending 31 March 2021, compared to the previous year where applicable

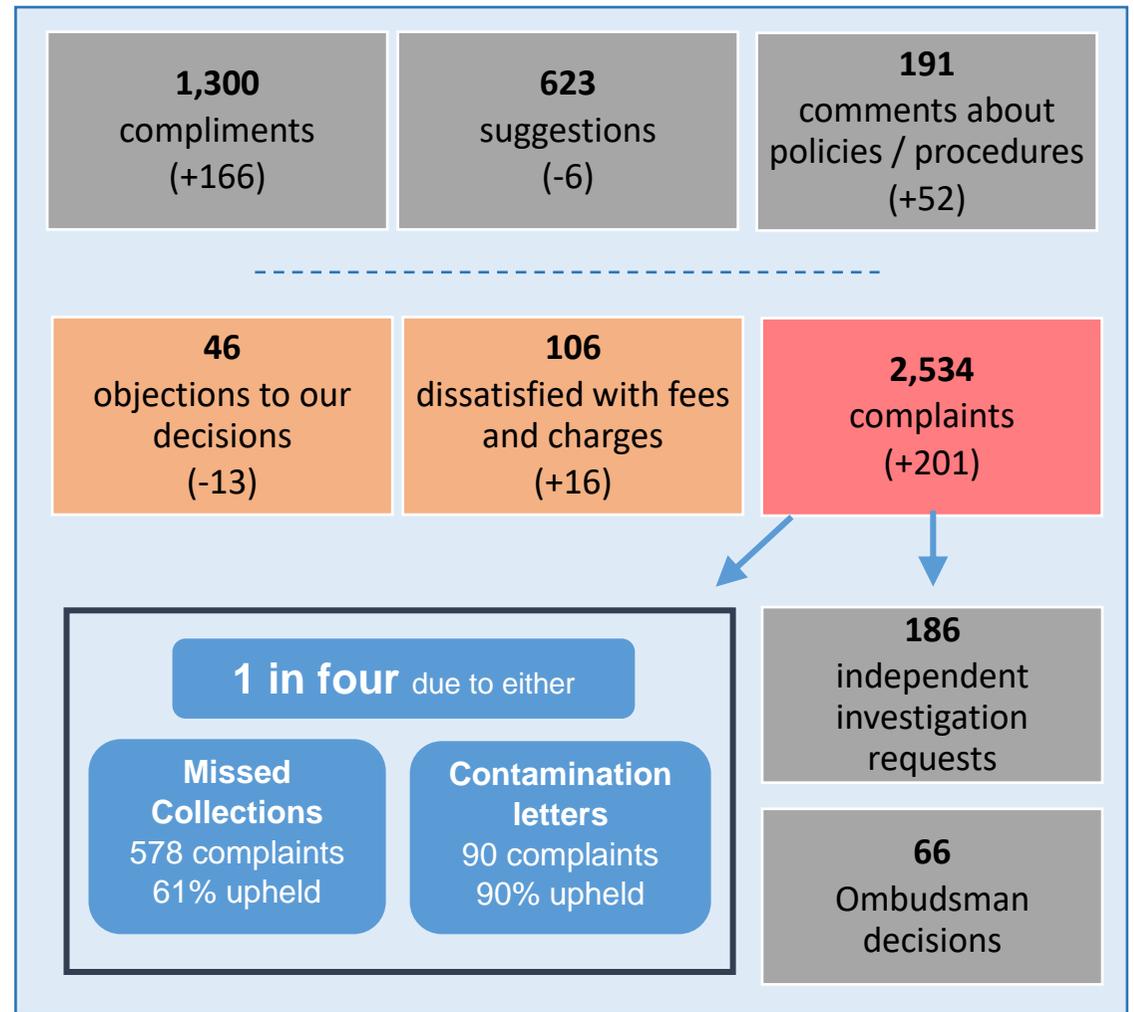
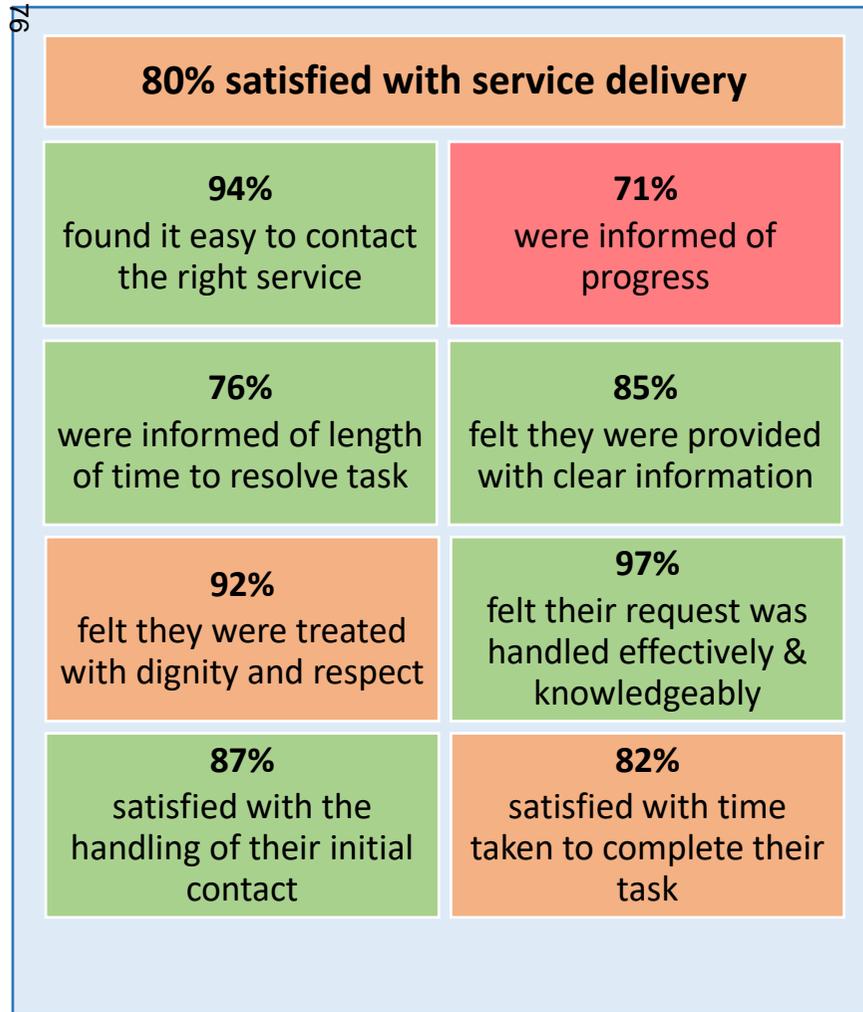
<sup>26</sup> face-to-face data is not comparable as Customer Access Points (CAPs) have been closed since March 2020

\* 7 December 2020 to 29 January 2021 – 647 respondents

# AN EXCELLENT COUNCIL: How good are our services to customers and the public?

## Summary<sup>27,28</sup>

96



<sup>27</sup> (data relates to the 12 months ending 31 March 2021, compared to the previous year where applicable)

<sup>28</sup> Satisfaction data is from the CRM closure process (based on 13,260 responses)

**Corporate Overview and  
Scrutiny Management Board**

18 June 2021

**Refresh of the Work  
Programme 2021/22 for the  
Corporate Overview and  
Scrutiny Management Board**



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**Report of Paul Darby Corporate Director of Resources (Interim)**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

None

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) with the updated work programme for 2021/2022.

**Executive summary**

- 2 COSMB review their work programme each year to reflect the objectives and associated outcomes and actions identified within the Council Plan and in the context of the County Durham Vision 2035.
- 3 The proposed COSMB work programme has been framed around the shared County Durham Vision 2035 based on the three strategic ambitions of 'more and better jobs', 'long and independent lives' and 'connected communities'. COSMB's work programme also reflects the fourth ambition which captures our organisational transformation agenda and the ambition to be an excellent council.
- 4 Overview and scrutiny work programmes are designed to be flexible to accommodate items which may arise throughout the year. This flexibility is particularly important as we make our way along the government's roadmap out of lockdown. We will consider how best to enable the scrutiny function to respond in these times of continuing uncertainty.

**Recommendations**

- 5 COSMB is recommended to:

- a) Receive and comment on the proposed COSMB work programme for 2021/22
- b) Agree the COSMB work programme for 2021/2022 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues.

## **Background**

- 6 Scrutiny committee meetings have recently returned to meeting in person following the use of remote arrangements under COVID-19 emergency regulations. During the lockdown period work programmes were reviewed to enable remote meetings to focus on matters of the highest priority. As a result, regular overview reports were circulated to members via email for comment.
- 7 The number of meetings in the corporate calendar available to overview and scrutiny have also been substantially reduced since March 2020 due to staff capacity to support virtual meetings. At this point we are unsure how many meetings we will be allocated for 2021/22 and will reprioritise work programmes if circumstances change. Any review of work programmes will take place with the chair and vice chair and in consultation with the committee.
- 8 COSMB has a strong focus on the MTFP and service improvement and this will continue in 2021/22. The Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery and restoration process will be reflected in these reports to COSMB.
- 9 The current overview and scrutiny committees work programmes are informed by:
  - Council Plan
  - Cabinet's Notice of Key Decisions
  - County Durham Vision for 2035
  - Partnership plans and strategies
  - Performance and budgetary control data
  - Changes in government legislation
  - Local priorities
- 10 The County Durham Partnership agreed a Vision for County Durham 2035 based on a strategic assessment of need using our intelligence platform Durham Insight and developed following extensive consultation with the public. This sets out our strategic direction and what we would like to achieve over the next 15 years and is written around three broad ambitions for the people of County Durham:

- More and better jobs
- People live long and independent lives
- Connected communities

- 11 These remain the strategic ambitions in our response to the COVID-19 crisis, where key impacts relate to employment, health and wellbeing, and communities. They will also remain key as restrictions ease and we move along the roadmap from national lockdown and we continue with our restoration and recovery.
- 12 Scrutiny work programmes also focus on the four priorities of the Council's transformational projects:
- Redesign our services to better meet the customer's needs at reduced cost to the Council
  - Help communities become more resilient and self-reliant
  - To move our partnership working from good to great
  - To become renowned for our skilled and flexible workforce and our employee engagement.

### **Council Plan 2020 - 2023**

- 13 The Council Plan is the primary corporate planning document for the county council and details Durham County Council's contribution towards achieving the objectives set out in the Vision for County Durham 2035 together with its own change agenda. It aims to provide a readable and accessible summary for members, partners and the public of our priorities for the county and the main programmes of work that we will undertake over the coming three years to help achieve these priorities.
- 14 Both the Vision for County Durham and the Council Plan are structured around the three ambitions which are mentioned above. An additional ambition of an excellent council has been developed for the Council Plan to capture the corporate initiatives that the council has identified and wants to undertake to transform its operations and enable achievement of the ambitions within the vision.

#### **An excellent council**

- a) Our resources will be managed effectively
- b) We will create a workforce for the future
- c) We will design our services with service users
- d) We will use data and technology more effectively

e) We will actively performance manage our services

## **Current Work Programme**

15 During 2020/2021, COSMB prioritised items to be considered at a reduced number of formal meetings due to the coronavirus pandemic. Reports on other items were circulated via email to members. However, although there was a reduced number of formal meetings the committee has undertaken budgetary and performance monitoring, scrutiny review work and overview presentations.

In depth and light touch scrutiny reviews including updates were:

- Budget and MTFP process

16 Overview Activity

- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Customer Feedback: Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Reports
- Overview of partnership work including the County Durham Partnership and Area Action Partnerships
- Transformation
  - Digital Strategy and Current ICT and Digital Developments
  - Integrated Customer Service Programme
  - Workplace Transformation: Enabling Smarter Working

17 Budgetary and performance monitoring:

- Quarterly budgetary monitoring for Resources and the former Transformation and Partnerships service grouping.
- Quarterly corporate performance monitoring overview for the whole Council.

18 COSMB also considered a comprehensive COVID-19 planning and response report summarising the actions the council had taken working with partners to respond to the pandemic and its framework for recovery planning.

## Areas for consideration in the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme

- 19 COSMB are asked to agree the proposed work programme for next year. This is set in the context of the challenges the Council faces:
- The recovery and restoration following the COVID-19 pandemic and the government's roadmap out of lockdown restrictions
  - Ongoing austerity
  - The shared County Durham Vision 2035
  - The Council's transformational projects
- 20 Paragraph 14 of this report identifies the activity undertaken by the committee during 2020/21. The committee is asked to consider areas for further progress updates and review topics to be included in the work programme for 2021/2022 in light of the current Council Plan and the Vision for County Durham 2035. Appendix 2 of this report sets out a draft work programme for consideration.

### Background papers

- [Council Plan 2020 - 2023](#)
- [A Vision for County Durham 2035](#)

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**Contact:** Andy Palmer

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

None

### **Finance**

None

### **Consultation**

None

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

None

### **Climate Change**

None

### **Human Rights**

None

### **Crime and Disorder**

None

### **Staffing**

None

### **Accommodation**

None

### **Risk**

The Overview and Scrutiny work programme is an important element of the Council's governance and risk management arrangements.

### **Procurement**

None

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## **Appendix 2: COSMB Work Programme**

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<p><b>Overview and Scrutiny Draft Work Programme 2021/22</b></p> <p>Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB)</p> <p>Lead officer: Andy Palmer</p> <p>Key service contact: Jeff Garfoot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More and better jobs</li> <li>• People live long and independent lives</li> <li>• Connected communities</li> <li>• Excellent council</li> </ul>	<p>Note:</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Review – A systematic six monthly review of progress against recommendations/action plan</p> <p>Scrutiny/Working Group – In-depth review/light touch review</p> <p>Overview/progress – Information on an issue; opportunity to comment, shape, influence, progress with a scrutiny review</p> <p>Performance/Budget – Ongoing quarterly monitoring performance reports/budgets</p>
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Item	When (subject to confirmation of OSC meeting arrangements)	Who	Outcome	Comment
<b>O/S Review</b>				
<b>Scrutiny/Working Group (light touch / in-depth review)</b>				
Budget and MTFP process	Autumn 2021  Jan 2022  Feb 2022	Jeff Garfoot/ Andy Palmer	To enable scrutiny members to comment and feed into the MTFP and budget setting process.	To look at any issues and or reviews linked to achieving savings within the MTFP  Update reports considered by COSMB

Item	When (subject to confirmation of OSC meeting arrangements)	Who	Outcome	Comment
<b>Overview/Progress</b>				
<p>Service Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformation of office environment and mixed model of working location</li> <li>• Digital Strategy and Digital Inclusion</li> <li>• Workforce Strategy Delivery</li> <li>• Systemic review of CRM - update</li> <li>• Business support services</li> </ul>	(Site visit combined with meeting when considering transformation of office environment and mixed model of working location)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andy Palmer/Vicki Murray/ Alison Lazazzera</li> <li>• Vicki Murray</li> <li>• Alison Lazazzera</li> <li>• Vicki Murray</li> <li>• Andy Palmer/Sarah Armstrong</li> </ul>	<p>To update members on the Transformation Programme.</p> <p>HR policies and practices have been reviewed</p> <p>Staff expectations clarified in terms of working smarter</p> <p>Managers responsibilities and training in place</p> <p>Large numbers of staff currently home working using ICT</p> <p>OD – Strategy &amp; delivery plan in place with projects being taken forward including: Management and leadership development</p> <p>Corporate and service workforce development</p>	Members' information

Item	When (subject to confirmation of OSC meeting arrangements)	Who	Outcome	Comment
			<p>New ways of working and expectations</p> <p>Values and behaviours being embedded across the workforce</p>	
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000) quarterly report	<p>Quarter 4 2020/21 Sept 2021</p> <p>Quarter 1 2021/22 Oct 2021</p> <p>Quarter 2 Dec 2021</p> <p>Quarter 3 Feb 2022</p>	Kamila Coulson-Patel	To inform members of the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) on a quarterly basis.	Members' information
Regulation of Investigatory Powers annual report	Sept/Oct 2021	Kamila Coulson-Patel	To inform members of the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).	Members' information
Customer Feedback – Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions quarterly report	<p>Q4 2020/21 June 2021</p> <p>Q1 2021/22 Sept 2021</p> <p>Q2 Dec 2021</p>	Vicki Murray	<p>To inform Members of the Customer Feedback report on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>To present key messages in relation to the</p>	Members' information

Item	When (subject to confirmation of OSC meeting arrangements)	Who	Outcome	Comment
	Q3 Mar 2022		management and handling of statutory representations for Children and Adults Social Services.	
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and six monthly report to Council	June 2021 Dec 2021	Andy Palmer	Members to sign off the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report before submission to Council.	Members' information, and circulated widely
Notice of Key Decisions	At each COSMB	Jackie Graham	To keep members informed of any additions or amendments.	Members' information
<b>Performance/Budget</b>				
<b>Performance</b> Quarterly reporting	Q4 and Q1 2021/22 Sept 2021  Q2 Dec 2021  Q3 Mar 2022	Andy Palmer/Tom Gorman	To provide members with progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework.	Standing item
<b>Budget Outturn Report</b> Quarterly reporting - Resources	Q4 2020/21 and Q1 2021/22 Sept 2021  Q2 Dec 2021  Q3 Mar 2022	Ian Herberson	To provide Members with details of the forecast outturn budget position for service groupings.	Standing item

Item	When (subject to confirmation of OSC meeting arrangements)	Who	Outcome	Comment
<b>Periodic updates</b>				
Implications of government policy programme	Cabinet report	Andy Palmer	To keep members informed of the implications of relevant government policies.	As and when
Welfare reform and poverty action plan updates	Cabinet report	Andy Palmer/Emma Gardner	To keep members informed of the progress being made by the council and its partners in addressing welfare reform and the wider poverty issues in the county.	For information
County Durham Partnership update	Cabinet report	Julie Bradbrook	To keep members informed of issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership and other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.	For information
Chairs' updates	At each COSMB	Chair	To keep members informed of scrutiny activity.	For information
Petitions updates Quarterly	June 2021 Sept 2021 Dec 2021 Mar 2022	Jackie Graham	To keep members informed of the status of petitions received by the Authority.	For information

<b>Item</b>	<b>When</b> (subject to confirmation of OSC meeting arrangements)	<b>Who</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Comment</b>
NECA and JTC Overview and Scrutiny work programmes and minutes of meetings	(meetings dates tbc)	Stephen Gwilym	To keep members informed of work ongoing by the NECA O&S and JTC O&S committees.	For information

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny  
Management Board**

**18 June 2021**

**Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report  
2020/21**



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**Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources (Interim)**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

None

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To present the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) with the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report 2020/21 for comment and approval prior to submission to the County Council meeting on 14 July 2021. The report is attached at Appendix 2.

**Executive summary**

In accordance with Article 5 paragraph 5.03 (d) of the Council's Constitution, COSMB is required to report annually to the County Council on its work with recommendations for its future work programme.

**Recommendation(s)**

- 2 COSMB is recommended to:
  - (a) Comment on the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2020/21.
  - (b) Agree that the report be submitted to the County Council meeting.

**Background**

- 3 Each year the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report is prepared to provide information on activity by both COSMB and the five thematic Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programmes. This work

programme activity includes in-depth reviews, monitoring of performance management and budgetary reporting.

- 4 This report reflects the work undertaken by all overview and scrutiny committee members throughout 2020/21. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent restrictions placed on committee meetings and social distancing requirements, scrutiny in 2020/21 has not been able to operate as usual. A reduced number of meetings have been held for all our committees during this period and following a prioritisation of work programme items, meetings took place with much shortened agendas. Other reports were circulated by email to members for their comment. This report is a pared down version of the usual annual report. A six month update of scrutiny activity will be submitted to council in December with the next annual report in July 2022.
- 5 The Annual Report also includes detail on the statutory scrutiny roles with health and crime and disorder.

### Background papers

- None

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<b>Contact:</b>	Andy Palmer	Tel: 03000 268551
	Clare Luery	Tel: 03000 265978

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

None

### **Finance**

None

### **Consultation**

None

### **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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**Appendix 2: Annual report 2020/21 (attached as a separate item)**

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# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-2021

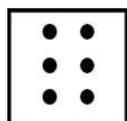
Resources

Durham County Council

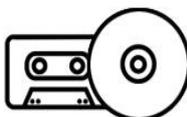
**May 2021**

**Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.**

العربية (Arabic) (中文 (繁體字)) (Chinese) اردو (Urdu)  
polski (Polish) ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi) Español (Spanish)  
বাংলা (Bengali) हिन्दी (Hindi) Deutsch (German)  
Français (French) Türkçe (Turkish) Melayu (Malay)



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# Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic has dominated our lives this year and Durham County Council has continued to work hard to help and support our residents and businesses through the emergency.

The challenge for overview and scrutiny in Durham County Council has always been crucial in ensuring how services are delivered to our communities. At a time of crisis it has been vital that our priority has been to constructively support the council and ensure that our services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

As a result of the pandemic we paused our planned scrutiny work programme from March 2020 to enable members to concentrate on working to support our communities. The scrutiny team operated a skeleton service and rescheduled much of our work. Following the introduction of remote meetings scrutiny restarted its work programmes in June 2020 with a reduced number of meetings and shortened agendas.

Durham County Council had already been facing the challenges of continuing austerity and financial uncertainty. A key priority for the authority will be to continue to work hard to protect frontline services whilst meeting savings targets and managing the additional considerable pressures as a result of the pandemic. Overview and scrutiny will contribute in a constructive way to support the council in meeting these significant challenges.

This pared down annual report sets out details of the work undertaken by scrutiny in the past year which has been limited due to the need for the council and partners to concentrate on the recovery and restoration of services. As the coronavirus pandemic eases and we continue along the government's roadmap from lockdown we will be reviewing our work programmes to identify areas of the county's response appropriate for an overview and scrutiny review.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in supporting and assisting the overview and scrutiny process in this difficult year – members, officers, partners, co-opted members and the scrutiny team themselves. All scrutiny committee meetings are open to the public and if you would like to get involved, the scrutiny team's contact details are at the end of this report.

**Councillor Rob Crute**

**Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board  
2020/2021**

# Scrutiny in County Durham

Scrutiny provides a valuable tool to scrutinise how we deliver our services and to drive improvement. We are supported by a dedicated scrutiny team and senior and specialist officers across the council which has helped develop a strong scrutiny culture and adds value to the work of the council.

Durham County Council has embedded the four principles of good scrutiny, developed by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, in all our work. These are:

- To provide a constructive critical friend challenge to executive policy-makers and decisions-makers.
- To amplify the voice and concerns of the public.
- To ensure scrutiny is carried out by independent minded people who lead and own the scrutiny role.
- To drive improvement in public services.

Durham County Council's overview and scrutiny function involves a considerable amount of partnership working. Our aim is to ensure that the good work already taking place contributes to our Transformation Programme's key principal of moving partnership working from good to great.

We also promote engagement with local expert and academic researchers in overview and scrutiny where they can add to our work.

The scrutiny team works with colleagues in communications to identify any matters within the work programme which may be of particular interest. Meetings considering items such as the climate emergency and changes to the delivery of health services have previously provoked a great deal of interest.

Local Democracy reporters are usually in attendance at most scrutiny meetings held in person. Their coverage has helped raise the public profile of scrutiny and for specific issues increased public participation in the scrutiny process. They have continued to report on our scrutiny meetings throughout the pandemic.

The majority of detailed in-depth reviews are carried out by the committees, but smaller working groups may be set up to carry out light touch reviews. Unfortunately, in 2020/21 no in-depth review work had been undertaken due to capacity of members, services and our partners.

Scrutiny committees decide which areas they wish to examine. This may arise following representations by members of the public about a particular matter; be an issue identified by councillors themselves; or follow on from reports or performance assessment on the council's activities made by the cabinet or outside agencies.

We also promote scrutiny by maintaining an excellent relationship between executive and non-executive members and meet regularly to discuss matters of common interest.

The overview and scrutiny process provides an opportunity for members of the public and local communities to comment upon any service

## Co-optees and engagement

We continue to work with the non-voting co-optees who sit on our scrutiny committees. They bring skills, knowledge and their own expertise and views to scrutiny and provide important external challenge to our work programme.

We have also promoted engagement of local expert and academic researchers in overview and scrutiny where they can add to our work.

This ownership of the work programme and strong organisational culture underpins scrutiny's legitimacy as an effective and strategic function.

Co-opted members appointed to scrutiny committees ensure a strong external representation and help scrutiny to engage with the public. During the year we have been able to recruit a new co-opted representative for a vacancy on the Adults Health and Wellbeing OSC. For the first time the appointment process involved members interviewing candidates remotely.

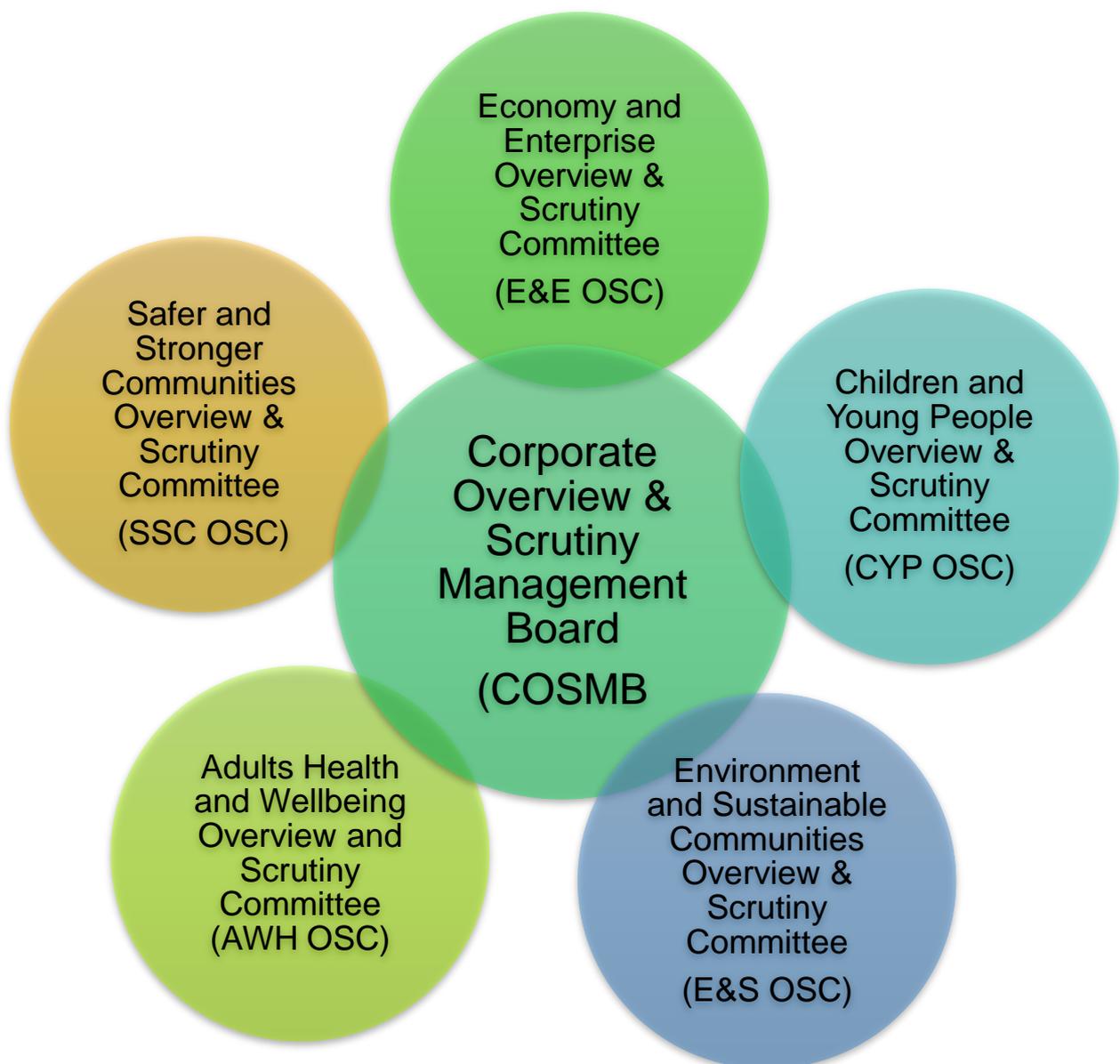
We value the different perspectives and challenge our co-optees bring to our work. Co-optees

- Act as an independent voice for those who live or work in County Durham.
- Bring specialist knowledge, skills and an element of external challenge to the overview and scrutiny process.
- Take an interest in, attend and contribute to the committees and working groups to which appointed.
- Establish good relations with other members, officers and co-optees.

We will be carrying out a full refresh of our co-opted members in 2022 and anyone who would like to express an interest is requested to contact the Scrutiny Team.

# Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Overview and scrutiny is a valuable part of local democracy and has important statutory roles in the scrutiny of health and crime and disorder. Statutory work is in addition to roles carried out by our Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and five thematic scrutiny committees as below:



# Overview and Scrutiny Review Activity

Each year the scrutiny work programme is developed to ensure a balanced programme. Alongside considering overview reports and updates, we plan focussed review work throughout the year. These reviews can be light touch or in depth and are usually reported to Cabinet and the appropriate thematic partnership.

## GP Service Provision in County Durham – Adults, Health and Wellbeing OSC

This review examined the extent of GP coverage across County Durham and identifying the range of services offered by GP practices. It also looked at the issues and barriers facing patients in accessing their GP including the availability of branch sites across individual practices

The Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee engaged in a number of consultation and engagement processes undertaken by GP practices which involve a range of issues including reductions in practice branch sites, reductions in pharmacy/dispensing provision and branch closures. During these processes, the Committee became increasingly concerned at the issues involving GP recruitment, retention, retirement and other workforce related pressures that are impacting on the level of service provision available to residents within County Durham.

There are concerns, nationally, regionally and locally about the falling number of GPs, the availability of GP appointments, the number of GP practices that are accepting new patients, the range of services available from GP practices, and the reduction in the number of GP branch sites.

The Review report was submitted to Cabinet in November 2020 and included a series of recommendations which aim to improve access to GP services, enhance the recruitment, retention and training of GPs and health professionals within General Practice, develop new ways in which patients can access primary care services including appointments.

Due to the pause in the work programmes this year, the following review will be completed in 2021/22.

## Road Safety – Stronger and Safer Communities OSC

Road Safety is an important area to which the Committee has previously undertaken review activity, held a focussed session on the “fatal four” being the four most common causes of casualties and fatalities in road traffic accidents (inappropriate speed, using a mobile phone while driving, not wearing a seatbelt and drink/drug driving) and young drivers. The Committee has also received annual update reports on activity of the Durham and Darlington Casualty Reduction Forum and monitored quarterly performance against road safety performance indicators.

The aim of the Committee’s review was to provide comment on the development of a new Road Safety Strategy. The Committee has a statutory role to scrutinise work of the Council and the Safe Durham Partnership and this work would contribute to actions within the Safe Durham Partnership Plan.

In advance of a draft strategy being produced, Members provided comment following evidence through two working groups meetings with representatives from the Council, Durham Constabulary, County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service and Council’s Road Safety Manager and a Data Analyst from the North East Regional Road safety resource. In addition, Members also undertook field study activity within schools and attended a driving awareness session with apprentices.

Consultation on the draft County Durham and Darlington Road Safety Strategy was launched in early 2020 and was scheduled to be considered by the Committee in March 2020, however this meeting was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Within this context, the strategy was circulated to the Committee and a response was provided in July 2020 to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder and the Service Grouping that provided comment on the strategy’s strategic vision, approaches undertaken through education, engineering, enforcement and evaluation, casualty statistics and delivery plan.

The Committee asked that once the strategy had been agreed by Cabinet and respective partnership boards that a report on implementation of the strategy and delivery plan is included within the Committee’s work programme.

## Planned Overview and Scrutiny in 2021/22

The work programmes for overview and scrutiny focus on the priority areas identified within the Council Plan, the Cabinet’s Forward Plan of decisions, the County Durham Vision 2035, partnership plans and strategies, performance and budgetary control data and changes in government legislation.

The process for developing the Council’s overview and scrutiny work programmes is consultative and comprehensive. Initial proposals are influenced by legislation, plans and strategies, performance reports and

include engagement with the executive, partners and officers. Each overview and scrutiny committee has an experienced chair to ensure there is a clear focus on the committee's role and forward plan of work. Where there are any cross-cutting matters, joint meetings are held to avoid duplication and make the best use of capacity of both members and officers

Work programmes are usually finalised during June and July and are designed to ensure there is flexibility and capacity to take on topics which may arise throughout the year.

A summary of the key issues for the 2021/22 Work Programme is overleaf

## COSMB

- Medium Term Financial Plan and budget setting
- Transformation
  - Digital Strategy and Digital Inclusion
  - Workforce Strategy Delivery
- RIPA
- Performance and budget outturn
- Customer Feedback
- Implications of Government Policy Programme
- Welfare Reform and Poverty

## Economy

- Support to Business Sector
- DurhamWorks Programme
- Town and Village Centres Programme
- Employability and Skills Development
- Housing Solutions
- Investment Pipeline
- Selective Licensing Scheme
- Transport (regional and local)
- Tourism
- Strategic sites in the county

## Children

- Child Poverty
- Erase
- Neglect in County Durham
- Growing Healthy 0-25
- Children and Young People Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
- Best Start in Life
- Care Leavers Strategy
- Young Carers
- Improving Educational Outcomes

## Environment

- Air Quality in County Durham
- Climate Emergency Response Plan
- SUPS monitoring against action plan
- Fly Tipping
- Environmental campaigns
- Fuel Poverty
- Highway, Footway and Bridge Maintenance
- Waste Management
- Flood Risk Management Authorities (flood mitigation in the county)
- Leisure Centre Transformation Programme

## Safer

- Arson and deliberate fires
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Off Road Bikes and Vehicles
- Hate Crime
- Reducing Re-offending
- Alcohol and Drugs Harm Reduction Strategy
- Youth Justice Plan
- Probation Services
- Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence
- Road Safety Strategy

## Adults

- NHS Statutory Consultations/Legislation plans
- COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan
- Development of Integrated Care Systems and Partnerships
- Health and Social Care Integration
- Shotley Bridge Community hospital
- Public health funding and services/campaigns
- NHS Foundation Trust performance and Oversight –
  - County Durham and Darlington NHS FT
  - Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS FT
  - North East Ambulance Services NHS FT

# Constitutional Responsibilities of Overview and Scrutiny

The constitutional responsibilities of the scrutiny committees are based on the themes within the council plan.

## Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

- To oversee and co-ordinate the work of Overview and Scrutiny and its committees
- To ensure effective liaison across the work of the committees on cross cutting issues.
- To be the strategic driver of the overview and scrutiny function.
- To consider as appropriate scrutiny member involvement in regional scrutiny arrangements within the context of any regional strategies.
- The establishment of appropriate liaison with the Executive in the interests of achieving common aims and continuous improvement for the Council
- To encourage appropriate community involvement in the overview and scrutiny role.
- Consider the Council Plan and Notice of Key Decisions and to monitor performance against these plans
- Deal with petitions in accordance with the Council's protocol for petitions
- Consider the council's annual budget
- Assist the Executive in the development of the council's annual budget and to review and scrutinise budgetary management
- Assist the Executive in ensuring the provision of efficient and effective corporate management and support arrangements
- Assist the Executive in the development of asset management
- Scrutinise delivery of the County Durham Visions 2035 and Council Plan ambition of an excellent councils and associated objectives of
  - Our resources will be managed effectively
  - We will create a workforce for the future
  - We will design our services with service users
  - We will use data and technology more effectively
  - We will actively performance manage our services

**Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC** scrutinises delivery of the County Durham Vision 2035 ambitions of More and Better Jobs, People Live Long and Independent Lives and Connected Communities in relation the environmental and sustainable communities and Council Plan objectives:

- A broader experience for residents and visitors to the County
- Fewer people will be affected by poverty and deprivation within the County
- A physical environment that will contribute to good health
- Our towns and villages will be vibrant, well used, clean, attractive and safe
- People will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities

**Children and Young People OSC** scrutinises delivery of the County Durham Vision 2035 ambitions of More and Better Jobs, People Live Long and Independent Lives and Connected Communities in relation to children and young people and Council Plan objectives of:

- Young people will have access good quality education, training and employment
- Children and young people will enjoy the best start in life, good health and emotional wellbeing
- Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities will achieve the best possible outcomes
- All children and young people will have a safe childhood

**Adults, Wellbeing and Health OSC** scrutinises delivery of the County Durham Visions 2035 ambitions of People Live Long and Independent Lives and Council Plan objectives in relation to adults wellbeing and health of:

- Better integration of health and social care services
- People will be supported to live independently for as long as possible by delivering more homes to meet the needs of older and disabled people
- Tackling the stigma and discrimination of poor mental health and building resilient communities.
- Promotion of positive behaviours.
- Review and scrutiny of NHS Services, adult social care, health inequalities and improvement and Public Health Services

**Economy & Enterprise OSC** scrutinises delivery of the County Durham Vision 2035 ambitions of More and Better Jobs, and Connected Communities and Council plan objectives of

- Delivery of a range of employment sites across the county.

- A strong, competitive economy where County Durham is a premier place in the North East to do business.
- A broader experience for residents and visitors to the county.
- People will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities.
- Helping all people into rewarding work.
- Standards will be maintained or improved across County Durham's housing stock.
- Delivery of new high-quality housing which is accessible and meets the needs of our residents.

**Safer and Stronger Communities OSC** scrutinises delivery of the County Durham Vision 2035 ambitions of People Live Long and Independent Lives and Connected Communities in relation to safer and stronger communities and Council plan objectives of:

- Promotion of positive behaviours
- Our towns and villages will be vibrant, well used, clean, attractive and safe
- Communities will come together to accept and support each other

# Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board 2020/21



Cllr Rob Crute  
Chair



Cllr Alison Batey  
Vice chair

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) provides a strategic direction for the work of all the overview and scrutiny committees.

## Reports and presentations scrutinised during 2020/21 include:

- MTFP (11) 2021/22 2024/25 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22
- COVID-19 Planning and Response
- Integrated Customer Services Programme
- Regulation of Investigative Powers Act (RIPA) 2000
- Quarterly Performance Management
- Quarterly Budget Outturn reports
- Workplace Transformation: Enabling Smarter Working
- Poverty Issues
- Customer Feedback - Complaints, Compliments & Suggestions
- County Durham Partnership
- Updates on Petitions
- Notice of Key Decisions

# Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/21



Cllr John Robinson  
Chair



Cllr Jean Chaplow  
Vice chair

The Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (AWH OSC) has a statutory role under the Health and Social Care Act 2001 as amended to scrutinise local health services

## Reports and presentations scrutinised during 2020/21 include:

- Overview and Scrutiny Review of Access to GP services in County Durham
- Update on the impact of COVID-19 on Adults and Health Services – Public Health Response and County Durham Care Partnership System Response
- An Overview of Adult Social Care
- Winter Planning and the work of the Local Accident and Emergency Delivery Board
- Shotley Bridge Community Hospital updates
- Local Outbreak Management Plan updates
- NHS County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group Primary Care Strategy
- Integrated Care Systems
- Suicide Rates and Mental health and Wellbeing in County Durham - Update report on progress against Scrutiny review recommendations
- Health Impact Assessments for Health Inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust Updates on the CQC Inspection results and also the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on TEWV services
- Quarterly Performance Management
- Quarterly Forecast Revenue and Capital Outturn

# Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/21



Cllr Heather Smith  
Chair



Cllr Christine Potts  
Vice chair

Children and Young  
People Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee  
(CYP OSC)

## Reports and presentations scrutinised during 2020/21 include:

- Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Young People's Services
- Children's Adolescent Mental Health Service update
- Child Poverty in County Durham
- Best Start in Life: 0-25 Healthy Child Programme
- Neglect in County Durham
- Director of Public Health Annual Report 2020
- SEND Overview and Focus on SEND in mainstream Schools
- Impact of COVID-19 on Education Services
- Quarterly Performance Management
- Quarterly Forecast Revenue and Capital Outturn
- Healthy Weight Alliance
- Children's Commissioning Action Plan
- Young Carers
- ERASE
- Pre Birth Teams
- Stronger Families Programme
- Free School Meals
- Tobacco Dependency in Pregnancy
- Signs of Safety Model of Practice
- Progress of the Children's Residential Care Homes Review Recommendations

# Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/21



Cllr Malcolm Clarke  
Chair



Cllr Richard Manchester  
Vice chair

Economy and  
Enterprise Overview  
and Scrutiny Committee  
(Economy OSC)

## Reports and presentations scrutinised during 2020/21 include:

- COVID-19: Economic Support and Recovery
- Impact of COVID-19 on Regeneration, Economy and Growth
- Business Durham - Progress
- Visit County Durham – Activity and Support Provided during the Pandemic and Recovery plans
- Overview and Scrutiny response to the Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document and the Parking and Accessibility Supplementary Planning Document
- Housing and Homelessness Strategies
- Housing response to COVID-19
- Private rented sector
- Selective Licensing
- Towns and Villages Centres Investment Plan
- DurhamWorks Programme – Youth Employment Initiative
- EU Funding
- Quarterly Performance Management
- Quarterly Forecast Revenue and Capital Outturn
- Key strategic employment sites in the County
- County Durham Plan
- Transport activity (regional and local)
- Digital Durham Programme (business sector)
- Masterplans
- North East Skills Advisory Panel
- County Durham Economic Partnership
- Durham County Council's Council Housing Delivery Programme

# Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/21



Cllr Eddy Adam  
Chair



Cllr Olga Milburn  
Vice chair

Environment and  
Sustainable  
Communities Overview  
and Scrutiny  
Committee (Env&Sust  
OSC)

## Reports and presentations scrutinised during 2020/21 include:

- Environmental Campaigns
- Fly-tipping
- Bereavement Services
- Overview of Household Waste Management
- Fuel Poverty
- Highways, Footway and Bridge Maintenance
- Impact of COVID-19 on Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Services
- Climate Emergency Response Plan Year 1 update
- Quarterly Performance Management
- Quarterly Forecast Revenue and Capital Outturn
- Community Action Team
- Woodland management
- Heritage Coast and the Tourism Offer
- Environment and Climate Change Partnership
- Climate Emergency Response Plan and Carbon Management Plan
- EU and Other Funding
- DCC Fleet
- Leisure Centres Transformation
- Sustainable Travel, Walking and Cycling Plan
- Stockton to Darlington Railway Bicentennial Celebrations
- Gala Theatre
- Air Quality Management in County Durham
- Heritage Assets
- Single Use Plastics
- National Fuel Poverty Strategy
- Flood Risk Management Authorities

# Safer & Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/21



Cllr David Boyes  
Chair



Cllr Heather Liddle  
Vice chair

SSC OSC has powers under the Police & Justice Act 2006, as amended, to scrutinise work being undertaken by the statutory crime and disorder reduction partnership - the Safe Durham Partnership

## Reports and presentations scrutinised during 2019/20 include:

- Overview and Scrutiny Review – County Durham & Darlington Road Safety Strategy
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- Safe Durham Partnership Board – Impact of COVID-19
- Community Protection update
- Public Protection Service – Enforcement and Intervention Activity
- County Durham Youth Justice Service Annual Performance report 2019/20 and Service Improvement Plan 2020/21
- County Durham and Darlington Hate Crime Action Group
- Probation Programme ‘Plans for future model’
- Bonfire period and arson
- Open Water Safety
- Off Road Bikes and Vehicles
- Alcohol and Substance Misuse Harm Reduction
- Reducing Re-Offending
- County Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan
- Draft Safe Durham Partnership Board

# Regional Scrutiny

The North East Regional Employers' Organisation supports a region-wide North East Joint Scrutiny Member/Officer network where all North East local authority scrutiny leads discuss national developments in scrutiny. The network also provides an opportunity to share work programmes and priorities and consider emerging issues that have an impact across local authority boundaries.

Durham County Council currently chair and administer the regional network. The network has held two remote meetings during the year and agreed an updated terms of reference.

## North East Combined Authority scrutiny arrangements

We continue to work with other regional authorities as the North East Combined Authority (NECA) which is comprised of the four councils of Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

NECA has three broad areas of focus:

- Transport
- Employability and Inclusion
- Economic Development and Regeneration

We have representation on the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise and challenge decision-making on behalf of our communities. The committee investigates matters of significant importance to residents across the areas covered by the four councils with a view to influencing decisions.

Durham County Council is represented on the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Councillors Rob Crute and Alison Batey, the Chair and Vice-Chair of COSMB. Councillors Malcolm Clarke and Richard Manchester, the Chair and Vice-Chair of Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are the nominated substitute members.

Transport is of strategic importance to the North East and both NECA and the North of Tyne Combined Authority (Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland councils) work collaboratively to ensure effective decision making takes place across the region. We work with NECA and the North of Tyne Combined Authority on a North East Joint Transport Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee established with representatives from all seven authorities. Councillors Rob Crute and Alison Batey, the Chair and Vice-Chair of COSMB represent Durham County Council. Councillors Malcolm Clarke and Richard

Manchester, Chair and Vice-Chair of Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are the nominated substitute members.

Both scrutiny committees usually meet at varying locations across the NECA area and meetings are open to the public. During the pandemic meetings have been held remotely.

Further details on NECA can be found at [www.northeastca.gov.uk](http://www.northeastca.gov.uk).

## Regional Health Scrutiny

The Council continues to work collaboratively at a regional level to ensure that the impact of changes to health services across local authority boundaries does not adversely impact upon residents of County Durham.

The North East Regional Joint Health Scrutiny Committee consists of lead Health Scrutiny members from all 12 north east local authorities.

The committee is charged with scrutinising issues around the planning, provision and operation of health services in and across the north east region, comprising for these purposes the areas covered by all constituent authorities.

## Sub Regional Joint Health Scrutiny Committees

The emergence of the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System and associated Integrated Care Partnerships has resulted in the establishment of two Integrated Care System/Integrated Care Partnerships Joint OSCs within the region.

### North East and North Cumbria ICS and Northern and Central ICP Joint OSC

This Joint OSC comprises representatives from Durham County Council; Gateshead BC; Newcastle City Council; North Tyneside BC; Northumberland CC; South Tyneside BC and Sunderland City Council

### North East and North Cumbria ICS and Central and Southern ICP Joint OSC

This Joint OSC comprises representatives from Darlington BC; Durham County Council; Hartlepool BC; Middlesbrough BC; Redcar and Cleveland BC; North Yorkshire County Council and Stockton on Tees BC

Durham County Council is the only North East Council with representatives that sit on both ICS/ICP Joint OSCs.

The regional and sub-regional joint scrutiny overview and scrutiny arrangements will be used to scrutinise the development of the ICS/ICPs and any associated proposals for substantial developments or significant variations in services.

Neither Joint OSCs have met during the COVID 19 Pandemic and we are aware that legislation is currently being progressed through Parliament which would place Integrated Care Systems on a legal footing and will result on governance arrangements for them being developed at a regional level. Durham County Council will continue to engage in this process.

# Overview and Scrutiny Team

The Overview and Scrutiny team is part of the Resources Directorate.

Andy Palmer, the Head of Strategy and Transformation is designated as the Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

Tom Gorman is the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager and Stephen Gwilym the Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

Diane Close, Jonathan Slee and Ann Whitton are Overview and Scrutiny Officers. Clare Luery is the Scrutiny Support Assistant.

Scrutiny office: 03000 265978

Email: [scrutiny@durham.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@durham.gov.uk)

Website: [www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)

## Key contacts:

- Adults, Health and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
Stephen Gwilym Tel: 03000 26814 [stephen.gwilym@durham.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.gwilym@durham.gov.uk)
- Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
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- Safer Stronger Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
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**Corporate Overview and  
Scrutiny Management Board**

18 June 2021



**Update in relation to Petitions**

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**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 all of the petitions that have been received by the Authority are processed by democratic services in line with its petitions process.
- 4 The 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 was circulated to members in November 2020 5 e-petitions have been submitted. Two are still active and collecting signatures on our website, we are waiting for a response for one and one e-petition was rejected on the grounds that the Council did not own the land in question.

- 7 In addition, four new paper petitions have been submitted, two of which have been completed and responses are awaited for the other two. A list giving details and current status of all active petitions is attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

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**Contact:** Ros Layfield

Tel: 03000 269708

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **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 389</p> <p>Re-open Ferryhill Railway Station</p> <p><b>E-Petition</b></p> <p>Petition received 25.06.20</p> <p>No. of signatures – 525</p> <p>Paper petition - 2976</p>	<p>Dave Wafer</p> <p>Head of Transport &amp; Contract Services (Interim)</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to re-open Ferryhill Railway Station and the Leamside Line.</p> <p>E-Petition to ran from 1.8.20 – 11.10.20</p> <p>Leamside Line remains one of County Durham’s key strategic assets and both the route and the opportunity for new stations along it are highlighted in the recently adopted County Durham Plan, the document that seeks to create the conditions and framework for an ambitious and deliverable future for residents and businesses:</p> <p>“The reinstatement of the Leamside Line would provide additional capacity and relieve the existing two track railway between Darlington and Newcastle. The Leamside Line could help enable a more regular rail service from Chester-le-Street and Durham City to York and Newcastle on the ECML as well as making the ECML HS2 ready. On a reinstated Leamside Line, new services and stations could be provided for passengers and additional capacity would be created for more freight to be transported in and out of the county ...” (para 5.211, County Durham Plan 2020).</p> <p>The Leamside and Stillington lines are also actively being considered by Network Rail through their Continuous Modular Strategic Planning Process (CMSP) and in particular their Church Fenton (near York) to Newcastle workstream, as well as by Northern Powerhouse Rail, as options for addressing the significant capacity limitations of the existing East Coast Main Line (ECML) through Durham to make sure the rail network meets the demands of passengers and freight-users for decades to come.</p>	<p>Petition <b>CLOSED</b></p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>A decision on a bid made by the local MP for Department for Transport's Restoring Your Railways Fund Round 2, for feasibility funding for the reopening of a station at Ferryhill and connections towards Teesside, is pending. It is believed a Round 3 opportunity will be opened at some point in the new year, with a bid for the Leamside Line to be made, considering co-ordination between different elements including Ferryhill and the Stillington Line.</p> <p>Durham County Council will continue to actively participate through the appropriate regional and sub national governance channels related to Leamside, Ferryhill Station and the Stillington Line.</p>	
<p>Petition 392</p> <p>Lambton Drive, Bishop Auckland – speed restrictions</p> <p>Petition received 1.10.20</p> <p>No. of signatures – 79</p>	<p>Michelle McIntosh</p> <p>Traffic Asset Senior Engineer</p>	<p>Petition raised with regards to the speed of traffic at Lambton Drive, Bishop Auckland.</p> <p>Regretfully, the Council receive more requests for traffic calming than it is able to fund from limited road safety budgets. Due to the need to concentrate resources on reducing casualty accidents Highway Authorities are required to direct their limited funding towards addressing locations with known and proven accident problems.</p> <p>Having checked the accident recording database shared with Durham Constabulary, I can confirm there have been two recorded 'personal injury' accidents on Lambton Drive in the past four years, this being the standard search criteria. Compared to many other locations, this represents a favourable accident record with priority continuing to be directed to locations with a known and proven accident problem as we continue progress towards meeting casualty reduction targets.</p> <p>Community Speedwatch</p>	<p>Petition <b>CLOSED</b></p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>As part of our partnership approach to improving road safety, joint working with Durham Constabulary has enabled us to introduce an initiative known as 'Community Speed Watch'. This initiative is about giving a degree of ownership to local communities and providing them with the opportunity to tackle the issues and perceptions around speed.</p> <p>Under the Community Speed Watch initiative, 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> <p>Durham Constabulary would normally be able to advise of the date, time and venue of the next PACT meeting should you wish to attend however at this time, with such public gatherings suspended, contact could be made with local officers on the non-emergency 101 telephone number.</p>	
<p>Petition 393</p> <p>Ownership and maintenance of Urpeth Grange play area and equipment</p> <p><b>E-Petition</b> Petition received 23.10.20 No. of signatures - 287</p>	<p>Barrie Alderson Outdoor Facilities Co-ordinator</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to take over the ownership and maintenance of Urpeth Grange play area and equipment, situated adjacent to Ripley Close, Urpeth Grange Estate, Urpeth.</p> <p>The County Council does strongly support the provision for children's' play facilities, and recognises in its Review of Fixed Play Provision (Cabinet 15th July 2015) that it can be owned and managed by a variety of bodies, including for instance Town and Parish Councils, community groups, businesses as well as the County Council itself.</p> <p>In considering the potential adoption of new play areas arising from development, then in furtherance of Cabinet decision made on Cabinet 5 June 2013 (Interim Policy, Procedure for the Adoption of Public Open Space Associated with New Housing Developments) the developer must design a scheme that meets</p>	<p>Petition <b>CLOSED</b></p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>with Council specifications (this is also referenced in the Cabinet Report of 15th July 2015), and if they want the Council to take on the site, the developer (in this instance Persimmon) should pay the Council a commuted sum equivalent to resource maintenance for 15 years. It is not compulsory however, and the developer may choose to make their own arrangements to maintain.</p> <p>In this instance, as part of the planning approval for this development Persimmon were required to provide a new play area. Prior to its installation it was discussed with Persimmon that Durham County Council could potentially adopt the play area for ongoing inspection and maintenance subject to a management agreement and commuted sum being put in place between the two parties.</p> <p>Whilst advice was followed on the specification for the play equipment, on completion of the works Persimmon advised the Council that they had decided not to take up this option but that instead the play area had been transferred to a management company along with the much larger area of open space of which the play area forms part. It is not up to the Council to be involved in how Persimmon fund the company to undertake ongoing maintenance, but it is likely that these costs are passed to the home-owners associated with the development, who may be alerted to this at the time of sale.</p> <p>There is no obligation for a developer to seek adoption from the local authority nor is this something the Council can insist on. The practice of using management companies to oversee ongoing management / maintenance is something that many of the larger housing developers are doing UK wide.</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>I can confirm adoption by the Council, on the original terms offered to Persimmon, would still be available to the management company (as landowners), subject (and pursuant to policy) agreement of a commuted sum.</p>	
<p>Petition 394</p> <p>To implement restrictions on HGVs travelling through the villages of Pittington, Littletown, Sherburn and Sherburn Hill</p> <p><b>E-Petition</b>                      Petition received 31.10.20                      No. of signatures – 113                      Paper Petition – 228 signatures</p>	<p>Michelle McIntosh                      Traffic Asset Senior Engineer</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to implement restrictions on HGVs travelling through the villages of Pittington, Littletown, Sherburn and Sherburn Hill.</p> <p>E-petition ran until 30.4.21 and closed with 113 signatures.</p> <p>Lead petitioner to present at full Council on 14 July 2021.</p>	
<p>Petition 396</p> <p>To introduce parking restrictions or residents parking permits at Kirk View, Barnard Castle</p> <p>Petition received 12.02.21                      No. of signatures - 39</p>	<p>Lee Mowbray                      Major Projects Team Leader</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to introduce parking restrictions or residents parking permits at Kirk View, Barnard Castle.</p> <p>The process that would be followed when looking at such proposals is outlined below:</p> <p>In order to control parking we would need to create a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). All parking restrictions on the adopted highway require a TRO to enable enforcement action to be carried out. Prior to introducing a TRO, the County Council must follow government legislation to ensure that a full public consultation is undertaken. If feedback is not universally</p>	<p>Petition <b>CLOSED</b></p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>positive during this exercise then this can mean that the process runs for several months.</p> <p>I shall arrange for a technician to visit the site and draft up a proposed TRO scheme for the Kirk View / Bede Road junction area. This proposal would then be subject to a full consultation exercise as mentioned above.</p> <p>Looking at the permit parking zone request, I can confirm that the County Council has a policy which states that we will not designate bays or areas for resident only parking but we will consider requests for permit only areas, which are designed to displace long stay commuter parking but not short stay visitors. To this end, a permit scheme in towns like Barnard Castle, would operate for one or two hours in the morning and one or two hours in the afternoon.</p> <p>Permit Parking Areas will only be introduced in line with the following qualifying criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permit parking areas will only be considered for residential streets within commercial areas which are subject to a high demand for commuter parking.</li> <li>2. Initial requests for a permit parking scheme must be accompanied by support from at least 25% of the households in the street, or from a local member on behalf of the residents.</li> <li>3. More than 40% of kerbside space is occupied by non-residents for over six hours in the survey period and more than 85% of kerbside space is occupied by any vehicles during the same six hours.</li> </ol>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>4. Where support has been gained from at least 75% or above of the properties included within the proposed permit area.</p> <p>The cost of administering such a scheme is required to be funded by residents and, from past experience, a scheme will inevitably result in displaced parking affecting neighbouring streets and can impact on a town's vitality and economic wellbeing. In addition to this permit schemes can often cause inconvenience to residents and their visitors and may not be considered a worthwhile solution by all residents.</p> <p>We will investigate the Kirk View area to assess its feasibility for the introduction of a permit parking scheme. With this in mind, I have arranged for parking occupancy surveys to be undertaken in this area and will assess the results against the criteria noted above. These surveys are undertaken by an external company and they are hoping to carry these out early next month. Once the results have been received and analysed.</p>	
<p>Petition 397</p> <p>Traffic noise from A167</p> <p>Petition received 16.03.21</p> <p>No. of signatures – 30</p>	<p>Dave Wafer</p> <p>Head of Transport &amp; Contract Services</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to address the daily traffic noise from A693.</p> <p>In terms of legislation and background the County Council have no regulatory control over traffic noise as it is exempted from noise nuisance legislation. Whilst residents living next to a new or altered road may be able to claim compensation, this is not the case for people living next to an existing road.</p> <p>As there is no legal limit to road noise, we do not carry out any monitoring of noise levels. Further information can be found at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/noise-pollution-road-train-plane/noise-from-roads">https://www.gov.uk/noise-pollution-road-train-plane/noise-from-roads</a></p>	<p>Petition <b>CLOSED</b></p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>As part of a national noise mapping programme implemented by the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006, estimates for road noise across the County have been produced. These maps of noise levels can be viewed at the following website that enables users to zoom into specific areas - <a href="http://www.extrium.co.uk/noiseviewer.html">http://www.extrium.co.uk/noiseviewer.html</a></p> <p>By way of background it is generally accepted that vegetation has no effect on noise unless it is the equivalent of a 50m stretch of dense forest, which obviously could not be achieved in this instance. Whilst vegetation may have a psychological effect in that it breaks the line of site and therefore can give the impression of a noise reduction, in reality, it has no impact.</p> <p>There are existing trees along the A693 near to Station Road and the grassed verge is already well vegetated. The seasonal changes to trees and vegetation may also affect how noise is perceived and this does not appear to offer much in the way of actual noise attenuation. Adding additional planting isn't likely to improve existing noise levels.</p> <p>Generally, the most effective method for reducing noise impact when people live near the transport network is to improve the glazing which can be very effective at eliminating road noise but would obviously be the responsibility of the homeowners.</p>	
<p>Petition 398</p> <p>Do not move Woodhouse Close Leisure Centre</p> <p><b>E-Petition</b> Petition received 27.03.21 No. of signatures –</p>	<p>Alison Clark Head of Culture, Sport &amp; Tourism</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to listen to the residents of Woodhouse Close and Bishop Auckland and reverse the decision to build the new leisure centre at Tindale.</p>	<p>E-petition to run from 14 May to 25 June 2021</p>

**Petition Table – Active Petitions**

**Appendix 2**

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
Petition 399 Reinstatement of the DLI Museum  <b>E-Petition</b> Petition received 9.04.21 No. of signatures –	Alison Clark Head of Culture, Sport & Tourism	Petition asking the Council to reinstate the DLI Museum and its artefacts.	E-petition to run from 14 May to 25 June 2021
Petition 400 Community Petition to extend the 30mph zone on the A6076 Howden Bank  <b>E-Petition</b> Petition received 13.05.21 No. of signatures – 81	Dave Wafer Head of Transport and Contract Services	Petition asking the Council to extend the 30mph speed limit at least 300m NE from its current location, to beyond the entrance to Maiden View and Willow Burn Hospice. Additionally, to consider a 40mph limit for the remaining distance of approximately 700m to the 30mph restriction in Maiden Law Village.	Awaiting response.
Petition 401 Compulsory Purchase Order on the Station Pub and 2 Houses on the end at St. Helen Auckland  Petition received 21.05.21 No. of signatures – 150	Geoff Paul Regeneration, Economy and Growth	Petition asking the Council to Compulsory Purchase Order on the Station Pub and 2 Houses on the end at St. Helen Auckland.	Awaiting response.
Petition 402 To demolish or rebuild Ashley House, Thornley Road, Trimdon Station  Petition received 24.05.21 No. of signatures – 50	Geoff Paul Regeneration, Economy and Growth	Petition asking the Council to demolish or rebuild Ashley House, Thornley Road, Trimdon Station.	Awaiting response.

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
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**Corporate Overview and  
Scrutiny Management Board**



18 June 2021

**Notice of Key Decisions**

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**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 June 2021. It also contained information on those key decisions that are currently scheduled to be considered by the Executive up to 31 October 2021.

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<b>Contact:</b>	Ros Layfield	Tel: 03000 269708
	Andy Palmer	Tel: 03000 268551

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **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**

<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)</b>	<b>Description of Decision to be Made</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>	<b>Lead Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Main Consultees &amp; Means of Consultation</b>	<b>Contact details for further information</b>	<b>Scrutiny Involvement</b>
CORP/R/21/02	07-Jul-21	Medium Term Financial Plan (12) 2021-22 to 2024-25		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leader of the Council		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services Tel. 03000 261946	Scrutiny members will have input into the formulation of MTFP 12 through Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meetings
CORP/R/21/02	13-Oct-21	MTFP(12) - Update on development of MTFP(12) including consideration of options for consultation		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leader of the Council		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services Tel. 03000 261946	Scrutiny members will have input into the formulation of MTFP 12 through Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meetings

**SECTION TWO - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)</b>	<b>Description of Decision to be Made</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>	<b>Lead Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Main Consultees &amp; Means of Consultation</b>	<b>Contact details for further information</b>	<b>Scrutiny Involvement</b>
CYPS/04/2021	15 Sep 2021	Proposal to expand Escomb Primary School from 1 September 2023		Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services		Graeme Plews School Places and Admissions Manager Tel: 03000 265777	none

**SECTION THREE - ADULT AND HEALTH SERVICES**

<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)</b>	<b>Description of Decision to be Made</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>	<b>Lead Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Main Consultees &amp; Means of Consultation</b>	<b>Contact details for further information</b>
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**SECTION FOUR - REGENERATION, ECONOMY AND GROWTH**

<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)</b>	<b>Description of Decision to be Made</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>	<b>Lead Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Main Consultees &amp; Means of Consultation</b>	<b>Contact details for further information</b>
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**SECTION FIVE - NEIGHBOURHOODS AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)</b>	<b>Description of Decision to be Made</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>	<b>Lead Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Main Consultees &amp; Means of Consultation</b>	<b>Contact details for further information</b>
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