



Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Thursday 11 November 2021
Time 1.00 pm (Please note later start time)
Venue Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham

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 20 September 2021 (Pages 3 - 20)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties, if any
6. County Durham's Visitor Economy: (Pages 21 - 56)
 - (i) Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth.
 - (ii) Presentation by the Managing Director of Visit County Durham, Regeneration, Economy and Growth
7. Managing Change in County Durham's Towns and Villages: (Pages 57 - 122)
 - (i) Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth.
 - (ii) Presentation by the Head of Development and Housing Services, Regeneration, Economy and Growth.

8. 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
3 November 2021

To: **The Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

Councillor B Moist (Chair)
Councillor A Jackson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors M Abley, A Batey, G Binney, J Cairns, K Earley, L Fenwick, C Hood, C Lines, R Manchester, C Marshall, C Martin, J Miller, R Ormerod, A Reed, I Roberts, M-Idwal Roberts, A Sterling, A Surtees and S Wilson

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris

Contact: Lucy Gladders Tel: 03000 269 712

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Monday 20 September 2021** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Moist (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors A Jackson, A Batey, G Binney, K Earley, L Fenwick (substitute for J Miller), C Hood, R Manchester, C Marshall, C Martin, R Ormerod, A Reed, I Roberts, MI Roberts, A Sterling, A Surtees and S Wilson

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Cairns and J Miller.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor L Fenwick substituted for Councillor J Miller.

3 Minutes

Subject to the inclusion of Councillor G Binney and the substitute Members being added to the record of those present at the meeting, the minutes of the meeting held 21 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

5 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

There were no items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties.

6 Strategic Job Creation Plan

The Chair welcomed the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth, Amy Harhoff who was in attendance to provide the Committee with a presentation on the Strategic Job Creation Plan (for copy see file of minutes).

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth introduced the Operations Director, Sarah Slaven and the Economic Development Manager, Graham Wood who were in attendance to provide information in relation to their areas of work. The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth asked the Committee to note that the item was one of two related items, the Strategic Job Creation Plan linking to the Strategic Employment Sites in County Durham. She reminded Members of the theme in terms of the response to Brexit and the pandemic, as well as in terms of responding to pre-existing issues.

The Committee were asked to note the economic strategy landscape noting the key role of the Local Authority in terms of driving jobs and growth, with the Corporate Director explaining that the Council was not the only actor and that there was a role for central Government, businesses and partners. Members were asked to note the work that underpinned and supported the work of the teams within the Council, including the: Regeneration Statement; Business and Enterprise Framework; Skills Strategy; County Durham Vision; and County Durham Plan. The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted there was the new County Durham Economic Strategy, which would replace the Regeneration Statement, Business and Enterprise Framework and the Skills Strategy to be considered by Cabinet later in the year. Members were reminded that the County Durham economy was the largest in the North East, around £9 billion in productivity per annum, and were asked to note challenges including the gap in productivity when compared to where the County would be if performing at the national average. It was explained there were areas where the Council would work regionally with other Local Authorities and partners, where areas of economic strategy were cross-boundary. The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted the critical importance of Central Government in terms of planning and funds and investment programmes.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth reminded Members of the functions within the Regeneration, Economy and Growth Directorate, including: Transport and Contract Services; Communications and Marketing; Corporate Land and Property; Development and Housing; Culture, Sport and Tourism; and Business Durham.

She stressed that the Directorate was part of the wider Local Authority and worked with other areas such as Children and Young People's Services in order to provide the best opportunities for young people and with Neighbourhoods and Climate Change in respect of the environmental economy. Members were asked to note the work in supporting the private sector to drive growth, create enterprise, innovation and opportunity, through support to social and economic infrastructures.

The Committee were referred to slides setting out the long-term labour market issues, setting out statistics relating to employment, unemployment, economic activity and long-term illness for County Durham and the average for England in 2020. Members noted employment was 71 percent in County Durham, lower than 76 percent for England, and the unemployment rate was six percent for County Durham and five percent for England. It was added that the high rate of economic inactivity, 23 percent, compared to the England average, 21 percent, was linked to long term illness and the potential labour market in the County.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted that the County had a higher proportion of those employed in lower skilled occupations, such as leisure, and added that leisure and hospitality was an area valued in the County's economy in terms of driving growth. She explained that it was important to be able to ensure there were high level jobs and career paths within those areas. It was noted a challenge was the lower proportion of financial, insurance and business sector jobs within the County Durham economy when compared nationally and explained that therefore in terms of strategic sites it was important to be able to attract those types of businesses to the area. The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth explained another challenge was the gap in term of those within the County working in high skilled jobs, with the issue of skills being linked to being able to attract or retain those jobs in the County.

The Economic Development Manager referred Members to issues seen through employment support programmes, adding those jobs listed were frequently cited in the news and were not just an issue for County Durham. He added they were areas of growth and demand, with the Council working to align employment and skills opportunities to be able to direct people into those occupations. He explained that, even pre-pandemic, there were opportunities in respect of logistics, due to the County's road and rail network, and with continued pressure for delivery drivers, fork-lift truck operators. He added that, with an aging population and a health deficit across County Durham, health and social care were also areas with a high demand and noted Members would be aware of the Care Academy proposals that had been put in place to direct more people into that sector. Councillors were asked to note other areas included the education sector and also the ICT professional sector, the latter being an area where there was a gap in terms of the North East compared to the rest of the country. Members were asked to note the shift in 2016 in terms of replacement demand in companies, and while the County had been strong historically in terms of apprenticeships, there were changes in funding that the Council was working through.

The Economic Development Manager noted that elements included not only training to allow people to access the labour market, but also upskilling to allow access to higher level opportunities. He explained that a lot of that work was made possible by European funding and Local Authorities were awaiting information from Government as regards the details of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) to be able to design and implement solutions in the future.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth referred Members to information relating to educational attainment and noted while Primary School performance in the County was either good or outstanding higher level skills were a challenge, noting gaps in A-Level and degree-level qualifications in the County compared to the England level. She reminded Councillors of the strategic role the Council played in driving the economy and explained as regards its duty in creating vibrant and attractive places. She reiterated the work with a number of partnerships, including the County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP), and added that private sector engagement was also a key area, noting that both the Visit County Durham (VCD) and Business Durham Boards having representation from the private sector to help inform and shape activity, helping ensure they were both in touch with the market itself.

The Committee noted the work of the Local Authority in terms of significant job growth since 2009, 10,500 jobs, and were reminded of the strategic investments that had been made to help secure jobs, such as NETPark and Integra 61. The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth explained that logistics and advanced manufacturing accounted for 16 percent of the County Durham economy and noted that the leisure and hospitality industries were also important areas for the County. She noted that the North East was a challenging market to develop, however, the Local Authority was able to support the 'economic infrastructure' through work to create access roads to release sites for development and also in helping to attract Central Government and regional funding, acting as delivery agency for those investments. Members noted examples being the future phases of NETPark, with investment in road infrastructure having been key to unlocking the further phases of investment. The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted the capacity and expertise of the Council in being able to secure funding and in many cases deliver schemes in order to attract businesses. She explained as regards the role of the Council in terms of property investment and development, acting as a lever to allow the private sector to occupy the buildings to create jobs and growth. She added there were business support functions that the Council carried out, in terms of networking and sector support.

The Economic Development Manager noted the reliance on European funding in terms of the breadth of the offer in terms of skills development and explained as the core offer over the last 18 months, with the immediate response to the pandemic and redundancy response being important, in terms of reskilling and reequipping people in order for them to engage with new opportunities in the labour market.

He added as regards the march of digitisation, noting it was not only in terms of manufacturing but also in areas such as retail and hospitality. He noted the work in terms of not only developing basic digital skills, but also more technical applications supporting businesses as they repositioned themselves in terms of how they deliver their services.

The Economic Development Manager explained the Council provided a number of brokerage services in terms of apprenticeships, helping to make sure the complex arrangements for identifying which most appropriate framework could be navigated. He added that the Council would provide both support for a business and the person moving into an apprenticeship. He noted that redundancy support was an area the Council had to maintain and also had fed into the countywide rapid response service that operated with the National Careers Service (NCS) and Job Centre Plus (JCP), with the intention always to support a company and to try and retain as many jobs initially, then looking to match the skills of those at risk of redundancy with labour market opportunities. He explained the role, working alongside Business Durham, in respect of identifying companies that are in a growth position and to match people within programmes with those new opportunities, and to put in place a skills improvement programme if required to help move local people into the jobs that are created.

The Economic Development Manager referred the Committee to slides highlighting the use of European funding and also the timing issues in terms of programmes. He noted the programmes delivered by Regeneration, Economy and Growth and Children and Young People's Services supporting skills development and helping to progress people into employment. He explained a number of the programmes were destined to end in 2023 and reiterated the importance of the UKSPF and the recent Community Renewal Fund in terms of understanding how Government would be approaching the provision of support in that area. He noted there was a number of partners in terms of delivery of programmes, including the four Further Education colleges in the County, independent training providers, as well as nationally procured delivery agencies such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in addition to more specialist providers. The Economic Development Manager noted it was important to note the work undertaken in getting people ready for new labour markets as well as preparing an effective infrastructure post-2023.

Councillors were reminded of the DurhamWorks programme, supported by European funding, which aimed to help 10,000 young people aged 16-24 across the County into employment. The Economic Development Manager noted that the programme was similar to other programme as in it was based around a single point of contact for the client, with an individual action plan being developed to ensure the solution fits the young person, rather than simply putting people through volume programmes. He explained that it appeared to be providing a great deal of benefit, with the ongoing evaluation identifying some extremely positive case studies, both from the individuals point of view and also with very positive feedback from businesses.

The Economic Development Manager noted that while DurhamWorks focussed on young people up to 24, for those over 25 years of age there was a range of programme under 'Employability Durham' that included four core programmes funded by European funding, each with a specific focus, included a geographic focus, adults with health conditions and those with multiple barriers in terms of moving forward into employment. He added that the Council was supporting around 2,200 people through those programmes, with around 500 actively job seeking at any one time, and development work being undertaken with the remainder. He noted that a broad range of people accessed the programmes, with around 330 of the 2,200 having Level 4 qualifications or above, adding that there was a focus on those with long-term health conditions to help get them ready for the labour market. The Economic Development Manager noted that one of the main ways into employment for those people was via employment routeways, and noted a recent example with Amazon, one of the largest inward investments in recent years. He noted that of the initial 1,000 jobs, 342 secured interviews through the employment routeway and with 92 percent attendance on the routeway, with 87 percent being offered jobs. He explained that the Council was able to switch from providing general support to very focussed support for a particular routeway, both to employers and individuals in preparing them for opportunities as they presented themselves. He added the Council continued to support Amazon in terms of recruitment in respect of turnover and season peaks. The Economic Development Manager noted that routeway model was delivered for a wide range of employers alongside enabling sites and providing infrastructure.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted key opportunities and challenges including the large geographical size of the County, being the eight largest Local Authority by area in the country, with a large employment and labour market. She added that the key was in creating the locations and conditions to locate in the County and provide the workforce to sustain businesses and attract new businesses. She concluded by noting the role of multiple agencies and partners working alongside the Council in operating in a complicated landscape, noting the need to succeed for residents and local communities.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and asked Members of the Committee for their comments and questions.

Councillor A Batey noted her involvement with the Committee over the last 8 years and noted, when looking at fundamental issues, that transport was a key issue. She added she felt people in rural areas were being failed, as well as young people, citing a recent issue where 120 pupils had been unable to get to school as rural transport had been removed, with parents unable to get to work as they then had to take their children to school.

She reiterated she felt those in rural areas were not being supported and noted previous work of the Committee in terms of the 'Wheels 2 Work' scheme and noted children with free school bus passes for distance over 2 or 3 miles. She asked what the Council was doing in terms of its responsibilities in respect of education and employment.

Councillor A Surtees noted she agreed with Councillor A Batey in relation to the points raised regarding transport. She noted the recent changes in the labour market and noted that with issues including poverty and welfare reform, noting that the uplift of £20 in respect of Universal Credit had helped to enabled residents to be in a position to get a job, only for issues where transport was removed preventing them being able to get to work, and with the £20 uplift to be removed. She referred to the removal of the Council's Careers Service, 'Connexions' and noted the widening gap in young people's attainment. She noted the need for more work to be done linking schools and businesses and referred to a review undertaken around 5-6 years ago in that regard. She added that in many cases young people did not have an understanding of basic employability skills. In reference to the Skills Strategy, she asked as regards work to encourage the uptake of disabled workers with skills, for example in helping employers with the cost of adaptations.

The Chair noted the issues raised and the requirement for education up to age 18 unless a young person was employed. Councillor A Surtees asked if there was any information from the Officers as regards the review mentioned relating to links between schools and employers.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth acknowledged the issues raised relating to school transport and reiterated the importance of strategic transport, whether that was infrastructure or services to enable labour mobility. She reiterated that the County was a large county, with large rural areas, and while the Local Authority managed a lot of bus subsidies into bus services, there was always a gap in terms of need and the overall funding. She added it was important that, as the Council moved forward and inputted into the National Bus Strategy and funding, the Council was really ambitious and had a good analysis to understand what services were needed. She referred the issue of Connexions to the Economic Development Manager and reiterated that feedback was helpful in terms of developing the evidence base for the Economic Strategy and the associated Skills Strategy so that Officers understood residents and communities so that strategies, policies and investments through those strategies could be effectively targeted.

The Economic Development Manager noted the previous review work that looked at the improving progression agenda, including some of the issues around those not in education, employment and training (NEETs), and many of the points had been brought forward when bidding for European funding, with some wraparound programmes that operated alongside the DurhamWorks programme.

He noted the agenda in terms of helping young people progress was central within the Council's Children and Young People's Service and formed part of the long-term input into the employment and skills element of the Economic Strategy. He added that there had been a great deal of work undertaken with schools over the last couple of years, with schools now having the responsibility in terms of careers work at the local level. He added that the Council worked with both grant-maintained and independent schools and noted it was an area where the partnership working previously mentioned came into play, noting a great deal of time and investment made at the North East level by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) in respect of benchmarking gaps, a process to ensure that careers was lifted to a higher level and that higher level reflected the economy and business base in the area. He added it was not perfect, with more work to be done and reiterated that it had been identified as an area of work to be embedded within the employment and skills side of the emerging Strategy. In relation to disabled access, the Economic Development Manager confirmed there was a specific group within the Council that looked at that area, given the leadership role the Council had due to its disability standards, and the Authority looked at what it could do to ensure that people with disabilities were not disadvantaged in terms of seeking employment, not only with the Council, but also with partner organisations or any businesses that required that level of assistance in overcoming the adaptations to allow disabled residents to access employment opportunities.

Mrs R Morris noted the problems and issues raised were not new and noted that she had raised the issue of skills for several years, and this had been highlighted by the pandemic. She noted she was excited as regards a new Skills Strategy and asked how up-to-date it was, noting a previous strategy from 2018. She emphasised that it would be important for it to encompass the employment opportunities that were being discussed at the moment, asking how it would be reflected in the Skills Strategy and what the likely timescale was in terms of the new Strategy being in place. Mrs R Morris asked as regards how groups, such as business, education, voluntary and public sectors, were working together. So noted the report referred to six adult employability programmes and, with DurhamWorks making seven programmes, and asked whether those programmes were linked, if they were able to talk to each other and had an agreed agenda that they were all working to. She explained that DurhamWorks had promised a review back in Spring 2021 and noted she was not aware of the information relating to that review having been brought back to Members, adding that the figure of 10,000 young people being NEET was worrying. Mrs R Morris noted the general good performance of schools in the County and asked as to who is advising young people, where do they go to for advice.

She quoted a local young person who had expressed his wish to become an engineer to his teacher and had been told 'you are too bright to be one', adding that kind of comment worried her, given the focus on engineering within the County.

Mrs R Morris reiterated that she welcomed the new Skills Strategy being developed, however, given the importance of being able to use technology, she felt a separate IT Strategy was needed, noting it was 'the new literacy', and asked if there was one, and were there examples of local best practice. She concluded by noting that an economic and skills strategy was in effect an education strategy and noted that the way the partnership worked together to deliver the Economic and Skills strategies was as important as what it was actually going to do.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted the current Skills Strategy was ready to be refreshed and that was why it was highlighted within the presentation. She added that a lot within the current strategy was still relevant, operational and did not prevent the Council from looking at new programmes and activities. She highlighted that while the new Skills Strategy would be brought forward in parallel with the new Economic Strategy, it would not be left until the Economic Strategy was completed, and similar for other areas that might require specific work, such as transport as highlighted by Members of the Committee. She highlighted the voice of young people being heard within that Strategy was critical, whether that was working through the Durham Youth Council or with schools across the County to bring forward the stakeholder plan that sat alongside the Strategy.

The Economic Development Manager noted that in terms of partnerships, there were two main routes, one having been set out within the presentation in respect of the CDEP and through its Business, Enterprise and Skills Working Group, looking at the strategic agenda and emerging opportunities and how those were coordinated. He added that in terms of the detailed coordination the Council facilitated a 'Provider Forum' which included all the colleges, the main independent training providers and employment support providers. He added that met on a regular basis to look at programming issues, the flow of clients, emerging job opportunities and making sure that there were no gaps in provision, linking with employers for the benefit of residents. The Economic Development Manager explained that, in terms of the number of programmes in operation, the Council had responded to and had been successful in securing funding from a number of European procurements for different employment support programmes. He noted that when clients were referred or self-referred to the Authority then there would be a triage process and it would be identified which of the programmes was most appropriate. He noted that programmes were delivered through the same teams, with colleagues working alongside each other, with a focus on the needs of the individual and with the Council 'hiding the wiring' in terms of individual contracts, focussing on the outcomes for the clients.

Councillor MI Roberts noted he was new to the Committee and also a newly elected Councillor and apologised if there was an answer to his question within previous papers. He explained he worked within a section of Durham University and asked as regards the number of graduates retained in the County, noting many thousands had left the County after graduation.

He asked as regards what work was undertaken with Durham University in respect of graduate retention and noted that while many that attended were originally from elsewhere in the country, or indeed the world, many were from the County, region, and neighbouring areas such as North Yorkshire.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted there were two challenges in terms of graduate retention in the County, one being the gap in terms of university level education within the County and that the County 'exported' a large number of its students to other Russell Group universities outside of the County with many not returning to the County. She added that was in addition to the point raised in terms of retaining graduates from the Durham University, a world class institution, within the County. She noted the Council worked very closely with Durham University and explained there was a Memorandum of Understanding with the University in terms of a number of issues, including development and graduate retention. She added that she felt it was a key area to do better in and noted that graduates would stay if there were the jobs to go to, and similarly employers would come if there was the skilled workforce to attract those jobs. She noted it was an iterative process and it was key that the strategies, and the way the Council worked, homed in a little more in that respect. She noted developments, such as NETPark and the Aykley Heads site, would be key in terms of creating some of the higher end, high-tech jobs to help retain graduates. She explained that the County had the offer in terms of place, it was therefore having the offer of employment to go alongside that. Councillor MI Roberts asked if there was a specific strategy in terms of graduate retention, noting there was a huge opportunity in terms of attracting and retaining graduates in the County. The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth explained there was a series of strategic and tactical actions, however, no specific document entitled 'Graduate Retention Strategy'. She noted it may not be a strategy that sat on its own, however, it would be an integral part of the Economic Strategy.

Councillor A Sterling noted there was some frustration with Members looking for practical solutions to the issues raised, rather than additional talking. She highlighted the issues of transport, noting an example within her Electoral Division in terms of school transport, noting issues in terms of a school transport provision operated by a company outside of the County being withdrawn and there being no 'Plan B' in place. She explained she agreed with the comments made as regards university, in terms of encouraging young people to go and study, as well as being able to retain them within the County after graduation. She noted, in respect of careers advice, she was a tenant within a Business Durham property, and asked how the Council could be more practical in terms of reaching out to businesses locally utilising existing e-mail links. She noted a small jobs fair that had been held in conjunction with Derwentside College and asked if similar activities could take place in terms of careers information. She noted that schools and teachers were very busy and asked if it would be possible to offer them an easy solution in order to deliver such careers advice.

Councillor C Marshall noted he felt the next presentation would explain as regards a key part of the Council's plan in terms of retaining talent within the County, that being the development of key economic sites in order to fulfil the ambition of more and better jobs. He added there was the impact of national policies on Local Authorities and emphasised that Government needed the right strategies and large enough financial envelope to be able to deliver in terms of infrastructure, transport, skills development and education. He noted the clear need to create an environment in County Durham where businesses would want to invest and create jobs, and the key role the Council would have in that, however, he emphasised that one could not underestimate the impact on schools funding, skills funding, welfare reform and the upcoming UKSPF and Community Renewal Fund. He added one could not underestimate the disadvantage the County had following 10 years of austerity making the challenge even greater. Councillor C Marshall explained that he believed that the County was in an excellent position to create an ecosystem where businesses would want to invest, however, it would be more difficult if the County did not get the support and if all would not come together, politics aside, in order to ensure all was being done across the political spectrum to influence Government nationally so that the decisions they took had a positive impact for County Durham and not a detrimental impact otherwise Members would be having the same conversation in another 15 years.

The Chair noted he felt that Members had indicated that they wanted more accountability, more action and less talking.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted.

7 Strategic Employment Sites in County Durham

The Chair asked the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth, to present the update in respect of Strategic Employment Sites in County Durham (for copy see file of minutes).

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted the previous presentation referred to the strategies and activities relating to job creation and the next presentation would give details of some of the key employment sites, though not listing all of the employment sites across the County.

She explained that there were other areas that were also important, such as the 12 main town centres across the County including sectors such as hospitality, leisure and tourism. She reiterated the need to create higher level jobs and, focussing on logistics and advanced manufacturing both areas of competitive advantage for County Durham, the strategic location of the County being on the A1(M), A19 and the East Coast Mainline.

She noted that it was important, whilst acknowledging there were a number of employment sites across the County that the CDP included beyond those set out in the report and presentation, that the strategic sites set out clearly in one space significant numbers of jobs. She noted key corridors included the A1(M), Durham City and the A19, and the opportunities were linked to those key transport links.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted that Forrest Park was located on the A1(M) corridor, with a 55 hectare site with the potential to create over 3,000 jobs. She added a number of the businesses already located on the site were large employers and it was important to be able to attract such companies that could employ a significant workforce in jobs on higher than average wages. She added that additional locational benefits above the transport links included being adjacent to Aycliffe Business Park, being close to Tees Port, and having the potential for a rail freight interchange in the long term. She noted it was a good example of sector relationships and good transport links that were key in unlocking strategic employment sites, adding there were challenges for such sites within the North East, with Local Authorities having to support such sites with elements such as enabling infrastructure.

The Committee were reminded of the NETPark development, a specialist employment site at Sedgefield that was moving on to its next phase of development. The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth explained that the site was developed in conjunction with Durham University and was a good example of leveraging the research capability and working with a number of private sector employers. She noted there were currently 40 occupiers at NETPark, and it was expected that would grow as the site expanded into its further phases of development. It was added that the site was at over 90 percent occupancy which had grown during the pandemic due to the high value growth businesses on the site and the work of the Council in providing infrastructure and transport investment and helping to develop the site such to allow the space for businesses to grow. Members noted the good transport links to the A1(M) and A19 and the clear specialist nature of the site, such as the Satellite Applications Catapult and other high-tech businesses that contributed both to the county, region and nationally. The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted that there were over 600 employees across the site, with growth in the next phase to support an additional 1,250 jobs.

In reference to Integra 61 at Bowburn, Members were asked to note the development was a private sector development which had been supported by the Local Authority in terms of enabling works in terms of infrastructure and support in terms of a skills provider to ensure local people were able to access the jobs being created. It was noted there was significant opportunity to grow the site and the location on the A1(M) and provision of specialist logistic services was important, as well as potential for links with manufacturing.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted the Aykley Heads strategic site represented a significant opportunity within Durham City, with the potential for up to 4,000 jobs across a 56 hectare site. She noted that one important element, as was the case at NETPark, was the quality of the development including the green spaces and environment for the workforce. She explained that it was critical in terms of the types of tenants the Council wished to attract and the types of jobs that would be available as a result. Members noted existing business and activity on the site included: Atom Bank; Watersons; Honcho; Tait Walker; the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC); Business Durham; Durham Constabulary; and the Durham City Incubator. She reminded Members the planning application had been supported around one year ago and stressed that the opportunity was not just for Durham City, but also for the wider County. It was noted there were similar themes in terms of links with Durham University and the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth added there was positive dialogue with the University in terms of their role in supporting the development, enabling research and creating jobs and roles for future graduates.

The Committee was asked to note the site of Jade Business Park at Murton, and the Operations Director explained the Council had redeveloped the former Hawthorn Colliery and Coke Works site and the site was designated as an 'Enterprise Zone' which provided benefits in terms of further development of the site and to the tenants of the site. She added it was one of the first more speculative developments undertaken in the North East in recent times and explained the Council had worked with a private sector developer to build the site, with the first phase of seven units having been completed in the summer of 2020 with all but one of the units having been let to tenants. Members noted a good range of businesses with interesting, high value-adding jobs including: a supplier to the automotive sector; a modular housing solutions company; a low-cost solar film manufacturer; and a company manufacturing bespoke architectural glass. The Operations Director noted within the first year there had been 140 jobs created on the site and there was a significant area of additional land available at the site which the Council were looking to take forward.

It was explained that the overall completed site had the potential to generate around 2,500 jobs and the Operations Director added the site was a good example of how work within the Regeneration, Economy and Growth Service was integrated in terms of initial planning application work, work in obtaining Enterprise Zone status and enabling infrastructure work followed by the work of Business Durham in terms of working with the developer and market the site as it was being built and then manage the units and attract businesses. She explained that the businesses on site had also taken advantage of the other packages of support, examples being Corehaus and Power Roll accessing funding from the County Durham Growth Fund to fit out their units and Power Roll having investment through the Finance Durham Fund that meant they were able to locate all of their facility at Jade Business Park.

The Operations Director noted Business Durham had worked closely with the Council's Employability Team in terms of connecting those businesses which were looking to take on additional employees with the Team. She added that Corehaus had noted they were very keen to work with local schools in terms of highlighting to young people the opportunities in modern construction and had been involved with the Gatsby Programme and the NELEP in respect of videos to be used in schools as regards construction industry opportunities.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted over 10,000 jobs across those five strategic sites and the Local Authority's role in enabling the development, whether they were sites the Council developed directly or provided infrastructure to allow private sector development. She added it was important to have the tools to enable development, such as financial assistance, bidding for Central Government or NELEP funding, or taking development forward as a Local Authority to kickstart a market. The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted the excellent businesses already within the County and reiterated the importance of the Council's 'joined up role' in offering the levers to help unlock the private sector so they could flourish in County Durham.

The Chair thanked the Officers and asked as regards a primary contact in terms of the key strategic sites, whether there were plans to develop more strategic sites, for example within the north of the County, and who was responsible in terms of performance of the sites.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted her Directorate was the contact, albeit the scale was such it was more than one individual as contact. She added that the Strategy Team had oversight in terms of the strategic sites and their performance and in terms of individual sites it varied, as described by the Operations Director, with some being Council led with Business Durham and some being private sector led, with the Council being able to quickly navigate any contact as required. In respect of future sites, the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted the CDP, adopted in Oct 2020, set out the overall employment land supply over the next 15 years and while many of those sites were not included as 'strategic sites' they were important. She added it would be important in terms of articulating the opportunities in terms of the strategic site and also the 12 main town centres and noted that, while it would be fantastic to have a strategic site within a walkable distance, it was not always practical and therefore it was important that the Council worked to ensure the opportunities that were created were accessible to people via appropriate transport modes and having the requisite skills.

Councillor C Marshall thanked the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and all of the staff within the Teams supporting the work in relation to job creation and the strategic sites. He noted that bringing forward development on the scale that was happening in County Durham was the envy of the North East and did not just happen overnight.

He noted that such developments would start off as a plan, but would rely upon Planning, Assets and also on being able to have a plan that the private sector could buy into.

Councillor S Wilson left the meeting at 10.52am

Councillor C Marshall noted the partnership working in bringing sites forward, adding it could be useful if Members of the Committee were able to visit the strategic sites and speak to the businesses and asked how the Council was able to sell the sites and County to business. He also noted a report would be considered by Cabinet in respect of the new Headquarters for the Council and asked for clarification in terms of the 4,000 jobs for Phases 1 and 2 of the Aykley Heads site and whether they were dependant on the Council Headquarters moving from its current site.

The Chair noted a tour of the strategic sites for Members was an area being looked into by the Service.

The Operations Director noted the Council worked with a number of partners in terms of inward investment, including Invest North East England, which represented all the Local Authorities in the region and responded to inward investment enquiries where companies were looking for a location in the North East. She added that in terms of strategic sites, businesses were looking for what was available in terms of the site and the premises, i.e., was there a suitably sized site available and how quickly could a business move into a premise. She noted that the Council would also provide support in respect of those areas already mentioned, such as skills development, workforce recruitment, the environment, housing, however, the first and foremost question was 'is there a suitable site available'. The Operations Director noted the Council was in the process of updating its inward investment propositions in having information available for inward investors around the key sectors in the County, what skills they would find in the County, the University, and also support and funding packages that were available. She noted over the last 18 months there had been a great deal of change, given the pandemic, and the update in relation to propositions would have a focus on those areas of strength in the County such as existing businesses, infrastructure and supply chains.

The Operations Director noted that in addition to bringing in inward investment, it was important to continue to support existing County Durham businesses to grow and expand, adding that the Business Durham had a team looking at business engagement and account management and they spoke to businesses daily to find out what they needed to grow and expand. She added there was a very loyal County Durham business community and there was a strong feeling that County Durham was business friendly, and that the Council was also business friendly.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted there would be a future report at Cabinet in terms of the issue of the Council Headquarters and therefore she would not be able to speak as regards that specifically, however, she would add that the Aykley Heads site remained a critical and strategic site, with the job numbers being based on robust forecasts and it would continue to remain a priority to maintain a comprehensive masterplan for Aykley Heads and to target and strive for those job numbers as forecast.

Councillor C Martin noted the reports represented a 'good news story' in terms of the investment and jobs and asked if there was any 'bad news story' in terms of losing a major employer and whether any lessons had been learned.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth noted that it was important when looking to create opportunities in one area, potential impacts on other areas, such as in terms of logistics and manufacturing, were considered. She added that a number of the key sites were former sites that had been in decline and that had been renewed through development and were very different from sites in the past. The Operations Director noted she did not know of any cases where an employer had gone, however, she noted it was important to understand that companies would not look at the County and the Council's border, rather they would look at the North East as a whole, including the Tees Valley, and therefore it was important to be able to offer what businesses were looking for. She gave the example of Aycliffe Business Park, where there was little room for expansion and therefore the Forrest Park site adjacent was able to help as there had been many enquiries as regards additional space with many noting they would have looked to relocate to Darlington if space had not been available.

Councillor K Early asked as regards there was now a trend towards speculative developments, or whether Jade Business Park was an exception, linking to it being an Enterprise Zone.

The Operations Director noted it had always been an issue in the North East in terms of speculative units, based on the gap between the cost to the private sector in developing such units and the rental income from such units. She added therefore if such units were to be built there needed to be some confidence that the units would be able to be rented out.

She noted this had been an issue in the past in the North East and noted that Jade had been built without any pre-lets, however, the Council was confident, given the location on the A19 together with being an Enterprise Zone that businesses would be attracted to the site. She explained that it was encouraging that more private sector developers were thinking that they might be able to make speculative development work. The Operations Director noted the lead-in time involved in bespoke development and that many businesses would prefer to move in quickly and fit out as required.

The Chair noted the forecast of jobs and wondered whether those forecasts had taken into account a post-COVID reduction in office jobs and noted only 10,500 jobs had been added in the last 12 years, adding with levels being 25 percent below the England average there was still a lot of work to be done.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted.

8 Quarter Four 2020/21 - Revenue Capital Outturn and Quarter One 2021/22 - Revenue and Capital Outturn

The Chair introduced the Principal Accountant, David Watchman who was in attendance to speak to Members in relation to the Quarter Four 2020/21 Revenue Capital Outturn and Quarter One Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/22 (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor A Reed left the meeting at 11.06am

The Principal Accountant referred Members to the information relating to Quarter Four 2020/21 with the service reporting an underspend of approximately £1.266 million, against a revised budget of £44.439 million, with a carry forward of £1.429 million. He noted COVID-19 costs of £8.177 million excluded from the outturn position, those costs covered by Government COVID grant. He noted the capital spend of £62.793 million and that a request had been made to the Member Officer Working Group to carry forward the £6.418 million underspend to the current year to augment the 2021/22 Capital Programme. He added the report broke down the figures by Heads of Service and the report also set out the variances and included more detail of the Capital Programme at Appendix 3.

The Principal Accountant referred Members to the information relating to Quarter One 2021/22 with the service reporting a forecast underspend of approximately £618,000, against a revised budget of £49.505 million, with COVID-19 costs of £8.035 million excluded from the forecast outturn position, those costs covered by Government COVID grant. He noted the capital spend to 30 June 2021 of £13,448 million, from a revised service capital budget of £90.384 million. He added the report broke down the figures by Heads of Service and the report also set out the variances and included more detail of the Capital Programme at Appendix 3.

Resolved:

That the reports be noted.

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Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee



11 November 2021

County Durham's Visitor Economy

Report of Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report and presentation provides members with detail of tourism and the visitor economy in County Durham.

Executive Summary

- 2 The visitor economy is a major economic driver for County Durham, generating £955mn of expenditure from 20.13mn visitors annually, supporting 12,133 jobs (STEAM 2019).
- 3 Covid-19 has had a devastating effect on the tourism and hospitality sector and since March 2020 Visit County Durham's work has focused on supporting the County's visitor economy businesses through the pandemic, and now towards recovery.
- 4 To better understand the support requirements of the sector we have issued seven Covid-19 tourism business impact surveys and gathered anecdotal feedback through 1-2-1 telephone calls and emails with businesses. The results from the surveys have been shared with teams within DCC, local and regional organisations and nationally with government to shape the response and support needed for the sector.
- 5 The visitor economy remains a growth industry in the County and has continued to build steadily over the past decade. Despite the current challenges facing the sector there is huge potential for further growth: over the next 5-10 years (by 2030) we forecast an increase in tourism jobs in County Durham - driven by the development of new and existing product, attracting more visitors resulting in increased expenditure.
- 6 We estimate the potential development pipeline to be in excess of £400mn, and the challenge in the coming months and years will be for

us to realise this potential for the benefit of economy and residents of the County.

- 7 Significant opportunities may also be realised from current government or DCC investment programmes: Levelling up, Stronger Towns, Community Renewal Fund, Reopening the High Street and Welcome back. Enquiries from hotel developers have increased significantly in 2021 and there are currently a number of live tourism-related planning applications.
- 8 There are further signs of more immediate recovery; anecdotal evidence suggests that accommodation providers are at capacity and recruiting additional staff to deal with demand; visitor attractions are reporting visitor numbers higher than pre-covid levels of 2019. The boom in staycations is having a positive impact on the county's businesses.
- 9 Taking the current evidence and short- and medium-term opportunities into account the outlook is positive. However, it requires a strategic approach to marketing and development to maximise recovery and growth.

Recommendations

- 10 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided in the report and during the presentation.

Background

- 11 Members will recall that at the meeting of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 July 2021 members discussed and agreed the draft work programme of the committee. Included in the work programme and identified as a priority to come to formal committee was detail in relation to strategy and plans for tourism post COVID, the performance of the visitor economy and activity undertaken by Visit County Durham (VCD) to develop and promote the county's tourism offer.
- 12 Arrangements have been made for relevant officers from the Regeneration, Economy and Growth Directorate to attend committee and provide members with the information they have requested.

Visit County Durham overview

- 13 Visit County Durham is the destination management organisation (DMO) for County Durham working on behalf of businesses and public agencies, we came into being on 1 April 2006. Working closely with

VisitEngland, VisitBritain, the DCMS and a wide range of public and private sector partners and tourism businesses both in Durham and across England, our primary aim is to grow the county's visitor economy.

- 14 Our operating model is that of a destination management organisation within the framework of a local authority; we deliver Durham County Council's destination management, destination marketing and place marketing functions. This is a public/private model that was used as a best practice case study in a practical destination management handbook for the World Bank.
- 15 Visit County Durham Ltd is a private, not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with a public/private board of 12 directors. Durham County Council has a right of two places on the board, these are filled by the Director for Regeneration, Economy and Growth, and the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships. The VCD Ltd board meets four times a year and provides strategic oversight and private sector insight of the work of the VCD team.
- 16 The Visit County Durham team are part of the Culture, Sport and Tourism Service of Durham County Council within Regeneration, Economy and Growth; the directorate responsible for the development and delivery of the economic strategy for the county, associated policy, community, business services and infrastructure to unlock inclusive economic growth.
- 17 The team comprises 14 staff, with a core budget of £705,000 per annum, which includes an income contribution of £38,879. Income is generated, to supplement the budget, through visitor economy businesses via a paid for, non-exclusive membership scheme. The private sector contributes financially to work of VCD in return for benefits and activities which meet their needs and support their business, and partner marketing activity to raise the profile of the destination and its offer for visitors.
- 18 Our purpose is to provide strategic added value, coordination and leadership to tourism activity and the visitor economy in the county for public agencies, the private sector, and tourism businesses.
- 19 Our main activity is destination management. This means influencing or delivering directly, activities that relate to visitors and the visitor economy, including marketing, information services, product development, visitor experience, business engagement and workforce development.
- 20 Many people are involved in delivering a vibrant visitor economy, which is why we work in partnership with various teams in the Council,

businesses, stakeholders, and partners from across the county, and in the region. We partner nationally and internationally with England and Britain's tourism board(s) VisitEngland and VisitBritain. We take a different role in each of our areas of activity depending on need and existing arrangements.

- 21 Our objective is to ensure that the tourism sector performs to its maximum capacity and brings economic benefits to the county and its residents in the form of wealth and job creation. Our broad aims are to attract people to the area and to provide visitors with the best possible experience when they are here.

Strategy

- 22 The County Durham Vision for 2035 is that County Durham is a place where there are more and better jobs, people live long, and independent lives and our communities are well connected and supportive.

- 23 Tourism and the visitor economy are recognised in the document as an important sector for local growth, jobs, and prosperity; the sector is featured as a key strategic ambition under the 'More and better jobs' strand:

24 ***More and better jobs***

We will build on our successful tourist economy through culture-led regeneration to broaden the leisure experience for residents and visitors to the county. Our visitor experience will compete with the best offered by other comparable destinations.

- 25 The Durham Tourism Management Plan (DTMaP) is the destination's plan which converts local, regional, and national market research and strategies into a county-based plan to grow the county's visitor economy. The plan is for all organisations and individuals in Durham, and, where relevant, national bodies to help them understand what is being done, what needs to be done and how they can contribute to Durham's success.

- 26 Durham has had a Tourism Management Plan (DTMP) since 2006. It was compiled by Visit County Durham in collaboration with the county's tourism industry and a range of partners, including various teams in Durham County Council.

- 27 The Durham Tourism Management Plan is developed and monitored by the board of Visit County Durham Ltd, and endorsed and adopted by the Cabinet of Durham County Council as the plan for developing the county's visitor economy.

- 28 To support delivery of the plan by the County Council, a Tourism Internal Working Group was established with representation from across the Council to support the co-ordination of activity to ensure a primary focus on the delivery of key actions and priorities outlined in the DTMP.
- 29 The DTMP sets out a vision for Durham as a visitor destination, the vision is underpinned by three objectives and identifies eight priorities relevant to future success.
- 30 The vision for Durham as a visitor destination:
- Durham will offer a visitor experience that matches its outstanding natural landscapes and internationally famous built heritage. The visitor economy will support long term social, economic, and environmental sustainability right across the county and be recognised by the county's residents as important to the quality of their lives.*
- 31 The next iteration of the DTMP will span the period from 2022 to 2026. Work is currently underway to update and refresh the plan.
- 32 In February 2021 consultants Blue Sail were appointed to develop a 2-year Accelerator Strategy to identify a number of short-term priorities to boost tourism in the wake of COVID-19 and to put in place approaches that support the growth, resilience, and stability of the sector.
- 33 The Accelerator Strategy is intended to sit alongside the Durham Tourism Management Plan which provides the over-arching vision for tourism development across the county but can also be used as a stand-alone strategy.
- 34 The approach taken in developing the strategy was to align recommendations with the strategic priorities and plans of Durham County Council and the wider North East, to draw on insight and lessons of good practice, to be market focused and, to identify quick wins as well as plans that can be put in place for the medium term.
- 35 A food tourism strategy is also in development and will be complete in the same time frame as the accelerator strategy and management plan.

Performance

- 36 Visit County Durham uses evidence to guide its work. This supports our USP as the main source of knowledge, expertise and experience about the county's visitor economy and visitor economy development. It also helps us to take an objective rather than emotional view of what will and won't work to grow the volume and value of the visitor economy.

- 37 Market intelligence is essential to accurately inform and shape the work of Visit County Durham and our partners, we gather and analyse current and relevant intelligence and information to help the county's tourism sector to prosper and grow.
- 38 One of the main pieces of research undertaken is the annual economic impact assessment STEAM, which approaches the measurement of tourism from the bottom up, through its use of local supply side data and tourism performance and visitor survey data collection.
- 39 The indexed STEAM results from 2015 to 2020 show steady year on year growth for the visitor economy, except for 2020 where the sector retracted and was badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Expenditure (£ m)	885.21	904.63	948.65	962.19	980.72	506.75
Visitor numbers (m)	18.67	19.25	19.71	19.71	20.13	11.39
Employment (FTEs)	10,966	11,158	11,682	11,998	12,133	6,794

- 40 Based on economic forecasts set out in governments UK Tourism Recovery Plan, the visitor economy is predicted to return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2023 but will need significant support at national, regional, and local levels to do so.

Challenges and opportunities

- 41 The ratio of overnight visitors to day visitors has remained almost static for the past 10 years. Day visitors account for 92% of all visits to the county with overnight visitors at 8%.
- 42 Despite marketing efforts targeted to attract audiences external to the county, several factors influence the high proportion of day visitors compared to overnight, including:
- lack of visitor accommodation in key tourism areas
 - lack of visitor product, particularly targeted at the family market
 - strong neighbouring destination brands (Yorkshire, Cumbria, Scotland)
- 43 Developments are underway which will help plug some of the gaps and improve the visitor offer, these include hotel, retail, and leisure developments in Durham City. Developments in Bishop Auckland.

Accommodation developments from small scale shepherd huts to 5-star destination hotel accommodation and everything in between. We estimate the potential development pipeline to be in excess of £400 million.

- 44 The growing programme of festivals and events is helping to build our reputation. The initial county bid for City of Culture 2025 made the longlist of eight destinations invited to work up a fuller bid for the next round and we believe this could be an excellent catalyst for developing Durham's cultural offer and raising awareness of the county as a cultural destination.

Destination development

- 45 Visit County Durham offers support, advice, and guidance for potential investors in the county's tourism product and submits formal responses to tourism planning applications. The last year saw a record number of enquiries, ranging from glamping pods to visitor attractions. Tailored support is provided for major capital developments.
- 46 Significant opportunities may also be realised from current government or DCC investment programmes including Levelling up, Stronger Towns, Towns Fund, Community Renewal Fund, Reopening the High Street and Welcome back, the visitor economy is a component in many of the programmes.
- 47 The VCD team supports and works with various departments across the Council including Regeneration, Planning, Environment and Culture on major programmes and development projects.
- 48 In early 2018 VCD and the Regeneration team commissioned a county-wide accommodation study focussing on the potential for hotel developments in Durham City, Bishop Auckland, and Seaham. Sector specific studies were produced for glamping, bed and breakfast, and pub accommodation.
- 49 The regional Northern Saints Group, led by Visit County Durham, created linked long-distance trails based on the heritage of the Northern saints and the tradition of pilgrimage. The Northern Saints Trails, based on ancient pilgrim routes, position the North East as the 'Christian Crossroads of the British Isles', and bring the fascinating stories of the region's Saints to life, set against a backdrop of the very best of the region's attractions, landscapes, places to eat.
- 50 The trails were soft launched in the summer of 2020 with the official launch and opening of the routes taking place in September 2021. Current developments on the routes are improved waymarking, access and interpretation.

- 51 Discussions are taking place with the Durham Heritage Coast team about a coastal Northern Saints Trail. In addition, we have had exploratory conversations with Cumbria, Yorkshire, Ripon, Whitby, and York about linking these destinations to the Northern Saints project.
- 52 In July 2021 Durham County Council and A Coruña Provincial Council in northwest Spain signed a region-to-region tourism collaboration agreement. The protocol was signed by Amy Harhoff, corporate director regeneration, economy and growth, and Antonio Leira, Councillor for economic affairs.
- 53 The agreement was endorsed at a hybrid meeting on 16th August, with representatives from DCC, VCD and A Coruña Provincial Council. The new alliance includes the sharing of best practice in tourism marketing, the promotion and enhancement of the English Way / Camino Ingles and other pilgrimage routes including the Northern Saints Trails and to share strategies and best practices that result in an increase in the economic impact of tourist activity in the province of A Coruña and in County Durham.
- 54 A suite of toolkits has been produced to highlight wider market opportunities for those operating within the visitor economy. The aim is to provide hints and tips to businesses who are interested in developing new products to attract new markets – astro-tourism, walking, cycling, accessibility, visitor welcome, equestrian and dog friendly.

Partnership support and industry engagement

- 55 Visit County Durham adopts a partnership approach to all its work. Since its inception in 2006 Visit County Durham has established or joined coalitions of organisations and individuals from the private and public sectors who agree to work together for a common aim or a set of compatible aims, and who share resources and responsibilities and agree to work in a co-operative and mutually supportive fashion.
- 56 There are c850 core tourism businesses in the county – accommodation, attractions, and activities, and an additional 500 plus businesses that contribute and are integral to the visitor economy, these include transport, cafes, restaurants, retail, and suppliers of services to the tourism industry.
- 57 The VCD partnership scheme offers a package of enhanced promotional and tailored business support activities in exchange for an annual fee. The scheme is designed to encourage collaborative working for the benefit of the destination and does not exclude those who cannot afford to or do not want to pay. We continue to work with

all visitor economy businesses and reinvest income generated through the scheme into initiatives that benefit the industry.

- 58 We engage with and support partners via several channels. Our weekly e-newsletter the Wednesday Grapevine is sent to over 1,200 contacts. Tailored training events are held throughout the year, sessions have included accessing overseas trade, astro-tourism, weddings, social media, YouTube, and informal drop-in days. We have an annual programme of industry events which includes informal networking and a spring and autumn conference.
- 59 In addition to our general partnership scheme, we offer a Strategic Partnership service for key businesses to shape and influence destination development and marketing activity for Durham. We work together in partnership to develop and deliver domestic and overseas marketing activities, monthly and annual themed campaigns.
- 60 Strategic Partnership is targeted at organisations that have an influential position within Durham's visitor economy, they are integral to the success of Durham, share VCD's ambitions and have significant capacity to help boost the area's profile and drive forward its future growth and success. 23 organisations are currently signed up as Strategic Partners.
- 61 Visit County Durham continues to work in partnership with travel organisations who represent key points of entry into the county, including the Port of Tyne; Newcastle, and Durham Tees Valley Airports, LNER and Trans Pennine Express, to identify opportunities to promote Durham through their activities, and to ensure VCD and partners are aware of travel partner initiatives that would benefit our own work.

Marketing

- 62 VCD takes an integrated marketing approach that provides seamless communication with the consumer from the earliest planning stage, to when they visit the county and that continues when they return home
- 63 Our focus is on pre-arrival marketing to independent travellers at the point where we can influence and inspire their destination choice.
- 64 We achieve greater marketing reach through partnership working in the domestic market with the county's tourism industry, regional and commercial partners, and Visit England. And take a realistic approach to international marketing working with VisitEngland, VisitBritain and consortia to deliver activity to a small number of territories. Online marketing

- 65 thisisdurham.com and its channel sites is our main on-line fulfilment tool. It is viewed by more than 1million unique visitors (individuals) a year and offers inspiration and information to potential visitors.
- 66 The main areas of work are development to ensure the site is current and functional, optimisation and paid search to ensure traffic volume increases by ensuring the site is visible in search engine results, content management to regularly refresh the destination offer, and the development of campaign channel sites to support tactical marketing work.
- 67 We create and distribute destination content for third parties to use in their marketing work including national marketing bodies (VisitEngland), intermediaries (travel trade), events with visitor appeal (Lumiere) and points of entry (airports).
- 68 e-direct marketing is designed to create and maintain direct relationships with existing and potential visitors and involves managing large consumer databases and sending tailored and targeted communications to individuals.
- 69 Social media marketing is undertaken currently through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and to some extent Pinterest.
- 70 We undertake marketing for major county events because they are all conceived and delivered as destination events that will attract visitors. This allows us to ensure the destination is profiled through event promotion. Wherever possible we use the place brand in destination events that other people produce and deliver.
- 71 Tactical marketing campaigns enables us to deliver tangible benefits to tourism businesses, provides ways for tourism businesses to utilise our promotional platforms and ultimately helps Durham to compete with others on a national level.
- 72 We work in partnership to promote the destination to the international market via the Heritage Cities consortium, trade buyers with Strategic Partners and the domestic group travel market with Discover Durham.
- 73 Our press and public relations function are focused on supporting the destination and businesses, gathering content from destination partners and generating coverage in out-of-region regional media e.g. Manchester Evening News, The Times.
- 74 Current campaigns include Escape the Everyday – a day visit and staycation campaign. We secured £80K from VisitEngland’s DMO Recovery Fund to support the industry and drive visitors to the county over the summer and autumn of 2021.

- 75 Escape the Everyday is a digitally led campaign with paid media, sponsored online content and social media influencer commissions. To date we have achieved a reach of 4.5 million people.
- 76 VCD generated or supported over £400k worth of media coverage this year to date with initiatives such as National Walking Month – May 2021: which generated over £50k worth of coverage, and 60 feature inclusions.
- 77 We host media, press and influencer visits throughout the year and have recently supported and welcomed Britain Magazine, Wanderlust Chloe, Daily Mail, Mini Travellers and The Times.
- 78 We are running a dedicated campaign to maximise the ability of Lumiere to attract out of county visitors, encourage longer stays and short breaks. The campaign is supporting the new county-wide artworks through itineraries to increase dwell time and spend with enhanced stay longer content on Lumiere channels and a joint media visit and Instameet.
- 79 For the official opening of the Northern Saints Trails we organised a media call on 16th September achieving 20 pieces of regional and national coverage with a value over £70k and a 3.4m reach. We commissioned a September feature in the Guardian which was syndicated across Yahoo and MSN with a value of £87k value and 10.3m reach. And an online feature on the Group Leisure & Travel magazine website.
- 80 Activity planned for the next 6 months includes a new national destination marketing campaign with a dedicated web portal, video content, digital ads and paid for media. Ongoing recovery marketing to support the sector and building on the profile we have achieved over the last 12 months.
- 81 Campaigns to date have focussed on encouraging people to reconnect with the county, the new campaign will target those that may not have considered Durham as being for them. The campaign will run November to Spring 2022 with paid media from early 2022 to support shoulder season.
- 82 It will be important for us to maximise the opportunities presented through the County's bid for UK City of Culture 2025 as a catalyst for developing Durham's cultural offer and raising awareness of the county as a cultural destination.

Conclusion

83 Overview and Scrutiny committee members will be aware of the performance of the visitor economy and work undertaken by VCD in partnership to develop and market the county as a tourism destination to support the creation of more and better jobs in the county.

Background papers:

- [County Durham Plan](#)
- [County Durham Vision](#)
- [Durham Tourism Management Plan 2016-2020](#)

Contact:

Michelle Gorman Michelle.gorman@visitcountydurham.org

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

None.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Climate Change

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

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County Durham's Visitor Economy

Michelle Gorman
Managing Director



Supported by

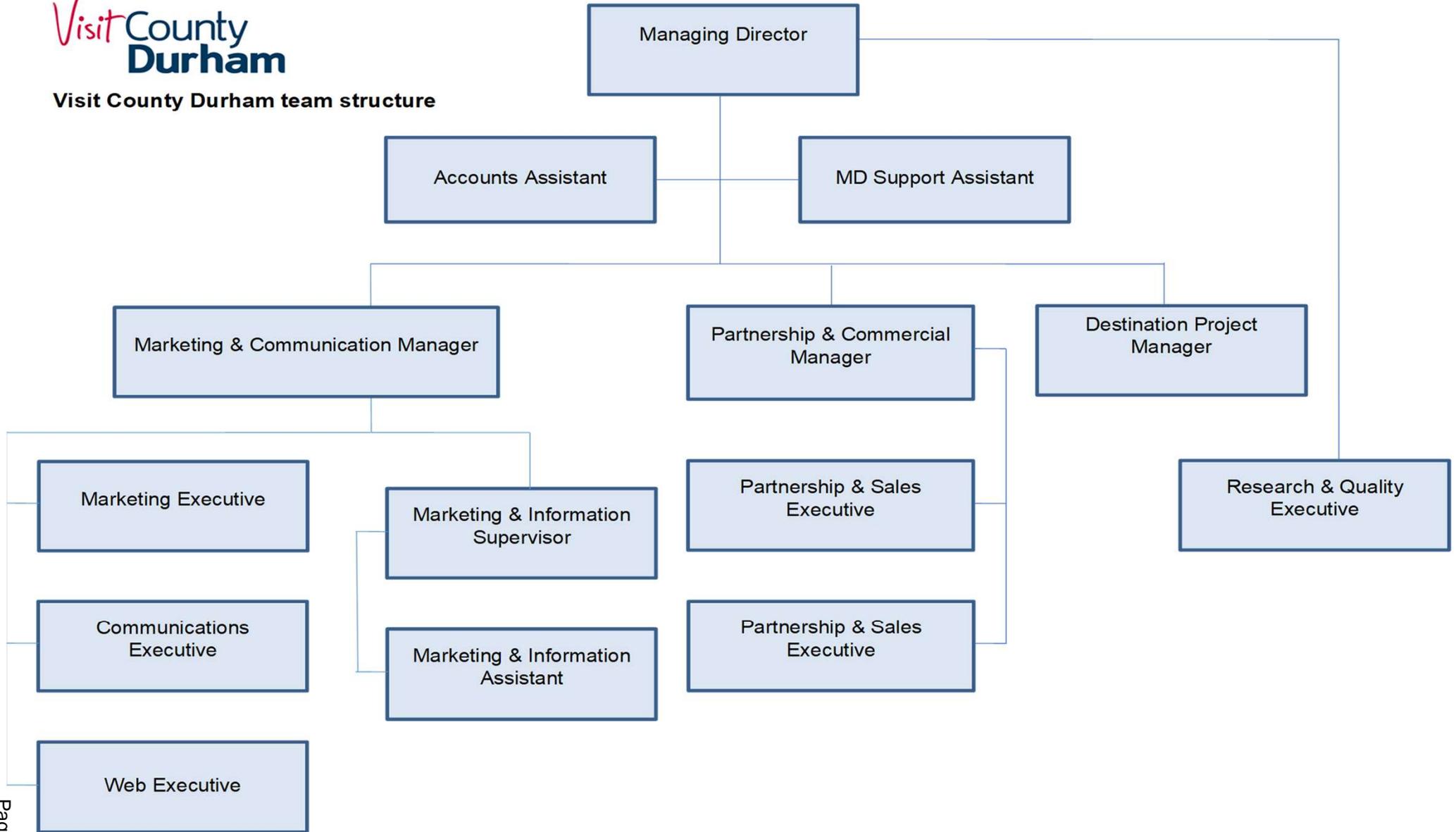


Introduction – Visit County Durham



- Destination Management Organisation for Durham and the tourism team for Durham County Council
- Team of 14 FTE
- Core budget of £705k, an income contribution of £38,879
- Visit England and Visit Britain key partners
- Public and private sector key partners
- Promotion – live, work, study, invest and visit
- Main aim – grow the county’s visitor economy
- Main roles – destination management, destination marketing and place marketing

Visit County Durham team structure



Strategy



Durham Tourism Management Plan
2016-2020



- County Durham Vision for 2035 – **More and better jobs**
- Durham Tourism Management Plan since 2006 – translates national, regional and local research, strategy and planning into action
- Identifies destination priorities and specific actions for up to 5 years with longer term ambitions up to 10+ years ahead
- Durham Tourism Accelerator Strategy
- Food Tourism Strategy

The vision for Durham as a visitor destination



Durham will offer a visitor experience that matches its outstanding natural landscapes and internationally famous built heritage. The visitor economy will support long term social, economic and environmental sustainability right across the county and be recognised by the county's residents as important to the quality of their lives.

Visitor economy performance and overview

STEAM Report
2019

Economic value
£955 million

Visitors
20.1 million

Jobs
12,133

STEAM Report
2020

Economic value
£507 million

Visitors
11.4 million

Jobs
6,794

VCD product
database 2021

Accommodation
624

Attractions
126

Activities
114

Shopping
100

Entertainment
16

Eating out
354

Sub-county summary

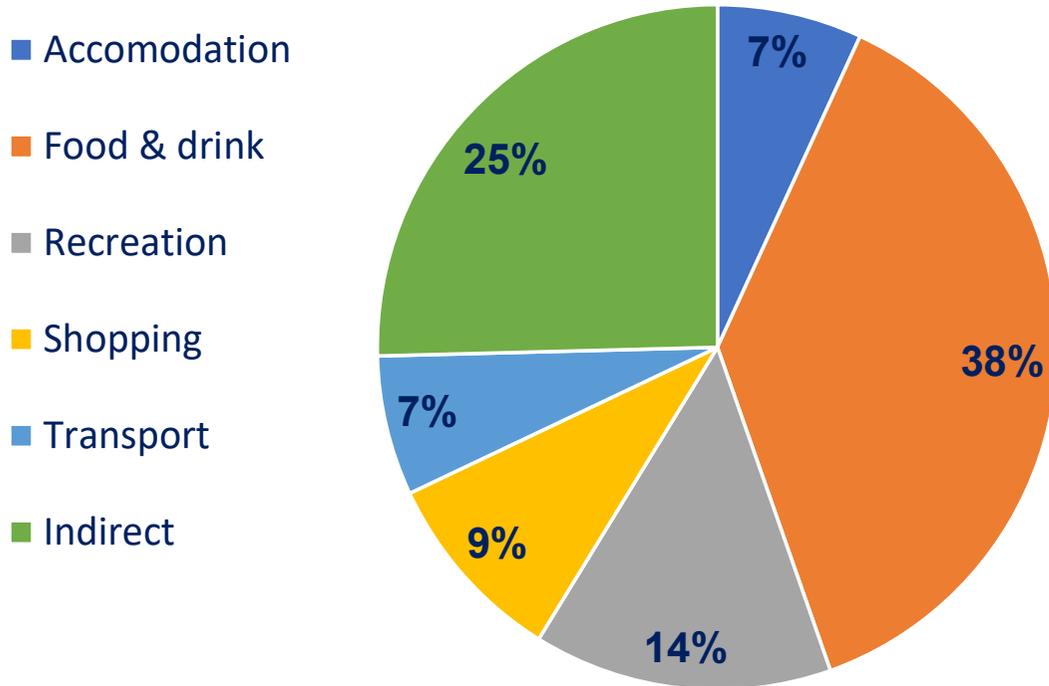


- **Durham City** – 25% visitor expenditure, employment 23% of county total
Average length of stay 1.14 days, staying visitor 2.24 days
- **Vale of Durham** – 42% visitor expenditure, employment 42% of county total
Average length of stay 1.09 days, staying visitor 2.37 days
- **Durham Dales** – 19% visitor expenditure, employment 21% of county total
Average length of stay 1.3 days, staying visitor 3.86 days
- **Durham Coast** – 14% visitor expenditure, employment 14% of county total
Average length of stay 1.1 days, staying visitor 2.84 days

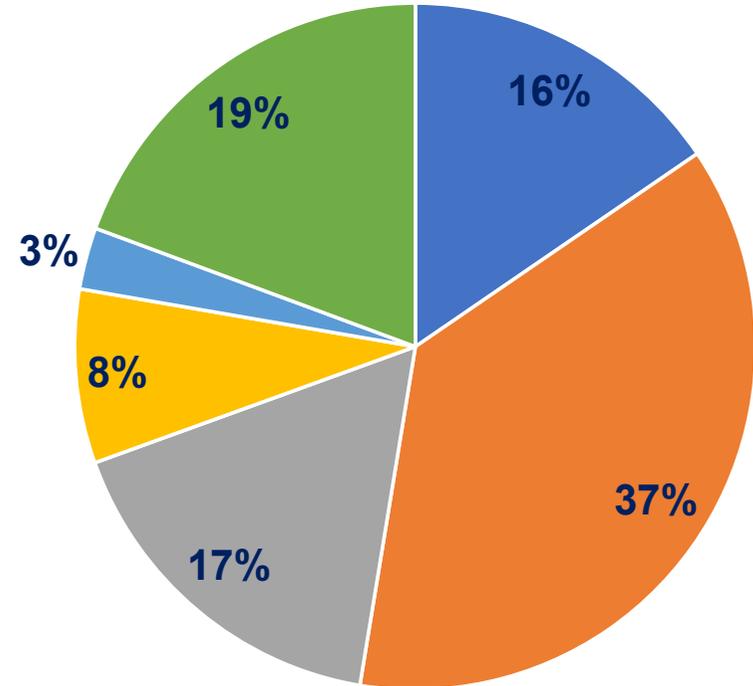
Sectoral distribution



Economic Impact



Employment (FTEs)



Visitor economy performance 2015 to 2020



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Expenditure (£ m)	885.21	904.63	948.65	962.19	980.72	506.75
Visitor numbers (m)	18.67	19.25	19.71	19.71	20.13	11.39
Employment (FTEs)	10,966	11,158	11,682	11,998	12,133	6,794

Tourism Outlook

- The Tourism Recovery Plan: government support to help the UK's tourism sector recover as quickly as possible with a full return to pre-COVID numbers by 2023
- An immediate trend for domestic travel and staycations in the UK will drive short-term growth
- Our strategy, as we head towards recovery will consider how we:
 - Deal with a period of fluctuation of social distancing measures and travel restrictions
 - Deliver a long-term approach, driving seasonal opportunities, encouraging a spread of visitors to sustain recovery
 - Capitalise on the **£400+ million** visitor economy investment and development pipeline

Wider Economic Development Plans

- County Durham Plan
- County Durham Economic Strategy
- Sustainable Transport Plan
- £3.6 billion Towns Fund
- £1 billion Future High Streets Fund, part of the Towns Fund
- £900 million Getting Building Fund
- £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund
- £220 million UK Community Renewal Fund
- Shared Prosperity Fund
- UK Tourism Recovery Plan
- Independent Review of Destination Management Organisations in England



Northern Saints Trails



- Regional tourism product development
- Position the North East as the 'Christian Crossroads of the British Isles'
- Website showcasing 500+ attractions and places to eat, drink and stay overnight

Partnership and industry engagement



- 850 core tourism business + 500 secondary visitor economy businesses
- Visit County Durham paid for partnership scheme
- Wednesday Grapevine weekly e-newsletter to c1,200 contacts
- Tailored training – social media, YouTube, golf, weddings, group travel, etc.
- Industry events – conferences & networking
- Partnership approach to encourage collaborative working for the benefit of the destination and businesses



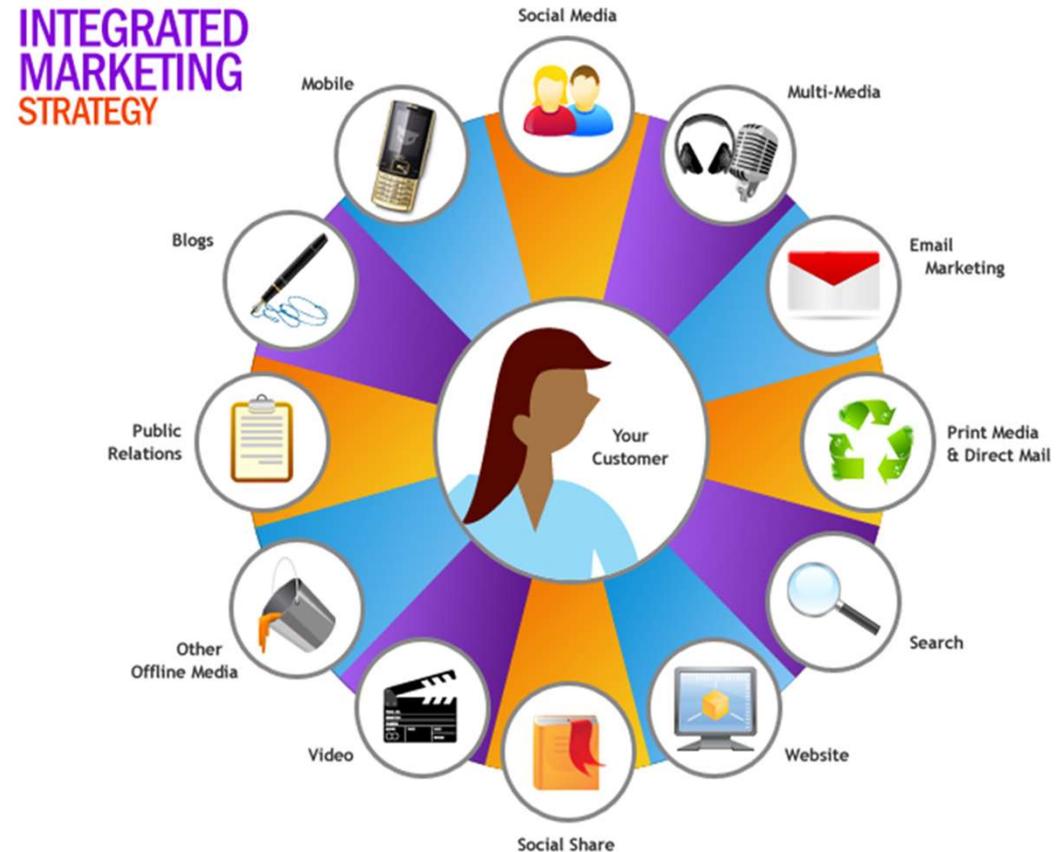


Destination marketing

- Work in partnership with strategic partners and tourism businesses

Main aims are to:

- raise the national profile & appeal of the county encourage overnight stays – stay longer and spend more
- raise shoulder season occupancy
- raise awareness of a distinctive Durham experiences



Campaigns

- Escape the Everyday – day visit and staycation campaign:
 - June-July 2021
 - maximum £80k from VisitEngland’s DMO Recovery Marketing Fund
 - amplify the national campaign at local level
 - benefit from halo campaign activity
- Digitally-led campaign, with paid media including:
 - VOD ITV Hub and Channel 4: All 4
 - radio digital channel partnership
 - digital display adverts
 - sponsored online content with targeted titles
 - influencer commissions
 - 4.5m people reached



ESCAPE

THE EVERYDAY



Media activity

- Generated or supported over £400k worth of media coverage this year to date
- National Walking Month – May 2021:
 - generated over £50k worth of coverage
 - 60 feature inclusions
- Attendance at the Travmedia IMM international media marketplace event
- Media and influencer visits:
 - Britain Magazine
 - Wanderlust Chloe
 - Daily Mail
 - Mini Travellers



Lumiere Breaks

- Dedicated campaign to maximise the ability of Lumiere to attract out of county visitors
- Encourage longer stays and short breaks
- Supporting the new county-wide artworks through itineraries to increase dwell time and spend
- Enhanced stay longer content on Lumiere channels
- Joint media visit and Instameet



Manchester Evening News

The
Guardian

Northern Saints Trails

- Media call 16 September
- 20 pieces of regional and national coverage over £70k value – over 3.4m reach
- September feature in the Guardian:
 - syndicated across Yahoo and MSN
 - £87k value - 10.3m reach
- Online feature on the Group Leisure & Travel magazine website



What's next...



New national destination marketing campaign to run November to Spring 2022 :

- ongoing recovery marketing to support the sector
- building on the profile we have achieved over the last 12 months
- campaigns to date have focussed on encouraging people to reconnect with the county new campaign will target those that may not have considered Durham as being for them
- video and web portal in production
- paid media to run from early 2022 to support shoulder season

Other activity underway:

- Influencer commission – Kate Stanforth
- Loved by Locals UGC campaign
- Interactive online marketing tool for Christmas
- Collaboration with Visit Northumberland on the 20th anniversary of the first Harry Potter film

D

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Supported by



Economy & Enterprise

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 November 2021

Managing change in County Durham's Towns and Villages



Report of Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To outline the process for managing change to the physical fabric of the County's Towns and Villages. This report will
 - (a) Set out the process for establishing planned interventions for place through Masterplans and Targeted Delivery Plans
 - (b) Demonstrate the development and alignment of funding programmes such as the Towns and Villages programme to facilitate change and improvement.

Executive summary

- 2 The Council's established hierarchy of plans and strategies provides an opportunity to underpin the County Durham vision and set out clear priorities for service delivery.
- 3 The County Durham Plan as one such document provides a framework for delivering change and improvement at a local level. This is further supported by a suite of masterplans and more recently the development of Targeted Delivery Plans which translate strategic priorities into a localised vision for change, improvement and investment.
- 4 The process of identifying localised needs and priorities for intervention which form part of the masterplan process have also been utilised to assist in the development of the Council's Town and Villages programme with both masterplans and the Towns and Village programme also heavily reliant on ongoing programmes of consultation and engagement with residents and wider stakeholders.

- 5 Through this joined up approach to vision and priority setting at a local as well as county wide level a broad range of activity has been developed both directly under the Towns and village programme but also through aligned funding opportunities which have common themes or delivery priorities.
- 6 These projects vary in scale and complexity with many just beginning to deliver significant impacts in communities across the County. The structures developed to ensure effective co-ordination and delivery of these projects will also be utilised to track ongoing progress and the outcomes of this broad ranging work.

Recommendation(s)

- 7 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided in the report and accompanying presentation.

Background

- 8 The Council Plan 2020-2023 is the primary corporate planning document for Durham County Council. The Council Plan reflects the County Durham Partnership Vision for County Durham and the following ambitions for the people of County Durham:
 - (a) More and better jobs;
 - (b) People live long and independent lives; and
 - (c) Connected communities.
- 9 Within the Council Plan, the connected communities ambition identifies an objective that our towns and villages will be vibrant, well-used, clean attractive and safe. Towns and Villages is noted as a key programme of work within this context in the Council Plan.
- 10 Towns and Villages is a long-standing priority of the Council. As an integrated approach to place-based regeneration, Towns and Villages has identified a significant investment programme currently underway across the county. Towns and Villages provides a clear program to support place-based priorities, such as the re-use of derelict buildings, walking and cycling improvements, public realm and leisure schemes for our towns and villages across our large and diverse county.
- 11 The Towns and Villages programme recognises that the Council has a pivotal role in shaping planning and development to underpin long term change especially in relation to town and city centres.

- 12 The Council can set out the vision and phased development framework for the future development of an area through documents such as the County Durham Plan. This assists in determining detailed decisions on planning applications and changes in the use of our towns and centres. For town centres to prosper, it is vital that decisions are made in the context of wider town centre impacts.
- 13 Long term masterplanning to rebalance the role and function of town and city centres and providing a broad range of functions remains central to this process. Utilising evidence masterplans reflect changing retail capacity and evolving shopping patterns as well as providing a starting point for addressing fragmented ownerships which are often a large obstacle to delivering change in town and city centres.
- 14 The Towns and Villages programme focusses on delivery and is accompanied by an Investment Plan 2021-2024. This Investment Plan notes where masterplans were in place at the time of its preparation and it also reflects the role of Housing Strategy, Targeted Delivery Plans in supporting housing and community objectives, as well as in improving the environment.

Masterplans

- 15 The Council have previously prepared a number of masterplans and regeneration frameworks for the larger towns in the county, the most recent being the Chester-le-Street Masterplan adopted in 2019.
- 16 Although this has always been a rolling programme, we have accelerated a number of new masterplans to support potential Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bids currently in preparation.
- 17 Although a key driver for this round of masterplans is LUF they are being comprehensively prepared and therefore contain other projects and proposals that will either not be suitable for LUF or may ultimately be unsuccessful bids.
- 18 The masterplans identify current and future activities across the public and private sectors in order to provide a coordinated approach to delivery and maximise opportunities for funding.
- 19 Masterplans are developed drawing on published and primary data which provides an economic context for the study area along with primary surveys examining retail occupancy, car parking capacity, pedestrian routes /nodes as well as streetscape and environmental quality.
- 20 Potential solutions to improve the commercial or usable areas across the study area are developed and tested through dialogue with a range

of council services and external partners where appropriate. These solutions are then the subject of an initial design, costing and validation before being included within the masterplan.

21 Despite the Council's extensive powers and resources, it is recognised that widespread change at a local level can't be delivered without partner and property owner buy in. various levels of engagement are built into the development of masterplans dependent on the complexity of proposed interventions

22 The key issues for each of the currently emerging masterplan include:

Chester-le-Street

- Building on the success of the de-culverting project.
- Creating an enhanced leisure offer.
- Expanding and improving employment locations to support job creation and economic growth.
- Improving connectivity, accessibility and sustainable travel opportunities.

Durham City

- A new cultural hub at Millennium Place.
- Improved accessibility and public realm improvements on Durham Riverside.
- Improved transport infrastructure including new park and ride capacity and a number of active travel projects.
- Heritage improvements at Durham Miners at Redhills, Crook Hall, Belmont Viaduct, Old Fulling Mill, Cornmill.

Newton Aycliffe

- Improvements to the town centre in including demolition of the multi-storey car park and a new leisure quarter.
- Delivery of improved cycling and walking infrastructure including better links to the town centre from Aycliffe Business Park and the railway station.
- Supporting the delivery of Merchant Park and Forrest Park.

Peterlee

- Diversify uses and improve the quality of the public realm in the town centre, including on Yoden Way.
- Improved pedestrian and cycle infrastructure into and around the town centre.
- Improve Peterlee bus station as the focus for a Mobility Hub.

Stanley

- Improved transport capacity on A693 and enhancement of active mode routes.
- Refurbished bus station and enhancement of active mode routes including linking residential areas to the town centre.
- Repurposing and redeveloping key vacant buildings and sites.
- Consolidate the retail core and introduce new destination retail.

Three Towns

- Improve the quality of shopping in the three town centres including improvements to buildings and public realm.
- Provide additional vehicle charging infrastructure within the towns.
- Cycle and walking improvements including the Brandon to Bishop Auckland cycleway.

23 If agreed, consultation will be undertaken on the masterplans from 29 November 2021 to 14 January 2022. Following consultation amendments will be made in response to the comments made wherever possible.

24 The final masterplans will be used to bid for funds both within the Council and externally, including informing the business cases that will be prepared for rounds two and three Levelling Up Fund submissions.

Housing Strategy Targeted Delivery Plans

25 Housing Strategy Targeted Delivery Plans (TDPs) are an integral part of the Housing Strategy and relate to maintaining and improving the existing housing stock and the wider housing environment. TDPs also form part of the Council's commitment to our disadvantaged communities through Towns and Villages and form part of the Towns and Villages Investment Plan. In this context, TDP are part of the

Council's approach of accelerating the delivery of projects to address issues in communities.

- 26 TDPs have been developed as an approach to deliver an intensive, focused and coordinated programme of activities by the Council and its partners in areas most in need across the county. The first phase of TDPs was approved by Cabinet in March 2021. The approved TDP areas are set out on the map at Appendix 2.

Targeted Delivery Plan Evidence Base

- 27 The Council has developed an evidence base to understand which communities are most in need of intervention. This evidence base has been developed to consider the types of issues that communities face and that the TDPs will look to address. It includes information on housing market indicators, low demand and stock condition as well as wider issues facing communities, such as crime. The evidence also includes contextual indicators which have an impact in determining people's housing options and ability to sustain a tenancy.
- 28 Data has been gathered at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level for the 324 LSOAs across County Durham. Whilst LSOAs vary in area, they are based on a broadly consistent population size. The use of LSOAs ensures that the TDPs represent a localised geography, comparable to a community or estate.
- 29 The individual datasets were ranked to understand which LSOAs performed poorly in respect of each data theme. These individual rankings were then brought together to create a cumulative ranking list, which provides an understanding of those areas across the county which rank relatively poorly across multiple housing issues and are most in need of intervention.
- 30 To note, in developing the cumulative ranking list, the process did not involve weighting of any of the data themes. A core intention of the TDPs is to coordinate actions in response to multiple issues in a locality. Therefore, it was considered important to understand those areas which performed poorly in respect of multiple indicators. Any approach to weighting specific sets of data may have elevated those locations performing relatively poorly against weighted single issues in the cumulative ranking list and potentially may have obscured those areas in greater need of intervention across a range of themes and which would benefit from a coordinated approach to delivery.

Overview of first phase of TDPs

- 31 The first phase of TDPs were approved by Cabinet in March 2021. TDPs are therefore in place for the following areas:

- New Kyo;
- Coundon Grange;
- Blackhall Colliery South;
- Thickey;
- Deneside East; and
- Stanley Hall West.

32 These TDP areas represented positions five to ten in the cumulative ranking list. Those locations ranked one to four in the cumulative ranking list were not considered to be appropriate for TDP on the basis that these areas already have existing large-scale interventions proposed or ongoing. It was considered that a TDP would not add further value beyond the ongoing or proposed strategic interventions, which have been developed to provide a comprehensive response to specific issues and opportunities for these areas. It is also in recognition of the respective stage of these projects which have either commenced or have recently been subject to public consultation. The areas ranked one to four in the cumulative ranking list are as follows:

- Horden Central;
- Easington Colliery North;
- Ferryhill Dene Bank North; and
- Horden East.

TDP Delivery, Monitoring and Future Programme

33 Delivery has commenced within the TDP areas. The actions undertaken respond to issues in each location and have been developed in line with the TDP action plan. To support delivery of the TDPs, discussions are ongoing with relevant Registered Housing Providers operating in the areas. Furthermore, as part of an ongoing programme, the approved TDPs are being taken to the relevant Area Action Partnership for discussion.

34 A TDP Governance Group has been established, consisting of officers from teams involved in the development and delivery of the TDPs. This Group meets to support the delivery of actions, in line with the TDPs. The Governance Group also monitors delivery against the TDPs.

- 35 Alongside the approval of the first six TDPs in March 2021, Cabinet agreed to the future expansion of the TDP programme. It was noted that the future programme of TDPs would build on the first six documents and scale up the number and coverage of TDPs across the county.

Towns and Villages Programme

- 36 The Towns and Villages programme was established in 2018 in response to the pressures and rapid change being experienced in the towns and villages. This change was identified not only through the routine monitoring of town centre vacancy rates and empty residential property numbers but also issues raised through discussions with local members and the Area Action Partnerships.
- 37 The Towns and villages Programme from the outset has set out to complement a wide range of investments already underway and to provide a particular focus on Alignment of policies and programmes, addressing gaps in provision, focussing on areas of deprivation or low market intervention and rural areas.
- 38 Between 2019 and 2020 further engagement work was undertaken to ascertain the scale and scope of problems at a local level, both set out as challenges and opportunities in the Council's masterplans but also reported through Area Action Partnership Boards and theme groups. This led to the defined activity themes for the programme which were agreed by Cabinet in October 2020. These are
- Strategic Investments;
 - Housing and Community;
 - Environment and Health;
 - Built Environment; and
 - Transport and Connectivity
- 39 Alongside some pilot activity undertaken through the programme, the cabinet approval of the programme's five themes led to a further round of AAP engagement where the themes were tested and a further round of local issues identified.
- 40 This strategic priority setting led to the development of the more detailed investment plan approved by Cabinet in February 2021. By this point, the emerging evidence base which included direct member and AAP dialogue, Masterplans, and the first round of TDPs highlighted the scale of change and need exacerbated by the Covid pandemic and additional programme resources were made available increasing the

programme from the original £10 million concept to the current £20 million.

Investment mapping, alignment and sequencing of interventions.

- 41 Alongside and building on previous consultation on a range of strategies and initiatives, an evidence base has been developed to assist in the targeting of interventions through the Towns and Villages programme. It considers a range of people-based indicators including, employment, housing, health and crime with data considered for all of our communities at the Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) providing a rank of areas in most need of support. Whilst MSOAs are used to collate evidence to inform consultation, this will be translated and presented as places that communities recognise.
- 42 The development of the Towns and Villages as a new approach to regeneration and aligned activity has been informed by previous consultations and alignment to the Council's Vision. This work has included the development of an interactive GIS mapping system which draws upon towns and villages interventions, mainstream service expenditure and partner and private development and investment information where available.
- 43 This system still subject to development and refinement does however provide a baseline position of the area and help sequence the delivery of planned investments as well as coordinate the opportunities for future projects.
- 44 Since the Towns and Villages projects commenced, additional funding opportunities have emerged which align with much of the activity identified in the programme. These funding streams include:
 - Reopening High Streets Safely /Welcome Back Fund – this central government funding has been provided through the Covid pandemic to support emergency measure to maintain town centre retail operations and to then encourage a return to more normal levels of footfall. Over £1 million has been allocated to County Durham under these two programmes and had been allocated against activities including Public information campaigns, business resource packs, covid retail support officers, temporary seating areas, deep cleaning of Town centre areas and events and attractions.
 - LAD programme – in July 2020 the Chancellor announced a £2 billion Green Homes Grant. Under this 3500 million has been allocated to local authorities under the Local Authority Delivery 9 (LAD) programme. Closely aligned to established aspirations for

improving energy efficiency of homes across the County, the Towns and Villages allocation has been aligned to provide match funding to draw down LAD monies

- Levelling Up Fund. Announced by Government in March 2021, the Levelling up programme provides the opportunity to submit applications for funding based on parliamentary constituency boundaries. These applications of upto £20 million each can focus on Transport Investments, Regeneration and Town Centre Investment or Cultural investments. As such projects selected or under development for submission under the levelling up programme have a close alignment to the aims of the Towns and villages programme and delivery of these schemes will contribute to achieving the programme's outcomes

45 Additional and aligned funding opportunities are routinely reviewed by the multi service Towns and Villages co-ordination group to both add value to and extend delivery opportunities from the established Towns and Villages budget.

Consultation and engagement

46 In line with the development of masterplans and TDPs the Towns and Villages programme is heavily grounded in consultation. Successive rounds of AAP consultation have tested the concept, themes and begun to identify issues of concern at a local level which are directly fed into scheme development and prioritisation and shared internally to as part of the development and monitoring of masterplan activity.

47 The allocation of funds directly to an AAP level has heightened the local area involvement in the roll out of the Towns and Villages programme and aligned regeneration interventions, with most AAPs now operating task and finish groups to identify local priorities, allocate devolved funds and raise awareness of local regeneration priorities.

48 The towns and village programme has from the outset sought to ensure a regular dialogue with AAP Boards to ensure alignment of activity and priority at both a strategic and local level.

Delivering Change

49 Commencing in 2019 and 2020 several pilot projects were commenced through the Towns and Villages programme, initially dealing with the immediate pressures faced in town centres. These included.

- Retail Hub – providing a package of training and support to existing and emerging businesses in the town centre alongside

working with property owners / agents to bring forward temporary / meanwhile uses to maintain town centre vibrancy

- Digital High Street – developing a network of town centre Wi-Fi to improve user experience and provide data on town centre usage. Digital High Street also includes a training programme for retailers to maximise digital marketing / sales
- Property Reuse and Conversion – working with property owners and agents to facilitate appropriate reuse of town centre properties
- Vulnerable land and Buildings. – securing / demolishing properties with a negative community impact where enforcement / repairs notices haven't resolved issues.

50 Alongside the development and early delivery of these town centred programmes a number of Housing and neighbourhood related initiatives were also commenced such as.

- Neighbourhood Retail support – supporting retailers through physical improvement packages in villages and neighbourhood retail parades
- Environmental enhancements – addressing local environmental concerns and linking with improvements to neighbourhood retail areas
- Community Housing – working with community groups to bring forward small scale development- schemes often focussed on groups with particular needs – Elderly / disabled residents, veterans etc.
- Green homes – building on a key priority strand of the Housing Strategy, the Green Homes project has sought to improve the energy efficiency of the poorest performing properties in the County. Utilising the £850,000 Towns and Villages funding a s match, a further £8.5 million of funding has been secured and defrayed through the LAD and other funds.

51 The Towns and Villages programme continue to develop and with additional resources aligned to them linked to the Covid pandemic., Some project strands are however still to fully define and programme improvement works, while work on the development of AAP based activity has only recently commenced.

52 The programme continues to develop with significant work undertaken to identify areas for intervention and to scope and design interventions.

As a result, around a quarter of the allocation has been defrayed or is currently scheduled for imminent delivery with over £18 million allocated against individual schemes pending detailed design and delivery. Details of allocations for each of the projects is set out in table 1 below.

Theme	Project	Programme Allocation(£)	Pilot Phase Expenditure(£)	Currently In Delivery(£)	To Allocate / deploy(£)
Strategic Investments	Digital High Street	775,000		425,000	350,000
	Retail Hub	300,000		100,000	200,000
	Neighbourhood Retail Improvements	2,750,000	675,000	172,000	1,903,000
	Town and Village Vibrancy	200,000			200,000
Housing and Community	Community Housing	700,000		400,000	300,000
	Housing Opportunities fund	150,000		150,000	
	Improving Community Resilience	2,000,000		300,000	1,700,000
	Green Homes Fuel Efficiency Programme	850,000		850,000	
	Hornden Regeneration Programme	4,500,000			4,500,000
	Allotment Improvement Programme	75,000			75,000
	Enhanced Environmental Maintenance	500,000	75,000	275,000	150,000
Built Environment	Vulnerable Buildings	1,300,000	305,000	300,000	695,000
	Property Reuse and Conversion	500,000		350,000	150,000
	Dean Bank Clearance and Improvement	150,000	150,000		
	Easington Colliery Programme	1,050,000		1,050,000	
	South Moor Improvement Programme	200,000		200,000	
	Sacriston Workshop Conversion	200,000	24,050	175,950	
Transport & Connectivity	Walking and Cycling Routes	3,750,000			£3,750,000
	Neighbourhood Parking and Circulation	850,000		350,000	500,000
Local Programme	AAP Area Improvement Fund	4,200,000			£4,200,000
Total		25,000,000	1,229,050	5,097,950	18,673,000

Table 1 Towns and Villages allocation status

- 53 Future delivery remains under review against other emerging external funding opportunities and Council mainstream expenditure.

Monitoring impact and utilising performance information

- 54 Projects delivered through the Towns and villages programme are predominantly capital in nature. As such they conform with the routine expenditure and output monitoring undertaken across the division. Given the nature of the projects, performance is also highlighted in Service plans with some aspects reported in divisional and corporate performance plans.
- 55 Additionally, progress in delivering Towns and Villages work is reported through the monthly Towns and Villages co-ordinators meetings and formally recorded through the major projects board.

- 56 Given the recent delivery of pilot projects and some elements of the programme yet to commence, outcome monitoring has not yet been comprehensively recorded.

Conclusion

- 57 The committee will be aware of the process of developing and delivering investment against the established suite of masterplans for the main towns, which provide a vision for place shaping and regeneration efforts in a local area.
- 58 Recently this planned /aligned approach to interventions at a local level has been supplemented by the development of TDPs which provide a similar focus for smaller / residential areas, but still ensuring major issues are identified, prioritised and scheduled for intervention through a range of budgets and programmes
- 59 The Towns and Villages strategy, developed from a concept agreed in December 2018 provides further resources to address these issues focussing on both strategic issues associated with the economic functions of our main centres through to local community priorities which impact on residents' quality of life.
- 60 Some Towns and Villages projects have been delivering benefits to communities since emerging as pilot initiatives during 2019. Other activities identified as the programme budget increased remain under development and will be delivered to address identified need and to align with other funding sources which have emerged in the intervening period.
- 61 The processes established to support the development and delivery of the Towns and villages programme provide a further source of evidence and intelligence which is utilised in regeneration plans to improve effectiveness, timeliness and impact. Information gathered through this process feeds into service plan reporting, performance boards and corporate reports to scrutiny committees.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- County Durham Plan -Local Development Scheme (Adopted October 2020) - [County Durham Plan](#)

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None associated with this report.

Finance

The Towns and Villages programme has been established with a budget of £25 million as set out in the investment plan approved by Cabinet in February 2021.

Other external funding in addition to wide ranging existing council funding continues to support place shaping and improvement activities across County Durham.

Consultation

Consultation remains a key aspect of the development of masterplans, Targeted Delivery Plans and the Towns and Villages programme.

Several rounds of consultation have been undertaken in conjunction with the area Action Partnerships with a current programme of task and finish groups meetings in operation to help determine local priorities for utilising designated area programme budgets.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None associated with this report.

Climate Change

Previous consultation rounds undertaken to support the development of the Towns and Villages programme highlighted the importance of climate change activities within the programme. Initially, this is being addressed through significant allocations to support walking and cycling, improving the energy efficiency of the worst performing households countywide and in ensuring the improvement and effective reuse of vacant and underutilised property.

Human Rights

None associated with this report.

Crime and Disorder

None associated with this report.

Staffing

None associated with this report.

Accommodation

None associated with this report

Risk

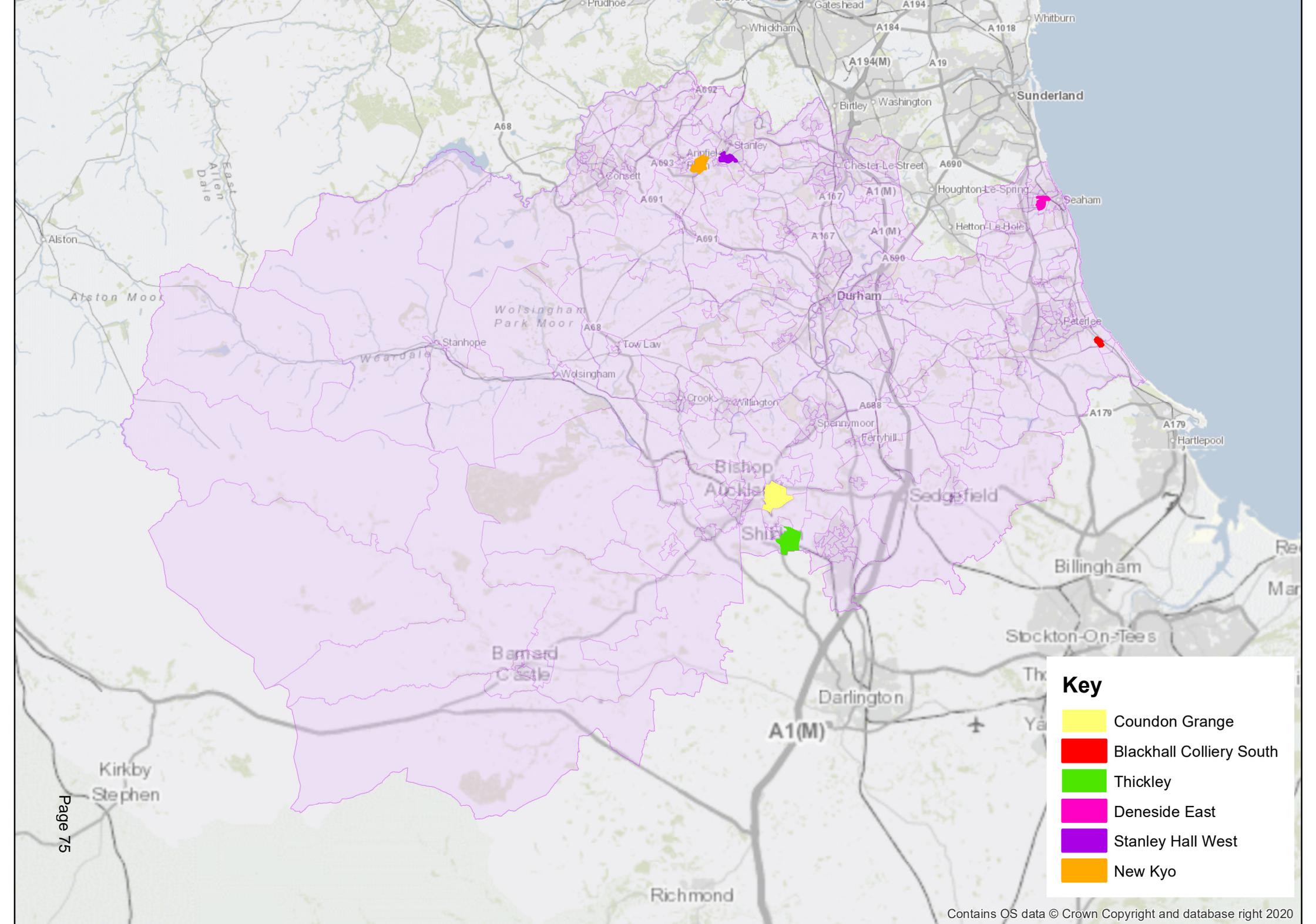
Risk is determined at a project level for interventions supported by Towns and Village Funding.

Procurement

None associated with this report.

Appendix 2: Map of County Durham TDP areas

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Key

- Coundon Grange
- Blackhall Colliery South
- Thickley
- Deneside East
- Stanley Hall West
- New Kyo

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Managing Change in County Durham's Towns and Villages

Economy and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny
11 November 2021

Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration,
Economy and Growth



Background

- The Council have previously prepared a number of different documents that include elements of masterplanning:
 - Main town masterplans
 - Regeneration frameworks (principally updates of the masterplans)
 - Area focussed masterplans
 - Targetted Delivery Plans (prepared under the auspices of the Housing Strategy)
 - The Towns and Villages programme
- Areas chosen to be included depends on the strategic aims and targeted outcomes

Purposes of a Masterplan

- Identifies an area's strengths and challenges
- Sets out a vision and general principles to guide future development
- Can provide a catalyst to enable an area to develop or change and encourage investment
- Identify opportunity sites for new development and suggest future uses for existing buildings
- Assess existing transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and identify required improvements
- Including projects in a masterplan can mean they are well placed to progress as sources of funding become available
- Provide a means of engaging the local community and trying to build consensus

Main Town Masterplans

- The Council have previously prepared a number of masterplans and regeneration frameworks for the 12 'main towns' in the county
- Prepared as a rolling programme dating back to 2013
- Updated in 2016 as Regeneration Frameworks to track progress to date
- Most recent masterplan Chester-le-Street, adopted in 2019
- Currently preparing a number of new masterplans to support potential Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bids
- Although LUF is a key driver for this round of masterplans they contain other projects and proposals that will either not be suitable for LUF or may ultimately be unsuccessful bids

Levelling up Masterplans

- Chester-le-Street, Durham City, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Stanley and Three Towns Masterplans go to Cabinet on 17 November
- Public consultation from 29 November 2021 to 14 January 2022
- Number of events including face to face (with Covid precautions)
- Asking for comments on projects proposed and suggestions for others
- Will investigate feasibility of suggested projects and include if possible
- Adopt final masterplans in Spring 2022
- Agreed masterplans will support successful Levelling Up Fund bids

Chester-le-Street Masterplan

- Provides an update on 2019 Masterplan
- Key Projects include
 - Creating a vibrant town centre building on success of de-culverting project
 - capitalise on the facilities at the Emirates Riverside Cricket Ground and Riverside Park by creation of a Sports Village
 - Completion of final plot at Drum Industrial Estate
 - Possible mixed use project at Stella Gill
 - Highways improvements to Picktree Lane, North Burns, Pelton Fell Road transport corridor
 - Improved walking and cycling links across the town

Durham City Framework

- The Durham City Framework has been prepared as a 'StoryMap', it is therefore best viewed online here:

<https://durhamcounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=76f264d05387492c93088e6fb0bbe854>

Key Projects include

- A cultural hub at Millennium Place;
- Improved accessibility and public realm improvements on Durham Riverside;
- Heritage improvements at Durham Miners at Redhills, Crook Hall, Belmont Viaduct, Old Fulling Mill, Cornmill;
- Housing developments at Sniperley Park, Sherburn Road, Gilesgate and Gort Place;
- Public Realm improvements on North Road, Boathouse Yard and Fowlers Yard;
- Cycling and walking projects including improved links from the railway station to the town centre
- Transport infrastructure including new park and ride capacity, Sniperley roundabout and a number of Active Travel projects



Newton Aycliffe Masterplan

Key Projects include

- Support the demolition of 1-17 Beveridge Way and the Multistorey Car Park to create a town centre development area
- Extend, refurbish and repurpose 32-58 Beveridge Way
- Repurpose and sub-divide 53-57 Beveridge Way to provide units for food and beverage uses that support the creation of a leisure quarter alongside extending and improving the leisure centre
- Support the delivery of improved cycling and walking infrastructure to the town centre from Aycliffe Business Park, the railway station, the new housing and surrounding parks
- Support the delivery of Merchant Park and Forrest Park

Peterlee Masterplan

- Key Projects include
- Diversify uses and improve the quality of the public realm in the town centre, including on Yoden Way
- Improved pedestrian and cycle infrastructure into and around the town centre
- Improve Peterlee bus station as the focus for a Mobility Hub including cycle parking, cycle share, car club, EV charging etc.
- Upgrade existing shared use route towards Horden and the Railway Station
- New gateway/plaza at Bede Way arrival point
- Assess feasibility for adaptive re-use of Lee and Ridgemount House

Stanley Masterplan

Key Projects include

- Improved transport capacity on A693 and enhancement of active mode routes, refurbished bus station
- Enhancement of active mode routes including linking residential areas to the town centre
- Repurposing and redeveloping key vacant buildings and sites
- New focus/flexible space on Front Street for potential events, markets, new cycle hub etc.
- Focus retail core on the southern section of Front Street and Clifford Road
- Destination retail introduced to west of Front Street to increase footfall

Three Towns Masterplan

Key Projects include

- A range of improvements in the three town centres to help improve the quality of shopping environment including improvements to buildings and public realm
- Provide additional vehicle charging infrastructure within the towns
- Improve car parking provision at Albion Place (adjacent to Co-Op) and Commercial Street in Willington
- Improve the Brandon to Bishop Auckland cycleway
- Promote current highway infrastructure through Low Willington Industrial Estate as a potential alternative to the A690
- Improve leisure provision in Crook by exploring the possibility of a new swimming pool
- Explore bringing the former Empire Cinema in Crook back into use

Area Based Masterplans - Horden

- A regeneration masterplan was commissioned in 2019 for the Horden numbered streets following resident consultation and in response to significant social , housing, environmental and economic issues in the area. This masterplan contained the following options for consideration:
 1. Do nothing.
 2. Limited intervention: Improving streets and back lanes.
 3. Partial intervention based on key initiatives: Making existing homes more family friendly.
 4. Part demolish / part rebuild: Creating a new neighbourhood with a mix of new and older homes.
 - a. Part demolish / part rebuild: As Option 4, including a new Education Hub.
 5. Wholesale clearance and rebuild: Create a completely new neighbourhood.
 - a. Wholesale clearance and rebuild: As Option 5, including a new Education Hub.

Area Based Masterplans - Horden

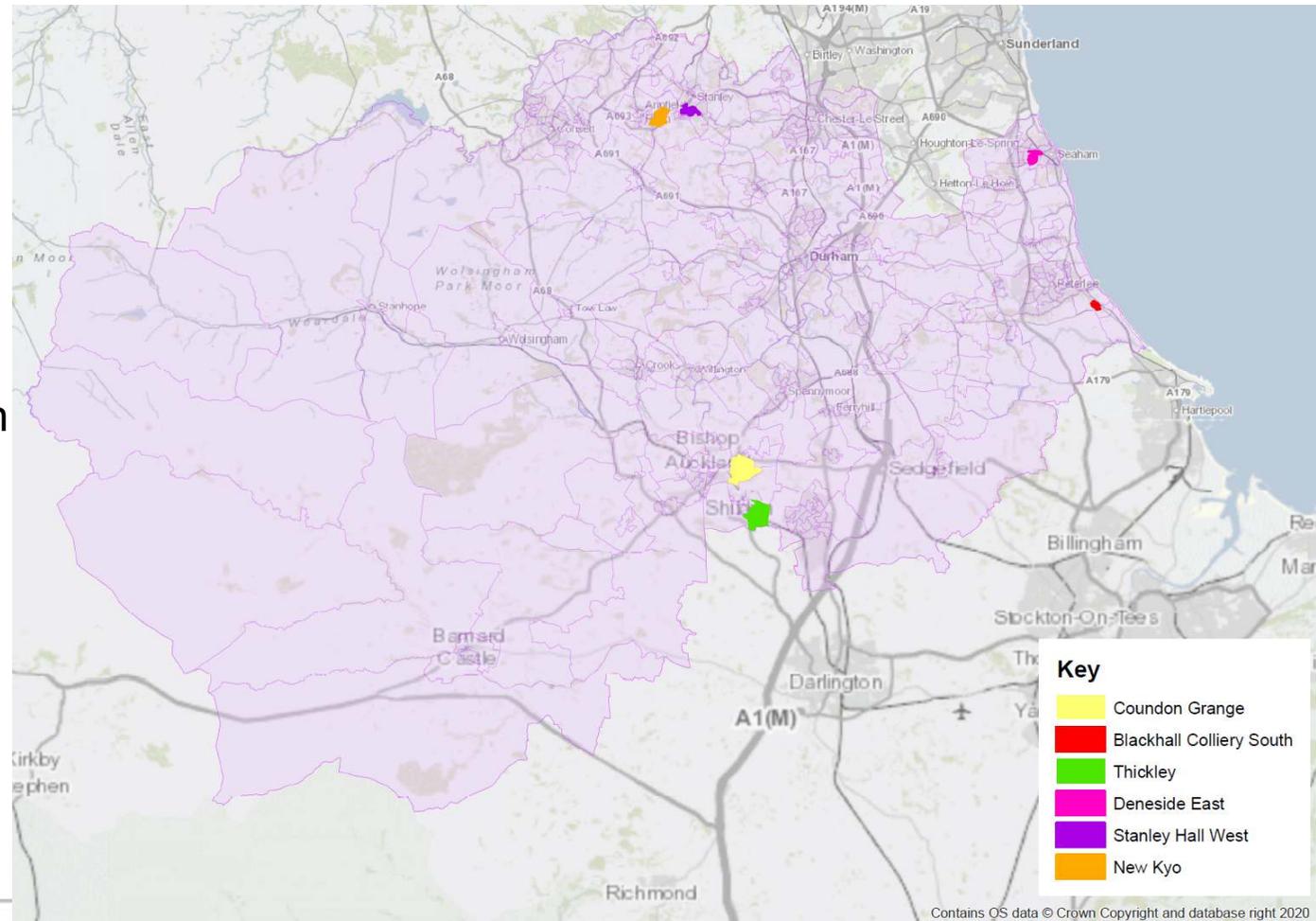
- Subsequent consultation on the masterplan undertaken in 2019 with the local community showed overwhelming support for options which included major intervention such as large scale demolition of the numbered streets. Initial financial appraisals were also undertaken at this time which showed that any scheme brought forward would need significant public funding due to the acquisition and demolition costs which are related to density of the numbered streets.
- Consultants have since been commissioned to review and further develop the initial masterplan for Horden which looks at the opportunities and challenges beyond the numbered streets and will:
 - Further review masterplan options for the Horden area which support major intervention;
 - Identify a preferred option through an optional appraisal process and consultation; and,
 - Prepare a Green Book outline business case to be used to assist with securing funding for the project.

Context to Targeted Delivery Plans

- The role of TDPs is identified in the Housing Strategy – support and maintain mixed and balanced communities.
- TDPs part of the Towns and Villages Investment Plan and the approach to accelerate delivery of the Housing Strategy.
- TDPs serve to deliver an intensive, focused and coordinated programme of activities in areas most in need across the county.
- Areas identified based on cumulative evidence ranking. Data considered includes:
 - Long-term empty homes.
 - Median house price.
 - Solid walls.
 - Fuel Poverty.
 - Income.
 - Employment.
 - Crime.
 - Health.

First phase of Targeted Delivery Plans

- First phase of TDPs approved by Cabinet in March 2021:
 - Coundon Grange
 - Blackhall Colliery South
 - Thickley
 - Deneside East
 - Stanley Hall West
 - New Kyo



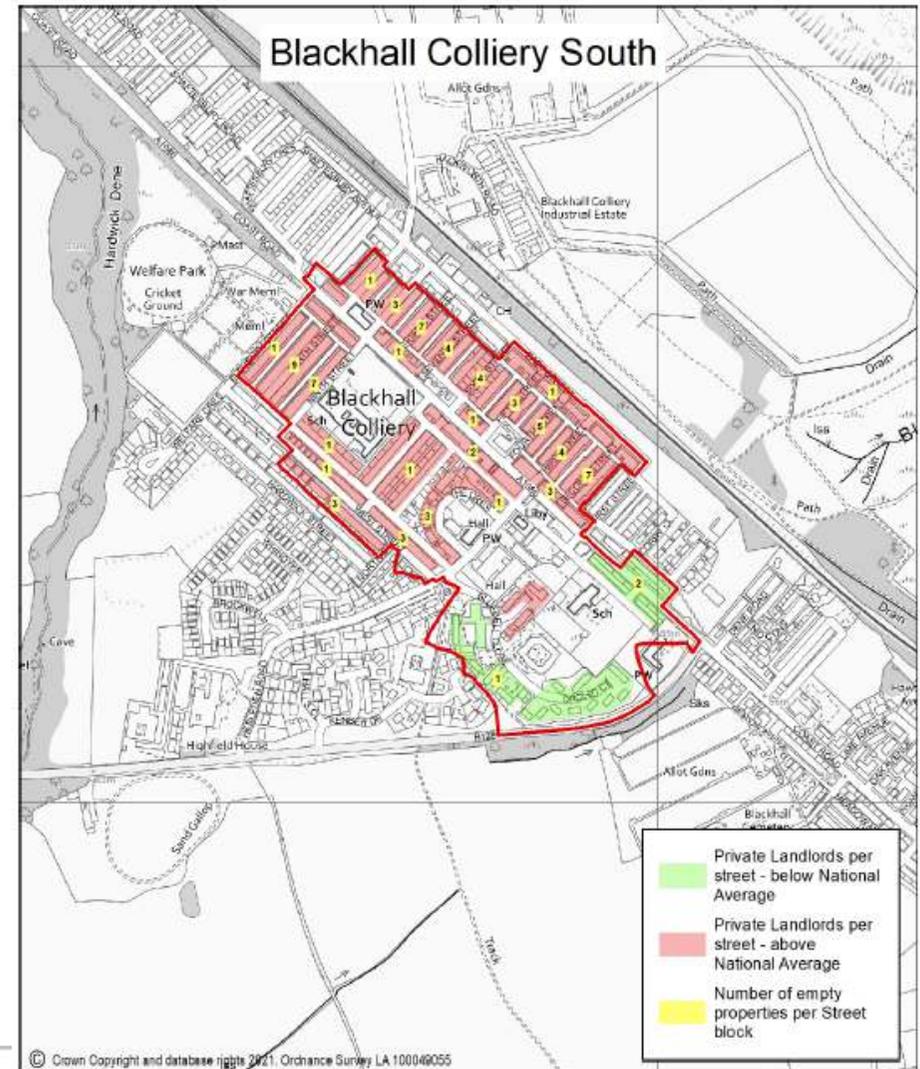
Coundon Grange TDP

- Evidence base notes issues in respect of:
 - Long term empty homes
 - Fuel Poverty
 - Income deprivation
 - Income deprivation affecting children
 - Crime
- Actions framework:
 - Support and maintain mixed and balance communities.
 - Meeting the housing needs of our residents
 - Improve energy efficiency of properties to ensure warm, healthy and energy efficient homes
 - Addressing poverty and the impacts of welfare reform in a housing context.
 - Address empty homes to support communities.
 - Provide care and support to older and vulnerable people.



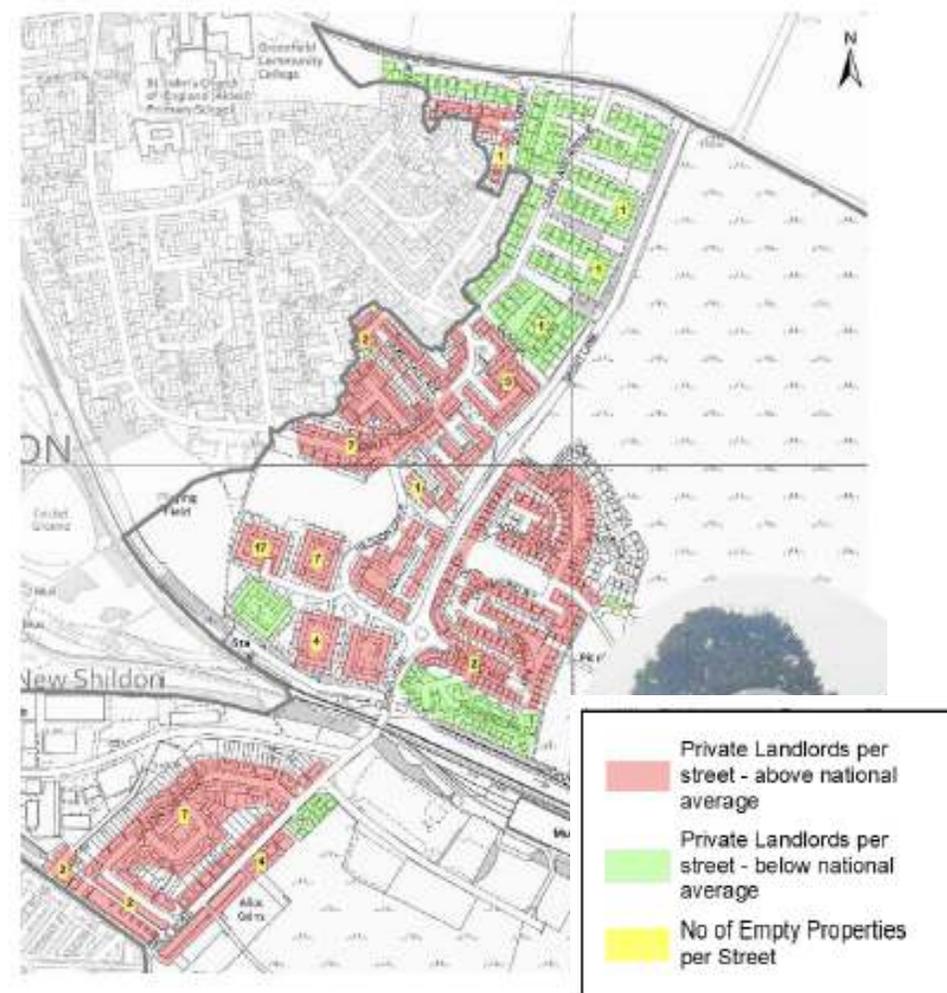
Blackhall Colliery South TDP

- Evidence base notes issues in respect of:
 - Long term empty homes.
 - Solid walls.
 - Employment
 - Income deprivation
 - Income deprivation affecting children.
 - Health
- Actions framework:
 - Support and maintain mixed and balance communities.
 - Addressing poverty and the impacts of welfare reform in a housing context.
 - Provide care and support to older and vulnerable people.
 - Improve energy efficiency of properties.
 - Address empty homes to support communities.



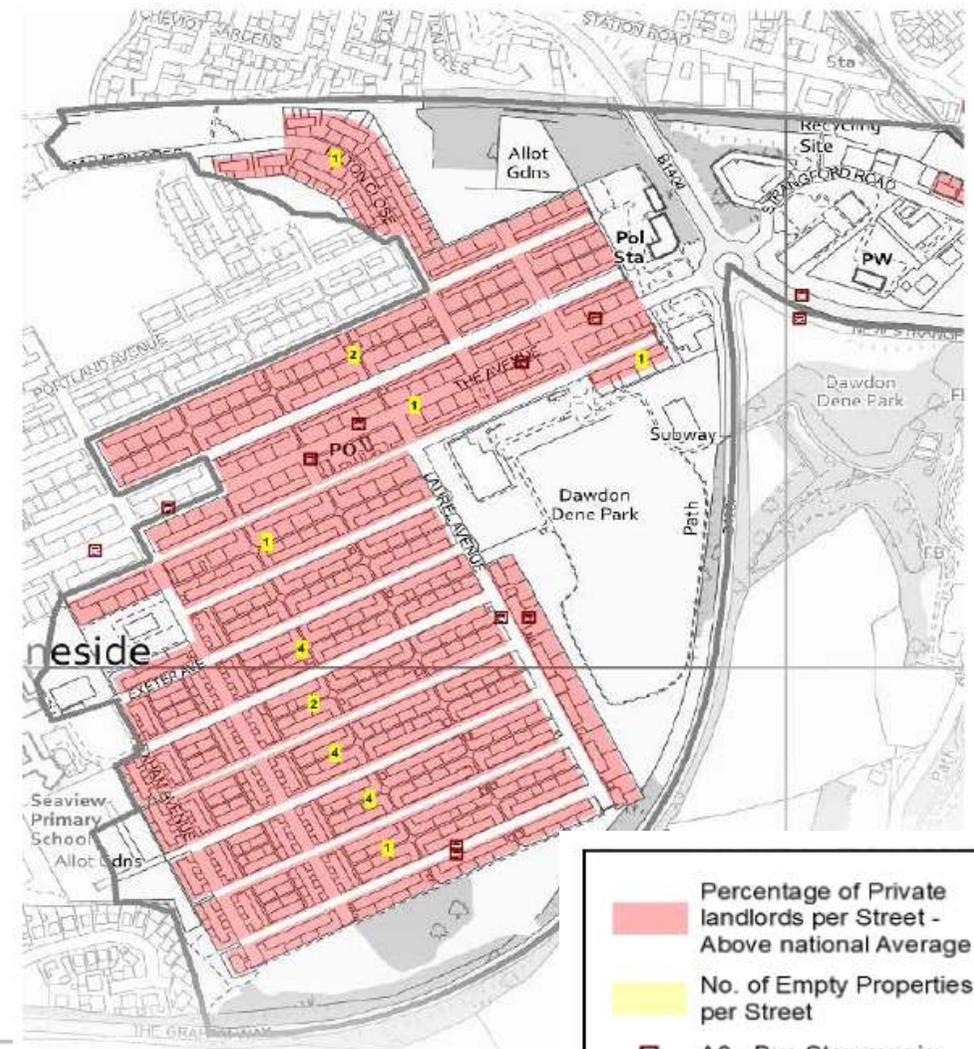
Thickley TDP

- Evidence base notes issues in respect of:
 - Long term empty homes
 - Employment
 - Income deprivation
 - Income deprivation affecting children
- Actions framework:
 - Support and maintain mixed and balance communities.
 - Addressing poverty and the impacts of welfare reform in a housing context.
 - Address empty homes to support communities.
 - Provide care and support to older and vulnerable people.



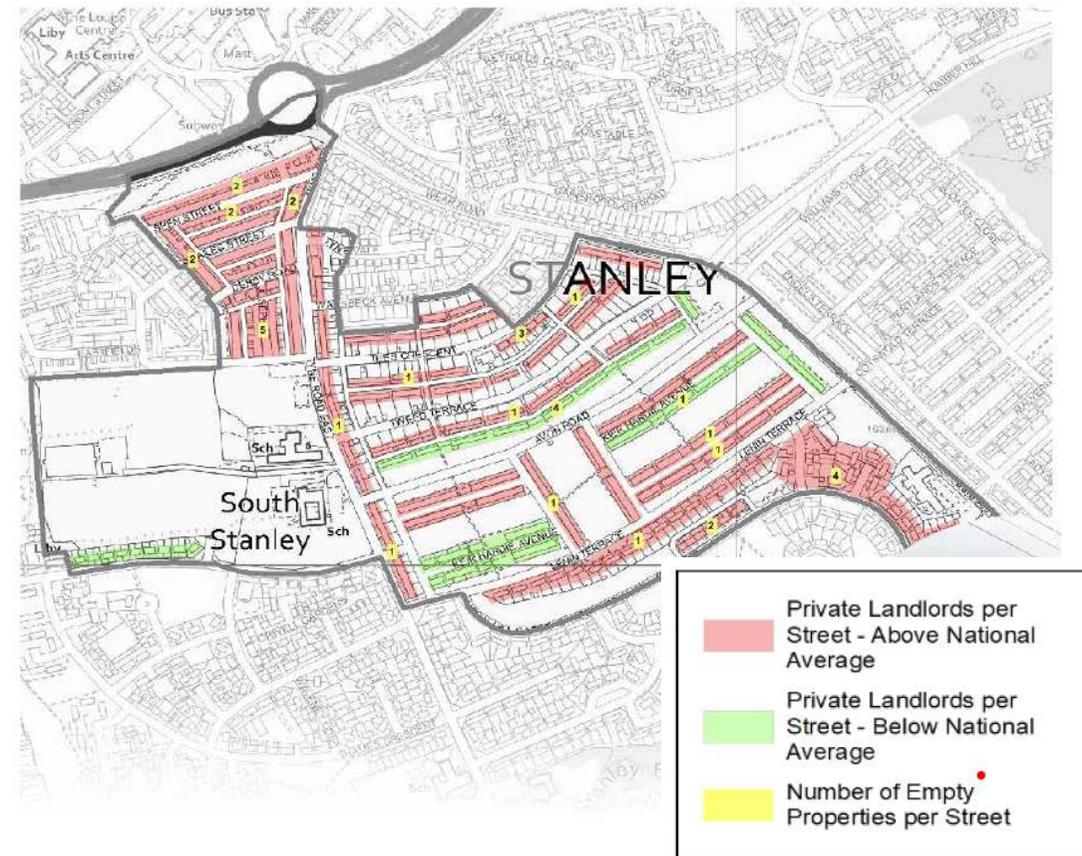
Deneside East TDP

- Evidence base notes issues in respect of:
 - Employment.
 - Income deprivation.
 - Income deprivation affecting children.
 - Health.
- Actions framework:
 - Support and maintain mixed and balance communities.
 - Addressing poverty and the impacts of welfare reform in a housing context.
 - Provide care and support to older and vulnerable people.



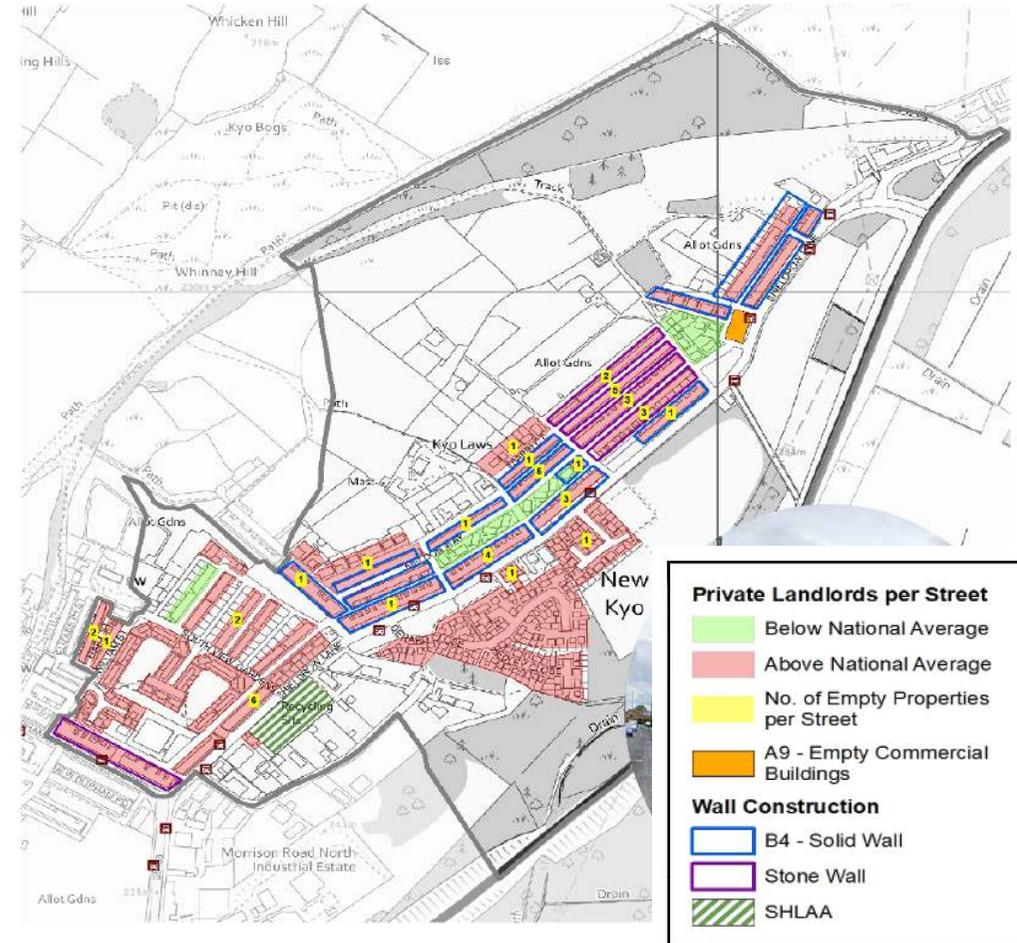
Stanley Hall West TDP

- Evidence base notes issues in respect of:
 - Fuel Poverty.
 - Solid Walls.
 - Employment.
 - Income Deprivation.
 - Income Deprivation affecting children.
 - Health.
- Actions framework:
 - Support and maintain mixed and balance communities.
 - Improve energy efficiency of properties
 - Addressing poverty and the impacts of welfare reform in a housing context.
 - Provide care and support to older and vulnerable people.



New Kyo TDP

- Evidence base notes issues in respect of:
 - Long term empty homes.
 - Fuel Poverty.
 - Solid walls.
 - Crime.
- Actions framework:
 - Support and maintain mixed and bala communities.
 - Improve energy efficiency of propertie
 - Provide care and support to older and vulnerable people.



Delivery underway

- New Kyo and Stanley Hall West
 - ECO energy efficiency / fuel poverty grants promoted via letter drops, door to door promotions and social media
 - To date grants issued for 12 gas boilers, 1 central heating system, 2 homes insulated and 5 hybrid boiler grants
 - Letter drop to all residents offering assistance from DCC's Managing Money Better service on energy tariffs, fuel debts and Warm Homes Discounts
 - Empty Properties – external inspection completed on empty properties
- Deneside East and Blackhall Colliery South
 - Empty Properties – external inspection completed on all empty properties
 - Inspection being prioritised using scoring matrix – low, medium & high to identify level of intervention required
 - Conversations with Housing Providers, Accent & Believe regarding their stock
- Thickley and Coundon Grange
 - Engagement with Livin as a key partner and stakeholder in Thickley – joint working on actions
 - Coundon Grange - review of Accents properties ongoing

Future planned actions include

- New Kyo and Stanley Hall West
 - Solid wall insulation grant project commencing in Jan 2022 to targeted streets in New Kyo and Stanley Hall West
 - Joint working with Stanley Medical Group targeting patients with asthma or COPD to provide warmer homes
 - Community Engagement exercise being planned for November using on line and hard copy resident survey
 - Engagement exercise will inform opportunities for bids to the Towns and Villages Fund
- Deneside East and Blackhall Colliery South
 - Letters to empty homes owners
 - Present at East MAPS – explain role of TDP and engage/network with all services and partners who attend meeting
 - Engagement with community – using various options.
 - Targeted ECO grant promotions will take place over the autumn/winter period
- Thicklely and Coundon Grange
 - Scoping potential insulation measures for Livin's properties in the area
 - Scoping Clean and Green measures and environmental works

TDP monitoring and future programme

- TDP Governance Group established:
 - Oversees emerging projects to ensure alignment with relevant TDP action framework.
 - Monitoring delivery from project inception to completion.
 - TDP Governance Group feeds into Towns and Villages workstream.
 - Annual report and update of TDP action plans to reflect delivery.
- Future programme of TDPs in development - to build on the first six documents and scale up the number and coverage of TDPs across the County.

Towns and Villages



Background

Increased recognition of the issues & challenges facing
town centres / retail areas
communities undergoing change

Cabinet reports – 2018, 2020 and 2021

Significant public / private investment across the county and £25 million
allocated through Towns and Villages programme

Includes £210,000 per AAP (2021/22 – 23/24) plus member uplift

Focus on:

1. Supplementing programmes and accelerating delivery
2. Partnership Working
3. Aligning activities and budgets
4. Focus on disadvantaged communities – equitable approach
5. Includes rural communities
6. Five delivery themes

The Five Themes

- Strategic Investments – support for town and neighbourhood centres
- Housing and Community - to support the accelerated delivery of the Housing Strategy, creating resilient communities;
- Environment and Health - to create local opportunities through high quality environment;
- Built Environment - to support regeneration activities within our towns and villages; find innovative solutions to underused / derelict land and buildings; support independent retailers and businesses; and to provide clean and attractive built environments that communities are proud of;
- Transport and Connectivity - to ensure connected communities through excellent connectivity for businesses and the workforce

Housing & Community Theme

Community Housing

- Focuses on
 - supporting the development of small scale residential build / conversion
 - Meeting needs of community groups / communities of interest
- Delivered in conjunction with registered providers.
- Also draws upon affordable housing, s106 and COMF funding.
- 8 schemes under development county wide
 - Looking to support disabled, learning difficulty and veterans groups
- First scheme open at Gilesgate, Durham

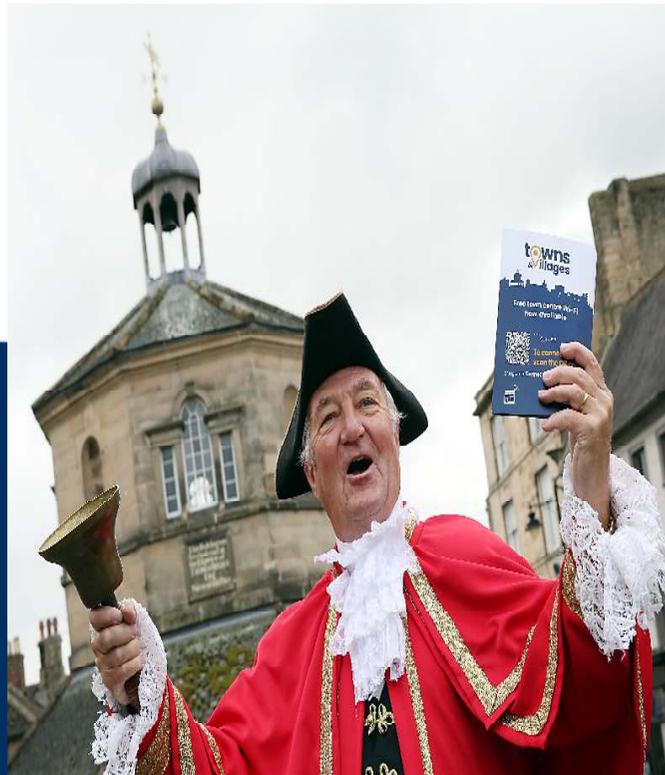


Towns and Villages Budget Allocations

Theme	Project	Capital allocation (£)	Revenue allocation (£)	Total
Strategic Investments	Digital High Street	575,000	200,000	775,000
	Retail Hub		300,000	300,000
	Neighbourhood Retail Improvements	2,750,000		2,750,000
	Town and Village Vibrancy		200,000	200,000
Housing and Community	Community Housing	700,000		700,000
	Housing Opportunities Fund	150,000		150,000
	Improving Community Resilience	2,000,000		2,000,000
	Green Homes Fuel Efficiency Programme	850,000		850,000
	Horden Regeneration Programme	4,500,000		4,500,000
	Allotment Improvement Programme	75,000		75,000
Environment and Health	Enhanced Environmental Maintenance	500,000		500,000
Built Environment	Vulnerable Buildings	1,250,000	50,000	1,300,000
	Property Reuse and Conversion	500,000		500,000
	Dean Bank Clearance and Improvement	150,000		150,000
	Easington Colliery Programme	1,000,000	50,000	1,050,000
	South Moor Improvement Programme	200,000		200,000
	Sacriston Workshop Conversion	200,000		200,000
Transport and Connectivity	Walking and Cycling Routes	3,750,000		3,750,000
	Neighbourhood Parking and Circulation	850,000		850,000
Local Programme	AAP Area Improvement Fund	4,200,000		4,200,000
Total:		24,200,000	800,000	25,000,000

Strategic Investments Theme

Digital High Street



Guest Wi-Fi and Smart Footfall Monitor now live in:

- Stanley (March 2020)
- Bishop Auckland (March 2020)
- Seaham (August 2021)
- Chester le Street (August 2021)
- Barnard castle (August 2021)

Next Areas for deployment:

- Durham City
- Crook
- Consett
- Spennymoor

Digital Retail Training Programme

Exploring app opportunities to support independent traders and customer loyalty



Strategic Investments Theme

Neighbourhood Retail Improvements

- **Delivery April – October 2021**
 - 15 Retail Businesses supported
 - £444,687 Private Sector Investment attracted
 - 40 Jobs Created
 - £136,207 Grants Awarded
 - 5 New Businesses Supported
 - 7 Vacant Properties brought back into use
- **Underway**
 - 8 schemes on site with works commenced
- **Development**
 - 20 applicants working through application process
- **Retail Clients April – October 2021**
 - 93 New Clients



Strategic Investments Theme

Neighbourhood Retail Improvements

- **Delivery April – October 2021**
- 7 Retail Businesses supported
- £195,507 Private Sector Investment attracted
- 13 Jobs Created
- £68,693 Grants Awarded
- 2 New Businesses Supported
- 3 Vacant Properties brought back into use



- **Underway**
- 11 on site works commenced
- **Development**
- 22 working through application



Housing & Community Theme

Community Housing

- Focuses on
 - supporting the development of small scale residential build / conversion
 - Meeting needs of community groups / communities of interest
- Delivered in conjunction with registered providers.
- Also draws upon affordable housing, s106 and COMF funding.
- 8 schemes under development county wide
 - Looking to support disabled, learning difficulty and veterans groups
- First scheme open at Gilesgate, Durham

Awaiting images

Housing & Community Theme

Green Homes Fuel Efficiency Programme

Towns and Villages External Wall Insulation Schemes

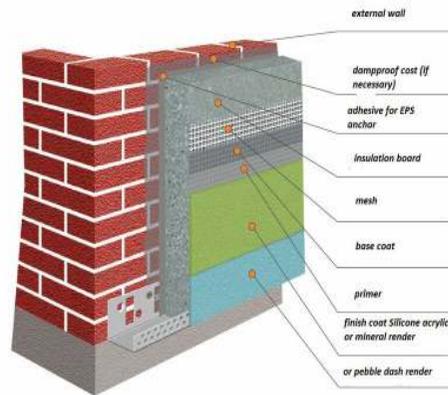
Saving Carbon, reducing energy bills , improving whole streets and communities

- **Villages**

- Dean Bank – Newton, Watt, Stephenson Faraday, Bessemer Streets
- Chilton – West Chilton Tce, Denebridge Row
- Coundon Grange – Front Row, Kimberley St
- New Kyo – Woodbine, Catherine, Prospect Tce

- **Match Funding**

- BEIS LAD Phase 1a, 1b, 2 - £8M
- Chilton Energy CIC - £250K
- Warm Homes Fund - £240K
- Towns and Villages Fund - £850K



Environment & Health Theme

Enhanced Environmental Maintenance



Staindrop - recently completed a number of improvements in the village and the surrounding areas. This has included development of a 'social seating area', aimed at encouraging residents to get out and socialise, whilst doing so in a safe and distant manner. Other works included installation of 12 benches, a number of new litter bins and a heritage wayfinder.

Built Environment Theme

Vulnerable Buildings

- Significant focus on impacts from vacant, abandoned and unmanaged property
- Approx 50 buildings currently under review.
- Co-ordinated use of planning, environmental health and housing powers alongside advice and support to achieve improvements
- Buildings demolished in
 - Easington
 - Seaham (x2)
 - Sacriston



Built Environment Theme Property Reuse & Conversion



Focus on reuse of empty & vulnerable buildings
Four Loans Issued
Air BnB Picture featured
One applicant under consideration

Built Environment Theme

Sacriston Workshop Conversion



Transport & Connectivity Theme

Neighbourhood Parking and Circulation



Rosemary Lane Nursery School & Resident Parking

One way access road created to aid drop off and collection

16 new car parking bays created

New footway to support safe pedestrian access to school



Strategic Investments Theme

Aligned Delivery in Town Centres

Spennymoor Market Place

- Work will start in early 2022 to improve the Market Place area
- The proposed demolition of the bandstand will create a more flexible space for events
- Construction of new, wider steps will improve access to the newly refurbished retail units on Festival Walk
- Improvements will enhance the development of Festival Walk and the newly constructed Town Centre car park



Seaham townscape Heritage Project – Underway Business Grants Church Street



Seaham Townscape Heritage Project – Underway Public Realm Improvements



Before



After



Seaham Townscape Heritage Project – Planner Public Realm Improvements



Existing



Artists Impression

Bishop Auckland Regeneration Programme – Public Realm



- DCC investment in public realm and recent refurbishment of Bishop Auckland Town Hall in line with masterplan priorities.
- Masterplan provides the backdrop to Future High Street and Stronger Towns funding awards.
- Public and Private investment being delivered across the town including recently opened Spanish Art Gallery
- DCC support through the Future high Street Fund to provide improved external environment / spill out space / public safety features aligns with enhanced Environmental maintenance and property reuse priorities.

Towns and Villages

Questions?

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