



Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Date **Thursday 2 September 2021**
Time **9.30 am**
Venue **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

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

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the meetings held on 18 June and 28 July 2021
(Pages 3 - 26)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Medium Term Financial Plan(12) 2022/23 - 2025/26 and Review of
the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme - Report of the Corporate
Director of Resources (Interim) (Pages 27 - 62)
6. Quarter 4 2020/21 Budget Outturn - Report of the Corporate Director
of Resources (Interim) (Pages 63 - 78)
7. County Durham Partnerships update - Report of the Corporate
Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change (Pages 79 - 104)
8. Update in relation to Petitions - Report of the Head of Legal and
Democratic Services (Pages 105 - 126)
9. Notice of Key Decisions - Report of the Head of Legal and
Democratic Services (Pages 127 - 136)

10. Information Update from the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees - Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Interim) (Pages 137 - 142)
11. 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
24 August 2021

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

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

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

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 18 June 2021 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor C Martin (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

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

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Maddison, R Charlton-Lainé and L Hovvels.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising:

The Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager responded to a query about the number of hospital admissions relating to women with alcohol related illnesses and confirmed that Durham was higher than the national average for females and males. He would circulate figures to Board Members after the meeting.

The Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager confirmed that it was an offence under the Environmental and Protection Act to burn commercial waste unless exempt. There was joint responsibility for investigating illegal burning of waste between Environmental Health who would investigate smoke and odour nuisance and the Environment Agency who would take enforcement.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Report on the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - Q3 and Q4

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which informed members about the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ('RIPA') during the period 1 October 2020 and 31 December 2020 (quarter 3) and 1 January 2021 and 31 March 2021 (quarter 4) (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved

- i. That the report be received
- ii. That the powers were being used consistently with the Council's policy and that the policy remained fit for purpose.

6 Q4 2020/21 Customer Feedback

The Board considered a report of the Interim Director of Resources which provided the Customer Feedback Report for quarter four, 2020/21 (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Crute referred to the low number of statutory complaints which had been upheld and asked whether there was an underlying reason for this, such as an overcomplicated process for service users. He also asked for further information on how complaints were recorded. The Interim Head of Digital and Customer Services advised that the information provided was at a high level but the complaints procedure was regularly audited and feedback requested through the process. Complaints that did not progress to the Social Care or Local Government Ombudsmen were also recorded so there was a full audit trail should a customer complain at a later date.

Councillor Jopling suggested that with regard to the digital skills survey, the response rate was low and the Interim Head of Digital and Customer Services confirmed that there was a full in depth report of the survey that gathered a lot more information such as age, demographics, disabilities and access issues and a copy would be provided following the meeting. She added that partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureau helped to establish the options available. AAP's and Community Centres were also linked with the Digital Durham Reboot Scheme which offered recycled Council equipment to charities and community organisations.

Councillor Elmer referred to the complaints that had been upheld by the LGO and asked whether the feedback from those decisions would lead to service changes. The Interim Head of Digital and Customer Services advised that a robust investigation was done to understand what could have been done differently and whether development or staff training was required.

Councillor Coult referred to the customer feedback summary and asked what steps had been taken to improve the figures. The Interim Head of Digital and Customer Service confirmed that people had different perceptions on how they should be informed and therefore the service were enhancing automated responses and trying to ensure updates included more context.

Councillor Adam referred to emergency out of hours calls and asked whether they were recorded as he often received reports from residents advising that they could not get through to an operator. The Interim Head of Digital and Customer Services confirmed that outside of the core business hours, calls were transferred to a telecare service and emergency issues were logged on the CRM with non-emergencies passed to Customer Services. On average there were no more than twenty calls per closed period and the majority related to highways or issues for the clean and green team.

Councillor Marshall commended the efforts of staff who had transformed the way services were provided to ensure residents were able to continue to report issues. With regards to digital connectivity, he advised that there were wider issues to investigate than just access to broadband, such as affordability and access to equipment which had been proven by remote learning in schools during the pandemic.

Councillor Lines asked whether pressures to switch from face to face to digital services had been emerging prior to COVID-19 and whether people who had been forced to make the switch were comfortable with it. The Interim Head of Digital and Customer Services advised that there had been a steady decline of people at Customer Access Points who were choosing to use the telephone prior to the pandemic, but the only way some benefit claims could be processed was in person and the restrictions had led to the digitisation of some of these processes. Additional services and support such as webchat could advise people how to use some of the online facilities with the option of screen browsing. There had been no complaints from those who would have normally attended in person.

The Interim Head of Digital and Customer Services advised that there would be more digitally supported services in future such as access to devices, supported self-serve and virtual appointments, where equipment in Customer Access Points would be offered. Some people may not return so the figures and feedback would continue to be monitored to decide what the offer was going forward.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

7 State of the County Report 2020/21

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

With regards to more and better jobs, Councillor Surtees queried the statement that the jobs market had been broadly stable and was making early signs of recovery. She asked whether the statistics provided were measured as the total number of jobs or the total number of individuals who were employed as there was a difference between an individual with one job and n individual who had three jobs, and this could explain why the employment rate was slightly higher. Councillor Surtees advised that she represented Easington which had the highest rate of unemployment in the County, but was also the highest populated area with a fifth of the County's population. The area had had a lot of stagnant wages, no pay rises, ten years of austerity, all exacerbated by COVID-19 and recently there had been an increase in child poverty, echoed across the County.

Councillor Surtees was interested to know the impact of child poverty across the County as it was an issue that was combined with other poverty issues such as fuel, low paid jobs and zero hour contracts, with many residents subject to financial pressures. Although there were brilliant schemes such as welfare assistance, the Council needed a robust system to monitor the impact of child poverty across County Durham. With regards to healthy life expectancy, Councillor Surtees advised that she had reached the expected age limit live a healthy life in East Durham and this was again due to deprivation. Finally, with regards to an increase in Looked after Children (LAC) and Children in Care (CIC), Councillor Surtees had read a recent report confirming that deprivation had a significant impact in children going into care which also had an effect on the Councils budget.

The Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager advised that the statistics with regards to the employment rate was with regards to individuals employed and not jobs, but he advised that it was artificially high due to the furlough scheme. With regards to Child Poverty, he agreed it was multi-faceted and not something easily measured. The indicator used was children eligible for free school meals, but there was a whole host of issues associated with child poverty such as educational opportunity and access to equipment impacted on education inequality and he agreed that following the impact of COVID-19 on educational attainment, all issues needed to be closely monitored.

Councillor Stead referred to fly tipping incidents being reported per hectare and queried the reasonableness of the measurement given that County Durham was significantly rural, especially compared to South Tyneside which was one of the areas it was compared to.

The Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager advised that this was a recently developed measure and confirmed that reporting as the number of incidents was not comparative to other local authorities as Durham had the highest population. It had been measured per hectare and per head of population but another difficulty was that that one incident of fly tipping could be a black bag full of rubbish or a lorry load so he was open to looking at alternative methods.

In response to a question from Councillor Adam regarding the nature of the report as this was a basic summary rather than the normal performance report that would be considered at Quarter four. The Head of Transformation, Planning and Performance advised that the full Quarter four performance report would be provided at the next meeting after it had been reported to Cabinet however it was important for information that was publicly available to be presented in order to frame the work programme.

Councillor Adam referred to the key stage four educational attainment figures and suggested that focus in key stage one was also required as there had been reports that children were struggling with writing due to the lockdown period. In order for children to get a good start in life, it was important that both reading and writing were closely monitored in key stage one.

Councillor Adam referred to many changes in government and this local authority and with regards to adapting to climate change, he asked whether there would be a review of the climate emergency response plan in light of COVID-19, to reflect what would be happening in the future as the Council adapted to new ways of working and policy changes.

The Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager advised that the Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee would look at reading and writing attainment when considering the quarter four performance report and agreed that the climate emergency response plan would need to be revisited as the pandemic had accelerated new ways of working which would undoubtedly have had an effect.

Councillor Jopling queried the additional 2% of waste going to landfill and asked what this equated to in tonnage and why it could not be processed as expected. The Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager advised that the process for disposing of waste was either recycling or burning to create energy, however due to the increase in volume a backlog had built up at the

waste plants. The recycling market had also been overwhelmed and therefore some of it had had to be disposed of in alternative ways as due to environmental protection regulations waste could not be stored.

Councillor Gunn referred to pupils eligible for FSM, County Durham was high at 29.4% compared to the national rate at 22.8%. With regards to the government change in the census data for the collection of FMS data and whether it would have any impact on the data that would be collated. That change had already happened and would be impacting on pupil premium.

Councillor Gunn commended the work of staff in Schools and Children and Young People's Services and although she completely understood the reasons behind the target with regards to EHCP's, it was incredibly low at 50% and she felt this should be addressed as the time taken to get a plan was a regular issue raised by parents. The Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager agreed that the EHCP target was a low compliance rate and advised that although they needed to monitor this, the regulations were expected to change and EHCP's could be scrapped altogether.

Councillor Gunn referred to the other complex issues regarding LAC/CIC as in addition to deprivation there were other compounding factors such as children and families court delays, which impacted on the adoption process. The Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager Data advised that data had been presented to CPP with regards to levels of deprivation and LAC a number of years prior, and there was a predictable correlation which had resulted in the restructure of services and enabled teams to operate according to the needs of certain areas.

Councillor Coult requested that the figures on children Not in Education, Employment or Training were reported by area as this was a factor when considering impacts on young people's mental health.

Councillor Marshall referred to more and better jobs and the report highlighted that the Council was yet to see the impact on the economy from the COVID-19 restrictions. He referred to the County Durham Plan which included plans to create 30000 jobs, with new and affordable homes in the right places. When coupled with the work done on the key strategic employment sites such as Forest Park, Milburngate and the plans for the Aykley heads development which were well underway, this would hopefully provide a much better and optimistic future for residents across the county. More than ever the council needed to see these plans fast tracked and investment in infrastructure and efforts to create jobs doubled.

Councillor Marshall commented that it would be interesting to see how the Council would start to roll out some of the work in place to invest in the infrastructure such as the town and villages, leisure transformation and

capital house building programme, which were key in fast tracking County Durham's recovery. It was important as a Board to monitor not just key performance data which was lagged, but also the intelligence from AAPs and communities as there could be consequences for decisions taken both nationally and locally, that would impact on communities.

The Corporate Scrutiny & Strategy Manager agreed that the Council were in a period of uncertainty, there would be impacts when the furlough scheme ended, impacts due to Brexit, and the public sector and local authorities had an important role to play in delivering capital projects that would have an effect on the economy.

The Head of Head of Transformation, Planning and Performance confirmed that the post pandemic economy could look very different, but it was important to remember that the County had seen boosts in the employment rate, however it was important to continue to monitor.

Councillor Avery was surprised that the figures relating to crime had reduced as he did not believe this to be the case in his locality. There was an issue in Ferryhill of private landlords renting properties to people from all over the country and various crimes had been reported as well as antisocial behaviour, but there seemed to be no control measures to stop this from happening.

The Head of Transformation, Planning and Performance confirmed that the crime data was combined from the police and the council and there had been an increase in antisocial behaviour which had been determined as COVID-19 related and an increase in fly tipping. He advised that local data would be presented in future in order to see specific areas of concern.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

8 Refresh of the Work Programme 2021/22

The Board considered a report of the Interim Corporate Director of Resources which provided the updated work programme for 2021/2022 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Chair reassured Members of the Board that new Chairs and Vice Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees had an open door policy and were open to suggestions on what should be on various work programmes. He also confirmed that they intended to be proactively scrutinising executive decisions prior to them being made.

Councillor Crute referred to the forthcoming review on the decision to close the DLI museum which was due to be considered by Cabinet in September. Due to the timescales and August recess it would be difficult, however he asked that it be considered by the Board prior to this meeting.

Councillor Adam asked for confirmation of dates of meetings and the Head of Transformation, Planning and Performance advised that the diary was in the process of being agreed and he would provide an update following the meeting.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

9 Overview and Scrutiny Annual report 2020/21

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources to present the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report 2020/21 for comment and approval prior to submission to the County Council meeting on 14 July 2021.

Councillor Crute, former Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board advised that the report covered a very difficult year for communities whilst faced a global pandemic and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the work programme had been paused until emergency legislation was in place and committees could be restarted remotely.

The scrutiny work programmes had to be reprioritised with a reduced timetable of meetings and shortened agendas, but he advised that some good scrutiny had been carried out and was reflected in the pared down annual report.

He advised that review work was limited last year and there were no site visits however, Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the important development of a new Road Safety Strategy and the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee concluded its review examining the extent of GP coverage across County Durham and the range of services offered by GP practices.

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board scrutinised the Cabinet's MTFP proposals and comments were included in the final budget report to Council. All of the thematic committees received detailed information on the impact of COVID-19 on the various service groupings and heard plans for recovery.

He thanked all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Co-optees, and Officers for their continued hard work throughout this difficult year and asked members to accept the report.

Resolved

That the report be noted

10 Update in relation to Petitions

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which provided for information the quarterly update in relation to the current situation regarding various petitions received by the Authority (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved

That the report be noted.

11 Notice of Key Decisions

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to consider the list of key decisions that was scheduled to be considered by the Executive.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Special Meeting of **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 28 July 2021 at 1.30 pm**

Present:

Councillor C Martin (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

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

Also in attendance:

Councillors L Brown, J Rowlandson and M Wilkes (Cabinet)

Councillors J Blakey, P Heaviside, L Holmes, C Hunt, G Hutchinson, D McKenna and P Molloy.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Lines and M Stead.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor J Nicholson substitute for Councillor C Lines
Councillor L Brown substitute for M Stead

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillor D McKenna declared an interest as a Trustee of East Durham Veterans Trust and Chairman of the Fusiliers Branch Sunderland.

Councillor K Shaw declared an interest as a Trustee of East Durham Veterans Trust.

4 Review of the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Collection and Archive

The Management Board considered a report and presentation of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which provided

the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) with an opportunity to contribute to a review by Cabinet of the options for the future storage, care, and display of the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Collection, archive, museum buildings and grounds (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chair welcomed representatives from stakeholder organisations who were present at the meeting and also members of the public attending.

The Head of Transformation, Planning and Performance explained the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had been tasked by Cabinet to hold an open consultative session of members and key stakeholders to consider recommendations to support Cabinet's review on the options for the future of the DLI collection and archive.

He went on to advise that both the Army Museum Ogilby Trust and the National Army Museum had planned to attend but given the high incidence of COVID-19 in County Durham they reluctantly decided earlier this week not to travel. The Chair of the Board had agreed that due to the circumstances, their joint submission should be included in the papers to be discussed. The submission was circulated to Members the previous day and was read out during the course of the meeting.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth alongside the Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism and Durham History Centre Programme Lead provided a detailed presentation which highlighted the two questions which the review would aim to answer through careful assessment:

Question 1: Can the former DLI building be brought back into use to house the DLI collection?

Question 2: What are the options to repurpose the former DLI building/site for an alternative use?

The presentation further provided an overview of the timeline and history of the previous decisions regarding the DLI museum, collection and archive and the development of the Durham History Centre project, including public consultation.

In summary the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth explained that the review would seek to:

- Explore options for displaying and storing and care of DLI collection in the existing DLI building.
- To undertake an impact assessment on the plans for the new History Centre

- To assess the impact on the storage, display, and care of other DCC collections and archive
- Provide a high-level options assessment, which would include any suitable alternatives uses for the former DLI building and with regard to the grounds and environment around the site.

Mrs D Inglis, Faithful Durhams was then invited to put forward her representation.

“Thank you Chair for giving us this opportunity to speak. My name is Diane English and I am secretary of Facebook group the Faithful Durhams, a group including other County Durham groups.

Our group was born out of the original group Save the DLI Museum which came about when it was decided to close the museum without public consultation in 2015, finally closing its doors in March 2016. We hold the DLI Regimental history close to our hearts and visited the museum regularly.

We have campaigned in and around Durham asking for public views on the closure and giving out information we had, such as why we were told the museum was closing, which range from financial problems, the museum being too far away from the city centre and that no one visited. We also let them know of some of the tricks along the way played by DCC. One example is the Labour councillor who spoke about vegetables in order to talk out time so that the DLI museum could not be discussed.

The people we spoke to were disgusted, and like us could not understand why the people had not been told about any difficulties or problems that had arisen. They felt let down and that the Trustees of the Collection and DCC should be ashamed of what had gone on and how the closure was conducted, after all almost all of us in County Durham, including some of us in this room had family members who served in the DLI - some even have loved one's ashes laid to rest in the grounds.

On that note ex councillor Neil Foster who was a cabinet member for Arts and Culture stated that a few sods of grass could be pulled up and taken to the Palace Green... how thoughtful of him.

The year leading up to the Museum closure there were 38,000 visitors this does not signify a poor attendance; the Green Howards Museum survives on around 17,000 visitors.

Our views on the move of the collection to the new history centre was that we realised council would not reopen the museum, the collection was split up. We felt we should support the new centre in order to get the collection back together.

Council did say that closing the museum would save £250,000 these figures have been proven to be incorrect, Sevenhills costs £588,000 per year (this building also houses more than DLI collection) as well as expenses paid to the University, including a one off payment of £90,000 plus £50,000 per annum (which is almost £1000 a week) as well as £175,000 on new cabinets, which the museum already had, the removal of the Collection and not forgetting the removal and relocation of the Inkermann stone (which is now beside the public toilets and litter bins) how appropriate.

The closure appears to have cost considerably more than the £250,000. DCC carried out a survey of the Museum in 2015 which found that in order to keep it up to scratch £250,000 was needed to be spent over a five-year period. Via FOI requests we found that 68 people had viewed the medals over a 5-year period. This was probably due to the number of hoops you had to jump through to get to see them.

Also, by FOI request we found that there was still no complete inventory of the Collection, considering this collection is worth millions of pounds we found a cause of concern. Colonel Ramsbotham, Chair of the Trustees at the time of closure did say that this new approach was making the collection a lot more accessible to the public, we found the complete opposite. Colonel Ramsbotham is no longer Chair of the Trustees.

We attended meetings with council officer Steven Howell as well as Trustees and Association members. The first meeting we were told that we could not relay any information to our group, which we could not agree to as we were there as our group's representatives. We were told that the History Centre would be the new home of the Collection and we were glad to hear this, but the next meeting the Collection was down to a couple of cabinets on a rotary basis. This meeting a Colonel swore at me and we were lied to about Museums being out of fashion and that my husband's regimental museum was closing, this was not true.

We supported the idea of the History Centre placing adverts in the local paper asking the public to get behind council consultations, both consultations the DLI came tops, however we were taken on board to keep us quiet. We were banned from the councils Facebook page as we asked too many questions about the Museum. Some strange things have gone on and I feel sure some people in this room will know more about them than us, such as the coincidence of a Trustee Major Lawton being made a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the County the day after the museum closed. Colonel Ramsbotham said it was an unfortunate timing.

Major Lawton is not the only Deputy Lieutenant of the county to be a Trustee, also we cannot understand why the DLI Association have never supported

our campaign, we were fighting for their Regimental Museum, again we were told by several of them that they were informed from higher authority to avoid our group... why?

The council have been playing with words about the new History Centre, stating it will be the first time in years that the Collection and Archives are housed together... they may be housed together but there certainly will not be a permanent DLI display. It appears the new history centre will have a lot of virtual or digital displays which is not a museum.

Our groups aim has always been to have the DLI Collection housed and displayed as a whole collection, of course understanding that most museums do not put every item on display. We were told the collection would not be split up and it was. The public told us they wanted to be able to see the collection, wanted their children to be able to view closeup, Wakenshaw's gun, take a seat in the Jeep, be able to walk around looking at uniforms, medals - weapons that grandad had or worn. The main aim, which was pointed out to us very clearly when speaking to people, was that a dedicated DLI museum was wanted, the DLI deserve that. If the archives and the collection were housed together this will be a great asset for historians, family researchers etc, having access to the written history of the DLI, however, keeping the new History Centre as the home for the archives could be an asset to the two buildings as each one could promote the other. We are very proud of our county history be it mining, railways or military but mining has Killhope, railways have Shildon, what does the DLI have?

Should council decide after reviewing all the information to reopen the Art Gallery and Museum we know this would be a massive step to putting things right. This would show the public that what went on regarding the closure was amongst other things a farce, and that perhaps this decision could be looked at a little closer at a later date. We've always been very conscious that the museum is surrounded by Veterans and other ashes which sadly did not seem to mean that much at the time of the closure. This leads us on to the outstanding grounds in the area, where wildlife is in abundance, walking areas are used and pure peace is promoted there. An ideal base to begin a day out and don't forget just over the road is the multi-million Wharton Park. Consider too the fact of ample car parking at museum. A cafe once again could be looked at, as people have said they Sevenhills.

Advertising is a must, as the museum had not been advertised effectively for years prior to its closure, which could have been deliberate. Durham is making its bid for City of Culture in 2023 what is more cultural than a museum and art gallery, especially as at the moment Durham City has no Art Gallery. Finance should also be considered in the reopening of the museum, as stated earlier the expenditure due to the Museum closure is ridiculous, we do appreciate that money cannot be plucked out of thin air to fund this

reopening, however millions of pounds were, by the previous council set aside for cricket clubs, Auckland project and the new council HQ, but hopefully, via grants, careful planning and simply doing the right thing this can be overcome.

Consider the public's opinion which has already been proven to count for a lot, after the historical defeat of Labour in County Durham in May this year. The people made their voices heard via their vote. During both wars and campaigns before and after thousands of DLI men fought and died they deserve to be honoured. What we must ensure is that this is never allowed to happen again, with both the collection or the grounds, and that the collection is put into the hands of people who will listen and who will generally have the DLI Regimental History at heart, the way it was years ago.

Our group, The Faithful Durhams, would like to once again Chair thank you and the new council for finally listening to the people we've spoken to whilst out on the streets. It's been a long time coming for a lot of us, but we would do it again in a heartbeat. Some of the things that I've mentioned may not sit well with some people, however this is the truth as we see it. I will finish now with this story. James Holland a prominent historian who also backed us, told us he was at Pegasus Bridge one Remembrance Day, all the dignitaries, officers etc, were standing around chatting after the service and at the back of the room stood an old DLI soldier, so he went up to this old man introduced himself and asked, "so Sir where did you go during the war", the old man simply smiled and said "son, we were all over".

After reading online the Chair of Trustees' statement, once again we are disgusted. He states that there is little other than fond memories that is of regimental interest at the museum. Well, what about the ashes of the DLI lads. Yes, these lads were probably miners before soldiers, but they put their lives on the line so that we could have a future. As for coming back, living in the community thousands never came back.

On a personal note, can I offer our group sincere condolences to Audrey Willis or should I say Audrey Court whose husband Richie passed away last night. Ritchie was Chair of the Faithful Durhams and ex DLI"

The Chair thanked Mrs Inglis for her statement and asked the Head of Strategy and Transformation to summarise the statements provided in advance by the stakeholders and to read for the benefit of the Board and others present, a late joint statement received from The Army Museums Ogilby Trust.

"The Army Museums Ogilby Trust (AMOT) has been involved with the collection of the Durham Light Infantry since our foundation over 70 years ago. Robert Ogilby our founder endowed the original DLI museum and our

Trust has supported it with regular grants and acquisition funds. In the last few years leading up to the closure of the Aykley Heads site grants exceeded £20k. We have also supported directly the DLI Trustees in their work including funding their governance reforms to a further £10k.

The National Army Museum (NAM) has given advice, training, and a whole range of professional support at no cost to the Local Authority since the early 1970's. It has regularly placed exhibitions from the National Army collection in the former DLI museum site and did so especially over the period of Great War centenaries and Waterloo bicentenary.

Since the closure of the museum at Aykley Heads in 2015/16 we have offered support and partnerships both with Durham County Council and the DLI Trustees. We encouraged both the appropriate conservation and care of the collection and pressed repeatedly for continued public access. We developed and deepened our relationship with Durham County Archives and its DLI holdings. We jointly supported the arrangements on Palace Green and the move to Sevenhills though always insisting these were interim moves.

At every juncture we have worked with Council officers, a committed and experienced curatorial and archive team, and the political leadership of the Council, with no regard to political stripe. This led in time to a Memorandum of Understanding agreed in 2017 which allowed AMOT funding and NAM advice for a superb programme of travelling exhibitions. It also opened the way for funded additional curatorial capacity from AMOT.

Over the last 5 years the DLI collection and archives have received over £100k in direct grants and matched funding. In addition, we provided over £13k of funding to the Durham Hymns project working with the archives and Northern Bands Trust. We raised the profile of the collection and the opportunities arising from having no permanent home. This included a NAM facilitated and AMOT funded study day in London, held at the NAM, for local authorities. Significant keynote contributions were given at this event by Durham CC and West Sussex CC who have a similar issue with a Regimental collection.

The costs of regular travel to Durham from our bases in Salisbury and London respectively and the hidden administrative costs and staff resourcing also need to be noted. I estimate overall with grants and support costs committed to the DLI collection AMOT is committed to the tune of over £170k. The NAM costs at this stage must also be significant.

Public funders have already noted the discussions in Durham and not in a positive light. Certainty is needed or a perception of unreliability will grow.

AMOT still has resources committed to Durham especially in regard to archives. Like other stakeholders we will be patient for the democratic

processes involved but it is safe to say that major changes will take our focus elsewhere. AMOT and NAM work with a network of 144 Regimental and Corps collections and currently are involved in 8 major military museum building projects apart from Durham. This includes major projects in each of the devolved parts of the UK. If our funding is not needed in Durham it will be welcome elsewhere. We will also look to recover our original spend.

AMOT and NAM were delighted when in early 2019 members of Durham CC gave the agreement to the Durham History Centre project. The project has grown and become a well thought through and integrated plan in which stakeholders were regularly consulted, including AMOT and NAM. It has from the outset been a joint effort. In Gillian Kirkbride and her team, the collection has imaginative and creative talents. The project will undoubtedly lead to greater and wider public access built on the inspiring links with the local community that have existed for so long. It also takes into account the trajectory of travel in museums across the world who have raised expectations including more technology, as part of the offer to any prospective audience.

The recently opened National Army Museum of America relies almost exclusively on virtual technology. The marriage of archives and collection on one site is certainly the way ahead and Durham CC and the people of Durham should be very proud of this project.

It is clearly the case some have felt uneasy with the plans and have been loud and persistent in their views though not always constructively. It is also the case that the communications of the Council have left external organisations like ourselves frequently bemused and frustrated at every stage of this story. It has appeared at time that our contributions have not been fully recognised which is sad considering our only interest is the preservation and promotion of the extraordinary stories and history of the DLI and the community from which it was hewn.

We strongly feel the Council should take into account in its review our financial commitment both to date and in the future. It should consider the damage to the profile of Durham if it binned another museum plan. How would this be received by external funders? It should reflect on the duty to care for the collection in the long term as its current home is not suitable for this purpose. It should also consider the museum and archive team gathered around this project. Once a skill set is diffused or even dispersed the loss is often irreparable.

The open sore of the Aykley Heads site is clearly an issue the Council feels it should address but this is for another conversation and with greater thought. AMOT and NAM would offer our thoughts on the possibilities but any suggestion that this should return as a museum we roundly reject. The

present Director of the Imperial War Museum and a former AMOT Trustee is frequently quoted as stating that a museum is not a memorial.

The honour due to the DLI lives on in the community and the desire to tell its story afresh and anew to future generations. Durham History Centre project is close to making that commitment a reality and so we warmly commend it to the review process. It is worthy of the DLI and the people of this part of England.

Thank you for allowing our submission and our earlier conversations with the Council leadership. We wish you well in your deliberations, the people of Durham in these difficult times and look forward to our future visits and projects together”.

The Chair then invited questions from the Board and members.

Councillor McKenna added that he had intended to ask for a moment of remembrance at the beginning of the meeting, however noting that this had now passed asked what the future plans were for the grounds at the DLI museum and whether, given the number of ashes of former light infantrymen scattered, if they would be consecrated and blessed.

Councillor Elmer noted that although the statement read out acknowledged that the site was a museum not a memorial, however it actually was, and it was therefore extremely important that the status remained as a place for remembrance and reflection and agreed that dedication of a memorial garden would be incredibly important.

The Corporate Director Regeneration, Economy and Growth in response stated this would be considered as part of the review, noting potential legal implications, however acknowledging that ensuring the honour of County Durham’s military history was important.

Councillor Brown noted it would be extremely important to ensure a bus service was provided to the museum and she hoped the council could explore options for a visual arts space in Durham. She went on to add she hoped the existing DLI building was viable for future use. For instance, Durham has no visual arts exhibition space.

Councillor Moist thanked Mrs Inglis for her representation which he noted was in contrast to that submitted by the Ogilby Trust. He asked whether the Faithful Durhams group would be satisfied with the set up of the History Centre if the DLI collection was on permanent display. He furthermore commented that the impact of a second location for the housing of the collection could have a positive impact.

Councillor Marshall asked for clarification as to whether it was in the council's gift to be able to say where the DLI collection was placed. In response the Durham History Centre Programme Lead advised that the collection belonged to the Trust and DCC looked after this on their behalf. Any decision taken on its relocation would be done in collaboration with the Trustees. Councillor Marshall further asked what course of action would be taken in the event that the council and the Trustees disagreed. It was explained that this would be a legal issue and dealt with in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement.

Councillor Freeman in noting his personal attachment to the DLI, expressed his disappointment that the museum had not stayed open until a decision had been made on the History Centre. Whilst he saw logic in centralising services at the centre, he commented on the importance of retaining a large permanent DLI display. Furthermore, he suggested that a programme of temporary displays at the DLI museum would ensure that an element of the history of the building remained whilst being used for an alternative purpose for example an arts venue which may help to support the council's UK City of Culture Bid.

Councillor Crute asked whether there would be any potential risks to clawback of funding should the move not go ahead. In response the Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism advised that the funding was subject to a commitment to display 5 five collections at the History Centre and should the transfer of the DLI collection not go ahead, then it would be subject to discussions with the funder. So, there would be some risk in this course of action.

Councillor Hood commented that the DLI site meant so much to family and friends of DLI veterans and ex and current Armed Forces personnel. Many had chosen this location to scatter ashes of their loved ones and as a place of remembrance should be preserved.

Councillor Jopling commented that in her opinion £250,000 was not a huge amount of money to put the existing DLI building right, given the sums of money wasted since its closure on contracts with Durham University to hold the collection. All in all, she felt that it had been an extremely expensive and avoidable exercise.

Councillor Adam added his thanks to all who had taken part in the discussions noting the emotional importance of the museum to many. He added however that in his opinion the physical artefacts connected to the DLI needed to be brought back to life in a building which was accessible and provided modern facilities for visitors. He suspected the feasibility study of the DLI museum would find it to be too expensive and unsustainable in terms of its future maintenance and its impact upon the environment. He queried

whether it would be realistic to get a full feasibility report completed by September.

In response the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth advised that the September Cabinet report would answer the two main questions outlined during her presentation, with preferred options. There will be a high level assessment and condition survey available and further work would take place once a preferred option was agreed. In terms of the timeframe for members to have detailed scrutiny of the report she advised that this would depend upon the preferred option although she expected it to be a matter of months.

Councillor McKenna remarked that the Regiment is the people and their sacrifice and is not a building. He added the building was not a war memorial.

Councillor Molloy commented that as a veteran himself coming from outside of County Durham he knew of the DLI and its importance to the people of County Durham. He therefore asked whether it would be possible to place a covenant on the land at the DLI museum to preserve it as a memorial area for the future.

In response the Corporate Director Regeneration, Economy and Growth acknowledged the clear importance of the grounds as an area of memoriam and advised that this would clearly need to be answered in the review.

Councillor Surtees commented that in her opinion Question 1 could not be answered without real consultation.

Councillor Howey suggested the grounds of the museum could be a memorial or peace garden for more than just the DLI. She asked whether the new History Centre would allow for a full family experience. In response, the Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism advised that the centre would be very family orientated.

Councillor Marshall added at this point that he wanted to thank staff for all their work over many years in relation to this issue. He did however recognise the importance of maintaining a place of commemoration for families and suggested that further work be done in this regard. He went on to refer to government funding cuts which started in 2010 and the impact this had upon council decisions over several years. However, noting that there were issues with the current DLI museum, including building maintenance, the transfer of waste for the building and reduced footfall, all of which highlighted the requirement for arrangements to be reviewed. He added that he still felt that the decision taken by the previous administration to exhibit

the important collection in a different way was the right one and welcomed the plans for a modern and engaging history centre.

Mrs D Inglis, Faithful Durhams stated the people of Durham wanted the museum open and her group represented the public.

Councillor Jackson noted that there was always hesitation when change was planned and further acknowledged the importance of retaining a place of remembrance for families who had scattered loved one's ashes on the site. He asked what percentage of the collection would be on display at the History Centre as he felt that this was key. In response the Durham History Centre Programme Lead advised that the history centre exhibition was still in development and it is not possible at this stage to confirm how many objects and archive will be displayed however, around 65% of the stories currently identified for the exhibition include DLI objects and archive.. For comparison around 550 out of 15000 items had been on permanent display at the DLI museum.

Councillor Jopling commented that scrutiny should not be political but responded to the comments made earlier about the period of austerity and said it was as a direct result of the previous administration's failings.

Councillor Gunn added that the suitability of the new History Centre for children and families was a key consideration of the previous administration. She added whilst it was known that there were very few educational visits from schools to the DLI museum the plans for the new history centre would hopefully engage more young people, she therefore felt that this was a great opportunity.

Further discussion ensued regarding advertising and promotion of the DLI museum and Durham Art Gallery and Councillor Howey noted that the reduction in footfall could have been partly to do with lack of active promotion. In response the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth agreed that promotion of school and family accessibility was key to the future success of the history centre. The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism also agreed that good communications were vital and plans were in place for engagement with key audiences furthermore, the History Centre will also be home to the registrar office for Durham and those who chose to marry there would hold the place in their hearts and would likely return to visit the centre time after time. In addition, there were plans for the History Centre to form part of the Durham Tourist Trail.

Councillor Brown suggested an exhibition at the DLI museum could be complementary to one at the History Centre. The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism confirmed at the time of the museum's closure the History Centre

had not been planned. Although the collection was dispersed it was always imagined that this may change.

Councillor Coult commented that she hoped the review would address future feasibility of the DLI museum and look to bring it back into use as a potential arts / café / storage / multi-purpose area.

The Chair then welcomed members of the public who had submitted questions in advance of the meeting and asked the Head of Strategy and Transformation to read those to the Board. The Chair then provided the response from the service.

Mr John Armstrong:

Question 1:

As there is a review into the new County Hall why do they not now use the building as the History Centre including the full DLI collection, bus parking and other things that would bring tourists back into the city centre?

Response:

The History Centre is a bespoke design and very specialist in its nature. Due to this it would not be suitable to use the new County Hall for the History Centre.

Current plans for the history centre will also include consideration on how it can support the visitor economy, including working closely with university colleagues to develop itineraries that include attractions such as the botanic gardens and the oriental museum which would support our aims for a stronger tourism offer in and around the city. This is particularly important as we develop our plans for City of Culture 2025.

The History Centre is planned to also house our registrars service and so be an appropriate setting to host weddings and other life events. The visual amenity afforded by the St Oswald setting will help ensure that this element of the centres' operations is successful.

Question 2:

Referring to a survey held prior to the decision on closing the DLI museum in 2015, why was there not a question included asking if people wanted the collection to be kept together? He further asked at this point why the question as to what the public like would to see here was not asked as he felt this was misleading.

Response:

There have been four separate public consultations over three years and one consultation did ask if they supported five collections being brought together.

Mr Peter Jackson

Question 1:

Will the Management Board ask their Cabinet Colleagues to consider the potential for creating a much-needed Durham County Arts and Crafts and Cultural "exhibition gallery and visual arts activities centre"; which would also act as a first-class visitor attraction? (question amended to include 'arts and crafts')

Question 2:

Will the Management Board also instruct the appropriate officers to explore the potential for such a venture to be run as a "Not for Profit Community Enterprise"?

Response:

Durham Art Gallery housed in the DLI museum was a popular facility and accounted for the majority of visitors to the museum building. Cabinet will include consideration of the resulting reduction in the visual arts infrastructure as part of the review of the DLI collection and former DLI museum building. In addition, we will consider our overall arts infrastructure as we develop plans in anticipation of successful shortlisting for City of Culture 2025. Management arrangements would be an integral part of this consideration, and the council would assess a number of operating models to ascertain optimum value for any cultural facility.

In conclusion the Chair advised that he would at this point close the meeting however noted that comments made by the Board would be collated to form part of the report which would be considered by Cabinet in September. He thanked everyone that had contributed to the debate on the review of the DLI collection and archive.

Councillor Crute requested that the Board consider the Cabinet decision in due course and it was agreed that the Board would receive a further report in this regard.

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

2 September 2021

**Medium Term Financial Plan (12)
2022/23 to 2025/26**



Report of Corporate Management Team

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources (Interim)

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) with an update on the proposed approach to scrutiny of the Budget 2022/23 and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) (12) 2022/23 to 2025/26.
- 2 COSMB have prioritised scrutiny of the MTFP and budget as part of their work programme.

Executive summary

- 3 The report to Cabinet sets out the plan for the MTFP (12) covering the four year period from 2022/23 to 2025/26.
- 4 The report highlights the period of significant financial uncertainty that local government is operating in brought about by a combination of the ongoing impact of the pandemic, our inherent low tax raising capacity due to our low tax base and significant budget pressures in social care and waste services alongside other unfunded pressures arising from pay and price inflation.

Recommendation(s)

- 5 Members are asked to:
 - (a) Consider and comment upon the July Cabinet report on the MTFP (12) 2022/23 to 2025/26.
 - (b) Note the timetable for scrutiny discussions.

Background

- 6 The Cabinet report includes information on
- (a) an update on the development of the 2022/23 budget since the Council agreed its MTFP (11) strategy on 24 February 2021;
 - (b) an update on the MTFP (12) savings forecast for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26;
 - (c) a draft MTFP (12) decision making timetable;
 - (d) proposed approach for consultation on the 2022/23 budget proposals and on MTFP (12);
 - (e) workforce implications;
 - (f) equality considerations;
 - (g) consideration of the proposed Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS0 for 2022/23.
- 7 COSMB has prioritised scrutiny of the MTFP and budget as part of the committee's work programme. It is proposed that scrutiny of the MTFP and budget will be according to the MTFP process as below. The Board will be notified of any variations to the overall MTFP timetable which might occur.

Date	Action
7 July 2021	MTFP report to Cabinet
2 September 2021	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider 7 July 2021 Cabinet report
13 October 2021	MTFP update report to Cabinet
25 October 2021	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider 13 October Cabinet report
15 December 2021	MTFP report to Cabinet – outcome of Comprehensive Spending Review
TBC	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider 15 December 2021 Cabinet report

Date	Action
9 January 2022	MTFP report to Cabinet – analysis of provisional local government settlement
21 January 2022	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider 9 January Cabinet report
9 February 2022	Budget report to Cabinet
10 February 2022	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider 9 February Cabinet report
23 February 2022	Council Budget and MTFP report

Background papers

- None

Contact: Andy Palmer

Tel: 03000 268551

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None specific with the report.

Finance

The report sets out the arrangements to scrutinise MTFP (12) proposals.

Consultation

The report includes information on the consultation process.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality considerations are built into the approach to developing MTFP (12) as a key element of the process.

Climate Change

The impact of final budget decisions will take into account climate change impacts

Human Rights

Any Human Rights issues will be considered for any detailed MTFP (12) proposals as they are developed and decisions made to take these forward.

Crime and Disorder

None specific with the report.

Staffing

The savings proposals in MTFP (12) will impact upon employees.

Accommodation

None specific within this report.

Risk

None specific within this report.

Procurement

None specific within this report.

Appendix 2: Medium Term Financial Plan (12), 2022/23 - 2025/26

Attached as a separate document.

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Cabinet

7 July 2021



**Medium Term Financial Plan(12), 2022/23 - 2025/26
and Review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

CORP/R/21/02

Report of Corporate Management Team

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources (Interim)

Councillor Richard Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance

Councillor Amanda Hopgood, Leader of the Council

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an update on the development of the 2022/23 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP(12)) covering the period 2022/23 to 2025/26. The report also considers a review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23.

Executive Summary

- 2 The newly appointed joint administration is committed to strong financial governance and getting value for money for public money whilst ensuring that any council tax increases are justified and affordable.
- 3 Having been appointed in May 2021, the new administration has embarked on a series of reviews of the programmes and projects it has inherited. It is in the process of determining its investment and disinvestment priorities for 2022/23 and beyond and is determined to ensure those priorities are based on meaningful engagement with all partners and stakeholders. The forecasts and assumptions included in this report do not yet include the financial implications arising from those reviews and priority setting processes.
- 4 Local Government is operating in a period of significant financial uncertainty brought about by a combination of the ongoing impact of the pandemic, our inherent low tax raising capacity due to our low tax base and significant budget pressures in social care and waste services alongside other unfunded pressures arising from pay and price inflation. The financial outlook for the Council will continue to be extremely challenging for the foreseeable future.

- 5 There continues to be significant uncertainty in terms of financial settlements for local government in the future and how available funding will be shared between local authorities. The government is expected to publish a Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in autumn 2021 covering a three year period. The uncertainty around the CSR is driven by lack of clarity on the outcome of the pandemic and the ongoing impact of Brexit upon the public finances. The forecast national deficit for 2020/21 is circa £300 million and it is forecast that this deficit will not have reduced below £100 million until at least 2025/26.
- 6 It is expected that the implementation of the findings from the Fair Funding Review (FFR), including any move to 75% Business Rate Retention, may now be delayed until at least 2023/24. There have been no further consultation documents released relating to the FFR, which indicates that it is now unlikely that this will be implemented in 2022/23. In addition, the government is presently reviewing Business Rates, the outcome of which could impact on the utilisation of business rates as a funding mechanism for local government.
- 7 The lack of clarity in relation to the CSR and FFR are exacerbated by uncertainties in relation to future council tax referendum levels, the Improved Better Care Fund, the national review of Social Care, short term funding provided to local authorities for adult and children social care pressures and the ongoing impact of the pandemic upon council services and especially council income.
- 8 This level of uncertainty is making financial planning difficult and requires the council to be flexible and adaptable in it's financial planning. In this regard the strong financial position of the council will ensure that the council is well placed to react effectively to any outcome.
- 9 At this stage, the Council is prudently planning on the basis that the council will lose £16 million of funding over a the next five years due to the impact of the outcome of the FFR but also from the forecast impact of further government funding reductions for local government to contribute to the recovery required to the national finances. It is forecast that the FFR will result in a loss of £10 million over a five year transition period with a £6 million loss due to austerity introduced over a three year period. The concern as regards the FFR continues to relate to the expected utilisation of the Advisory Council for Resource Allocation (ACRA) methodology for apportioning Public Health Grant which would result in a loss of £18 million of funding for the council, which is partially offset by gains the council would make due to other FFR formula changes
- 10 As we start to consider the budget plans for 2022/23, in line with previous practice, the MTFP Model has been reviewed and the financial forecasts for the next four years updated. The latest forecasts indicate a funding gap / savings requirement of £45.2 million will be required to balance the budget over the 2022/23 to 2025/26 period. Savings are forecast to be required in

all years of MTFP(12) as budget pressures and the impact of funding reductions outstrip the Council's ability to generate additional income from business rates and council tax. The forecasts assume the Council will apply the maximum increases in its Council Tax it is allowed to across each of the next four years, in line with government guidance.

- 11 The achievement of an additional £45.2 million of savings over the next four years will be extremely challenging – more so given the savings that the council has been required to achieve in the last ten years. The emphasis since 2011/12 has been to minimise savings from front line services by protecting them wherever possible whilst maximising savings in management and support functions. This is becoming much more difficult however, as the scope for further savings in managerial and back office efficiencies is becoming exhausted following the delivery of £247 million of savings up to 31 March 2022.
- 12 The total savings required at this stage for 2022/23 to balance the budget amount to £7.9 million, although it must be recognised that this figure could change significantly depending on the outcomes of the CSR, the 2022/23 local government finance settlement and any ongoing financial impact from the pandemic into next year.
- 13 Savings of £2.452 million for 2022/23 were approved in MTFP(11), however, this has been revised down to £1.5 million resulting in a savings shortfall of £6.4 million. The MTFP(12) forecasts assume that there will be a 3.99% council tax increase in 2022/23, line with MTFP(11) planning and 1.99% increases per annum thereafter. The 3.99% increase next year includes an assumed 1.99% council tax referendum limit increase and 2% for the adult social care precept delayed from 2021/22. The £6.4 million savings shortfall is also based upon all short term investments included in the 2021/22 budget ending in line with MTFP(11) planning expectations.
- 14 A much more challenging position is forecast for the council in 2023/24, where the savings required to balance the budget in that year is forecast to be £17.7 million. The budget in 2022/23 is protected by the withdrawal of funding for all short term investments that were factored into the 2020/21 and 2021/22 revenue budgets. The budget position for 2023/24 is likely to be the norm in the future for all local authorities like ourselves with low tax bases, where increasing base budget pressures, especially in social care and waste, cannot be financed from increases in council tax and business rate yields.
- 15 Savings plans will need to be developed for consideration for 2022/23 but especially for 2023/24. Having plans in place will enable the council to react to the outcome of the 2022/23 local government finance settlement which is expected to be announced in December 2021. If required, the council will be able to utilise the Budget Support Reserve (BSR) to balance the budget in 2022/23 as required. The current available balance in the BSR, as reported to Council on 24 February 2021, is £12.6 million.

- 16 The council is the only local authority now in the North East to have retained entitlement levels for Council Tax support within the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) in line with that which applied under the national Council Tax Benefit regime prior to 2013/14. This policy has protected vulnerable residents at a time when welfare reform changes have had a significant adverse impact. This report recommends that the current LCTRS is again retained and remains unaltered for a further year into 2022/23. Should the Cabinet agree, the Council will need to formally adopt this policy at Full Council prior to 9 March 2022.

Recommendations

- 17 Cabinet is asked to:
- (a) note the requirement to identify additional savings of £45.2 million for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26;
 - (b) note the £1.5 million of savings (as revised) for 2022/23 which were previously agreed in MTFP(11);
 - (c) note this leaves a forecast £43.7 million savings shortfall across the MTFP(12) planning period, but also note that this forecast could change significantly based upon outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Fair Funding Review and the ongoing impact of the pandemic upon council services and income;
 - (d) note that at this stage a forecast £6.4 million of savings are required to balance the 2022/23 budget;
 - (e) agree the high level MTFP(12) and 2022/23 budget setting timetable contained in the report;
 - (f) agree the approach outlined for consultation on the 2022/23 budget and MTFP(12);
 - (g) agree the proposals to build equalities considerations into decision making; and
 - (h) agree that Cabinet recommend to Full Council that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme should remain unchanged for 2022/23.

Background

- 18 To ensure MTFP(12) can be developed effectively and savings targets delivered in time to produce a balanced budget, it is important that a robust plan and timetable is agreed and followed.
- 19 The newly appointed joint administration is committed to strong financial governance and getting value for money for public money whilst ensuring that any council tax increases are justified and affordable.
- 20 Having been elected in May 2021, the new administration has embarked on a series of reviews of the programmes and projects it has inherited. It is in the process of determining its investment and disinvestment priorities for 2022/23 and beyond and is determined to ensure those priorities are based on meaningful engagement with all partners and stakeholders. The forecasts and assumptions included in this report do not yet include the financial implications arising from those reviews and priority setting processes.
- 21 There continues to be significant uncertainty in terms of financial settlements for local government in the future and how available funding will be shared between local authorities. The government is expected to publish a Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in autumn 2021 covering a three year period. The uncertainty around the CSR is driven by lack of clarity on the outcome of the pandemic and the ongoing impact of Brexit upon the public finances. The forecast national deficit for 2020/21 is circa £300 million and it is forecast that this deficit will not have reduced below £100 million until at least 2025/26.
- 22 The current MTFP(11) forecast that the Council agreed on 24 February 2021 covers the four year period 2021/22 to 2024/25. This report covers the MTFP(12) four year period 2022/23 to 2025/26.
- 23 Although the maximum period to be covered by the CSR is expected to be three years, it is felt prudent for the council to continue to plan across a four year timeframe. During this period the Council will continue to face significant and unavoidable budget pressures, especially relating to the National Living Wage, Social Care and Waste pressures whilst facing the uncertainty over the impact of the FFR.
- 24 Planning across the medium term in this way ensures that decisions can be made in the knowledge of the likely financial position of the Council and provides a basis for effective decision making taking account of the best estimates of income and expenditure.
- 25 At this stage of the planning cycle for MTFP(12) the following areas are presented for consideration by Cabinet:
 - (a) an update on the development of the 2022/23 budget since the council agreed its MTFP(11) strategy on 24 February 2021;

- (b) an update on the MTFP(12) savings forecast for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26;
- (c) a draft MTFP(12) decision making timetable;
- (d) proposed approach for consultation on the 2022/23 budget proposals and on MTFP(12);
- (e) workforce implications;
- (f) equality considerations;
- (g) consideration of the proposed Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for 2022/23.

Review of MTFP Model

- 26 The financial outlook for the Council continues to be extremely challenging. Prior to the pandemic the national finances were in a reasonably healthy state for the first time in 10 years. The impact of the pandemic upon the national finances has however resulted in a forecast £300 billion budget deficit for 2020/21 with the annual deficit not expected to reduce to below £100 billion before 2025/26.
- 27 It is widely expected that the Budget Statement and CSR to be published in the autumn of 2021 will highlight how the government will intend to reduce the national deficit, building on the action taken in the March 2021 Budget. Initial tax rises were announced in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget in March 2021, with local authorities able and encouraged to increase council tax by up to 5% in 2021/22.
- 28 The CSR should provide an indication on whether local government, as a non-protected government department thus far, will again see reductions in core funding. Indications have been given that the NHS, Education and Defence will continue to receive future protection indicating there could be difficult years ahead still for unprotected government departments such as local government. It is forecast therefore that future settlements for local government will reduce and that the council could be faced with £6 million of further grant cut, with a further £10 million loss of funding forecast as a result of the distribution formula that will be introduced under FFR.
- 29 The council will need to continually review the MTFP(12) projections and savings requirements over the coming months in light of future announcements and as more information becomes available on the longer term impacts of the pandemic on the councils budgets going forward.
- 30 In line with previous years, a thorough review of the council's budget has taken place subsequent to the approval of MTFP (11) by the Council on 24 February 2021. This has resulted in a small number of changes to the

assumptions for 2022/23 and in future years. The key adjustments and major areas for consideration are detailed below:

(a) Revenue Support Grant (RSG) / Fair Funding Review

MTFP(11) assumed that the FFR would be implemented from April 2022. It now appears more likely that the FFR will not be implemented until April 2023. On that basis the £6 million reduction in RSG, forecast to be phased in over a three year period, has been delayed until 2023/24, benefitting 2022/23. At this stage, the underlying assumptions built into MTFP(11) in relation to future local government finance settlements are unchanged. The main assumptions being as follows

- (i) The funding the council received in 2021/22 of £22.9 million for adult and children's social care will become recurrent;
- (ii) There will be no increase in the Better Care Fund;
- (iii) The council tax referendum level will be held at 2% over the MTFP(12) period and the council will take advantage of the 2% Adult Social Care precept available in 2022/23 as a consequence of deferring the full implementation of these powers in 2021/22.

All of these financial planning assumptions could change as a result of the CSR, the implementation of the FFR and the publication of the provisional local government finance settlement for 2022/23, which is most likely to be in December 2021. It is hoped that greater clarity will be provided during the coming months.

In terms of the FFR, the major concern for the council continues to be the potential impact on public health funding. Consultations to date on the FFR continue to advocate that the public health grant will transfer into the Business Rate Retention (BRR) process as part of the move to 75% retention from the current 50% (49% for the council and 1% for County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority).

As part of this transfer, the intention is to utilise the revised Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation (ACRA) methodology to allocate public health funding. It is forecast that this will result in a loss of £18 million (33%) of the council's current public health grant funding. It is forecast however that the council may benefit from other elements of the FFR formula, resulting in the current £10 million net forecast loss. Clearly, the Council will continue lobby throughout the review process and this position will need to be continually reviewed across the MTFP(12) period.

(b) Waste Collection/Disposal Pressures

A number of long term contracts across the waste service are coming up for renewal over the next two years. It is expected for a range of reasons that the cost of these renewals will significantly exceed the 1.5% price inflation allowance included across the MTFP(12) planning period. It is forecast that the additional base budget required will be £2.2 million phased as follows:

	£m
2022/23	1.2
2023/24	1.0

(c) Employer Pension Contributions

The results of the triennial valuation review of the Pension Fund will need to be applied from April 2023. This will set the employers pension contribution rate for the following three years, as well as determining the annual contribution to eliminate the pension fund deficit. Originally it was forecast that that the council would face an increase of £3 million per annum from 2023/24. The most recent report from the Pension Fund actuaries has indicated that at this stage the fund investments have performed above expectations, notwithstanding this, the position could change before the next revaluation. At this stage it is felt prudent to withdraw the £3 million budget pressure in 2023/24 and therefore this has been removed from the MTFP(12) model.

2022/23 Savings Forecast

- 31 Based upon the revised assumptions detailed in this report, the savings requirement for 2022/23 is forecast to be £7.9 million, slightly higher than the MTFP(11) forecast position of a £6.3 million budget deficit. The adjusted position reflects the forecast delay in the implementation of the FFR, offset by additional base budget pressures in Waste Disposal and a reduction in forecast savings from the Business Support Review. The 2022/23 saving figure of £7.9 million reflects the need to recover the £3.778 million of BSR utilised in 2021/22 to balance the budget and delay the impact of savings in the current year upon front line services.
- 32 In MTFP(11) savings of £2.4 million were approved which would be achieved in 2022/23. This forecast has now been reduced by £0.9 million to £1.5 million after reviewing capacity to achieve savings as a result of the ongoing review into Business Support Services (back office administration services) where savings of circa £2 million have been achieved over the last two years. The MTFP(11) approved savings of £1.5 million reduce the savings shortfall in 2022/23 from £7.9 million to £6.4 million.
- 33 Although the budget deficit of £5.9 million in 2022/23 is the latest forecast, it should be recognised that this figure could significantly change before Full

Council sets the budget on 23 February 2022. The final savings requirement will be influenced by the outcome of the CSR, announcements on the FFR and the local government finance settlement for 2022/23. Similarly the council is facing significant additional budget pressures at the present time particularly in social care and waste disposal which could impact upon the savings requirement and there may be a need to accommodate budget pressures as a result of the longer term impacts of the pandemic on the councils budgets.

- 34 At this stage, no budget growth or provisions have been made of any long term impacts arising from the pandemic, with budgets assumed to return to pre-pandemic levels of activity by 2022/23. Budget impacts caused by the pandemic in 2021/22 are being offset by the £15.3 million of COVID19 funding provided by the government this year.
- 35 The MTFP(12) forecasts also assume a 3.99% council tax increase in council tax in 2022/23 with 1.99% increases across the remainder of the MTFP(12) period. The 3.99% increase in 2022/23 utilises the 2% adult social care precept flexibility deferred from 2021/22 and is in line with government recommendations as maximum increases in line with the referendum limits are factored into the Spending Power calculations and the Chancellor of the Exchequers Red Book forecasts.
- 36 With this uncertainty in mind work will continue in the coming months to seek to identify additional savings to address any future shortfall. If there is still a shortfall in savings at the time Full Council agree the budget in February 2022, then the Budget Support Reserve (BSR) will need to be utilised. The current balance on the BSR, after utilising £3.778 million to balance the 2021/22 budget is £12.6 million. In utilising the BSR to balance Cabinet will need to be mindful of significant budget deficit that exists in 2022/23 and should note that it will be important to take into account the forecast £17.7 million savings shortfall for 2023/24 in planning for savings requirements over the coming months.

MTFP(12) – 2022/23 to 2025/26 Update

- 37 The adjustments to MTFP(12) planning detailed in this report have impacted upon the forecast savings requirements for the 2022/23 to 2025/26 period.
- 38 The current forecast of savings required for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26 are detailed below:

	Savings Requirement	Less Savings Already Approved	Savings Shortfall
	£m	£m	£m
2022/23	7.943	(1.502)	6.441
2023/24	17.745	0	17.745
2024/25	10.066	0	10.066
2025/26	9.400	0	9.400
TOTAL	45.154	(1.502)	43.652

- 39 As can be seen, the additional savings required to be developed to balance the budgets over the next four years is estimated to be £43.652 million. This estimate must be considered alongside the uncertainty facing local government at this time especially in relation to the outcome of the CSR, the Fair Funding review and the implementation of the next stage of BRR. The financial forecasts contained in this report are considered to be prudent but not overly pessimistic.
- 40 It is likely that savings plans in the future will become more complex and potentially more front line and as such will require significant planning and consultation. It will be vital that timeframes for delivery are planned effectively to ensure the Council continues to balance the budget across the MTFP(12) period
- 41 The realisation of additional £43.7 million of savings will have resulted in the Council being required to save £290 million from 2011/12 to 2025/26. The updated MTFP(12) Model is attached at **Appendix 2**.

MTFP(12) Timetable

- 42 A high level timetable up to Budget setting in February 2022 is detailed below:

Date	Action
7 July	MTFP update report to Cabinet
September	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider 7 July Cabinet Report
13 October	MTFP update Report to Cabinet
October/November	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider 13 October Cabinet Report
15 December	MTFP report to Cabinet – outcome of Comprehensive Spending Review

Date	Action
December	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider 15 December Cabinet Report
9 January	MTFP report to Cabinet – analysis of provisional local government settlement
January	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider 9 January Cabinet Report
9 February	Budget Report to Cabinet
February	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider 9 February Cabinet Report
23 February	Council Budget and MTFP report

Proposed Consultation Programme

- 43 Based on the best practice that has developed over previous consultations, it is once again proposed that we consult using our existing County Durham Partnership networks during October and November. This will include the fourteen Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and the thematic partnerships that support the County Durham Partnership. Additional work will be undertaken with special interest groups and there will be an opportunity for residents to respond electronically via the council's website which will be promoted through the council's presence on various social media platforms.

Workforce Implications

- 44 The council originally estimated 1,950 reductions to full time equivalent posts by the end of 2014/15. By 31 March 2022, it is forecast that there will have been a reduction of 3,000 posts, of which circa 700 will have been via the deletion of vacant posts. It is forecast that the number of post reductions will increase over the coming years as savings plans are developed and agreed to achieve the MTFP(12) required saving of £43.7 million. The exact number will not be known until proposals are developed.
- 45 At 31 March 2021 the council's workforce, excluding schools based employees, consisted of 9,459 posts (6,884.5 full time equivalent employees), of which, 7,437 posts (6,373.2 full time equivalent employees) are the councils permanent workforce and 2,022 posts (511.2 full time equivalent employees) are classed as temporary or casual employees.

- 46 The council will continue to take all possible steps to avoid compulsory redundancies and minimise the impact upon the workforce. This will require a continued focus on forward planning, careful monitoring of employee turnover, only undertaking recruitment where absolutely necessary and retaining vacant posts in anticipation of any required service changes, seeking volunteers for early retirement and/or voluntary redundancy and maximising redeployment opportunities for the workforce wherever possible.
- 47 In addition, the way that work is organised and jobs designed will continue to be reviewed by service groupings, with the support of Human Resources, to ensure that changes that are made to maximise the use of the workforce numbers and skills and introduce flexibility into the way work is organised to maximise the capacity of the remaining workforce.
- 48 These actions will ensure that, wherever possible, service reductions continue to be planned well in advance of commencing the exercises, employees are able to consider their personal positions and volunteer for ER/VR prior to the start of the exercise should they wish to, thereby enabling, in a number of situations, the retention of sustainable employment in the County for those who wish to remain in the workplace.

Equality Impact Assessment of the Medium Term Financial Plan

- 44 Consideration of equality impact analysis and mitigation is an essential element that members must consider in their decision making. As in previous years, equality impact assessments will be key to capturing and utilising equality analysis throughout decision making processes, alongside the development of MTFP(12).
- 45 The aim of the equality impact assessment process is to:
- (a) identify any disproportionate impact on service users or staff based on the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation;
 - (b) identify any mitigating actions which can be taken to reduce negative impact where possible;
 - (c) ensure that we avoid unlawful discrimination as a result of MTFP decisions;
 - (d) ensure the effective discharge of the public sector equality duty.
- 46 As in previous years, equality analysis is considered throughout the decision-making process, alongside the development of MTFP(12). This is required to ensure MTFP decisions are both fair and lawful. The process is in line with the Equality Act 2010 which, amongst other things, makes

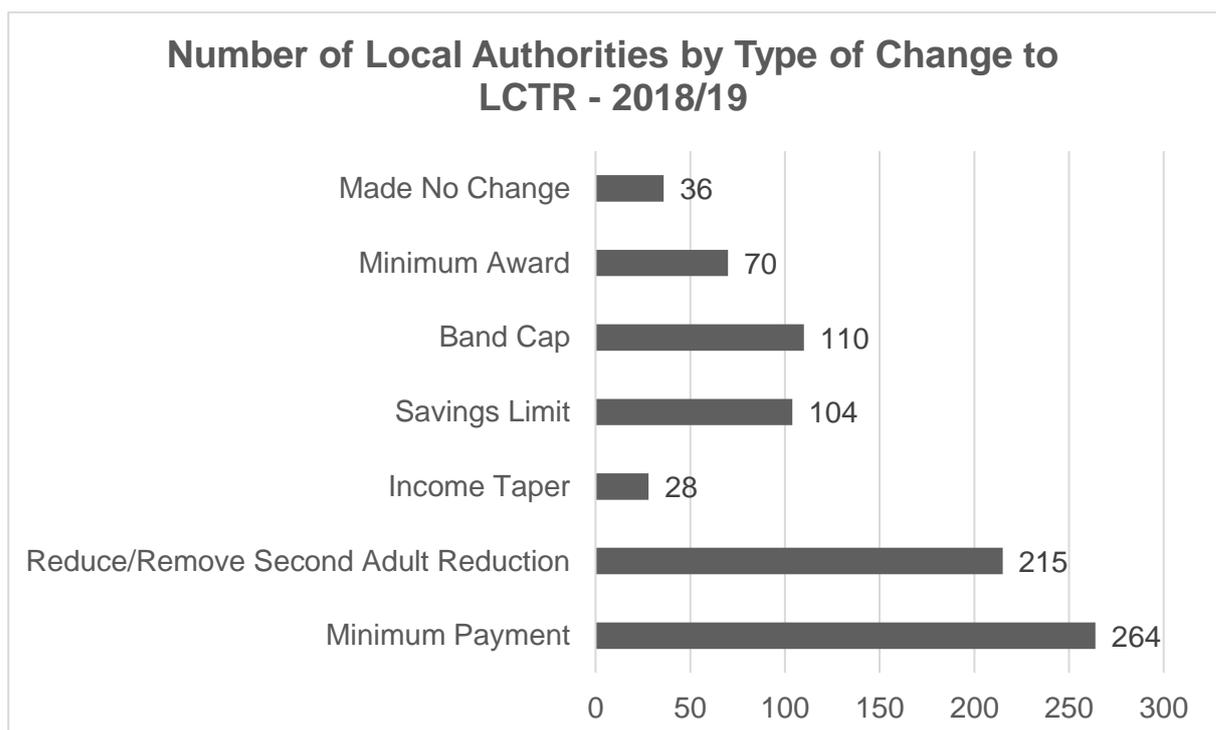
discrimination unlawful in relation to the protected characteristics listed above and requires us to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

- 47 In addition, the public sector equality duty (PSED), contained at section 149 of the Equality Act, requires us to pay 'due regard' to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 48 A number of successful judicial reviews have reinforced the need for robust consideration of the public sector equality duty and the impact on protected characteristics in the decision making process. Members must take full account of the duty and accompanying evidence when considering the MTFP proposals.
- 49 Throughout the period of MTFP planning through to setting of the 2022/23 budget and MTFP(12) in February 2022, the equality analysis for all savings proposals will be developed alongside emerging savings proposals. Any relevant consultation activity and/or feedback will be fed into assessments. Equality analysis and impact assessments will be considered in decision-making processes and at budget setting.
- 50 In terms of the ongoing programme of budget decisions the Council has taken steps to ensure that impact assessments:
- (a) are built in at the formative stages so that they form an integral part of developing proposals with sufficient time for completion ahead of decision-making;
 - (b) are based on relevant evidence, including consultation where appropriate, to provide a robust assessment;
 - (c) objectively consider any negative impacts and alternatives or mitigation actions so that they support fair and lawful decision making;
 - (d) are closely linked to the wider MTFP decision-making process;
 - (e) build on previous assessments to provide an ongoing picture of cumulative impact.

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23

- 51 Following the abolition of the national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) system on 31 March 2013, Local Authorities have been required to work with their precepting bodies to establish a Local Council Tax Reduction scheme (LCTR); reviewed on an annual basis. The LCTR provides a 'discount' against the council tax charge, rather than a benefit entitlement.
- 52 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant is paid directly to the council and the major precepting bodies (Police and Fire) and forms part of the council's formula funding arrangements.
- 53 As this Government grant is a fixed amount, when there is growth in the numbers of council taxpayers becoming eligible for support with their council tax, there is a resulting risk to the Local Authority; this was seen in the early months of the pandemic in April/May 2020.
- 54 The council's formula grant includes an element relating to Town and Parish (T&P) Councils and whilst the council has passed the grant on to the Town and Parish Councils, there is no statutory requirement to do so.
- 55 Following discussions with the Town and Parish Councils' Working Group, and in the spirit of partnership working, recognising the important role Town and Parish Councils play in providing local services to communities, it is proposed to continue to pass on the Town and Parish element of the formula grant in 2022/23.
- 56 As we await the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending and Fair Funding Reviews it is proposed that the Council Tax Support Grant paid to Town and Parish Councils 2022/23 is the same as 2021/22, to provide some certainty to Town and Parish Councils. Local Council Tax Support Grant payments to Town and Parish Councils are therefore forecast to be £1.332 million in 2022/23 at this stage.
- 57 The County Durham Association of Local Councils has, through the Town and Parish Councils' Working Group, requested that a review of "double taxation" is undertaken to inform further discussions. Work will commence shortly on this.
- 58 LCTR provides a 'discount' against the council tax charge, rather than crediting the account with a benefit payment and as such impacts on the council tax base and therefore the tax raising capacity of the council and its precepting bodies.
- 59 All local authorities are required to follow a national LCTR scheme for pension age applicants, which protects their entitlement at the same level as under the former national CTB regime. The pension age scheme can only be altered locally in ways which make it more generous to applicants.

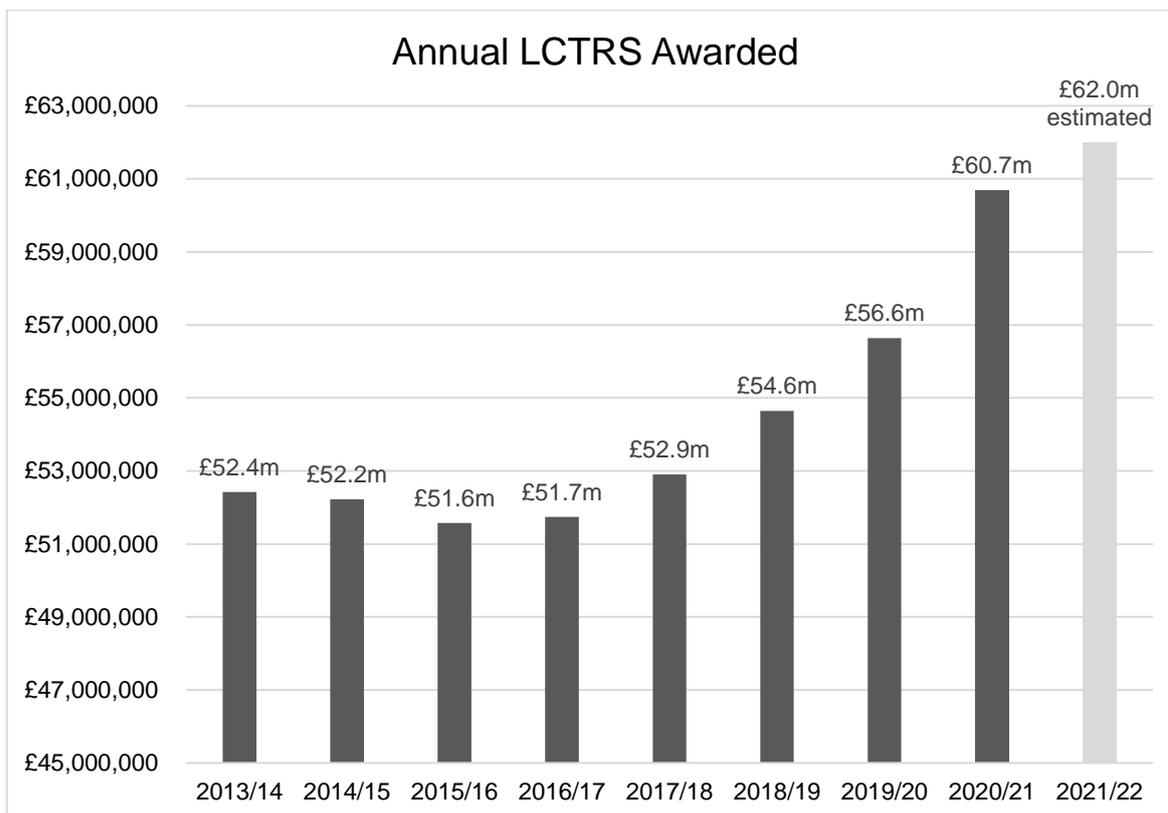
- 60 There are no such restrictions on the level of support that can be given by working age LCTR schemes.
- 61 In the North East region, Durham are now the only authority whose scheme continues to mirror entitlement under the former CTB system, whilst the other eleven councils have schemes that cap the maximum entitlement to working age claimants.
- 62 The majority of councils who made changes to their schemes in the first few years of LCTR, did so to cap the overall amount that could be paid to working age households. The most recent national data was published in 2018/19 by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. At that stage 80% of councils had made at least one change to their scheme by 2018-19. Different councils have set their schemes at very different levels across the country. Combined with different choices about other aspects of scheme design, this means that similar households are treated very differently according to where they live. More recently, local authorities have started to focus on making changes to better support applicants receiving Universal Credit (UC), while maintaining a cap on the total amount that an applicant can receive.



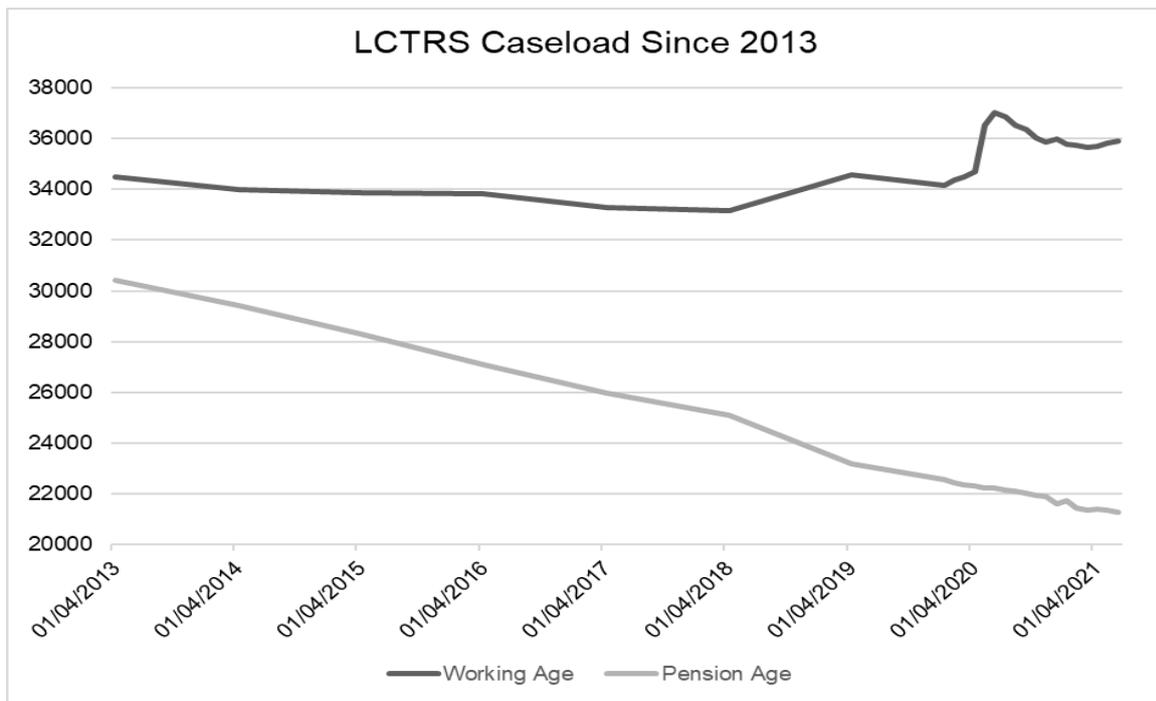
- 63 The roll-out of Universal Credit is currently scheduled to be completed in 2024. As at 1 June 2021, there were circa 19,300 LCTR applicants in county Durham receiving UC, around 54% of the current working age LCTR caseload.
- 64 There are currently 57,150 LCTR applicants in County Durham, of which 21,250 (37%) are of pension age and 35,900 (63%) are of working age. Almost 80% of all working age applicants currently receive maximum LCTR, leaving them with no council tax to pay. Approximately 85% of working age

LCTR applicants live in rented accommodation and 87.5% occupy Band A properties. LCTRS support is forecast to be circa £62 million in 2021-22.

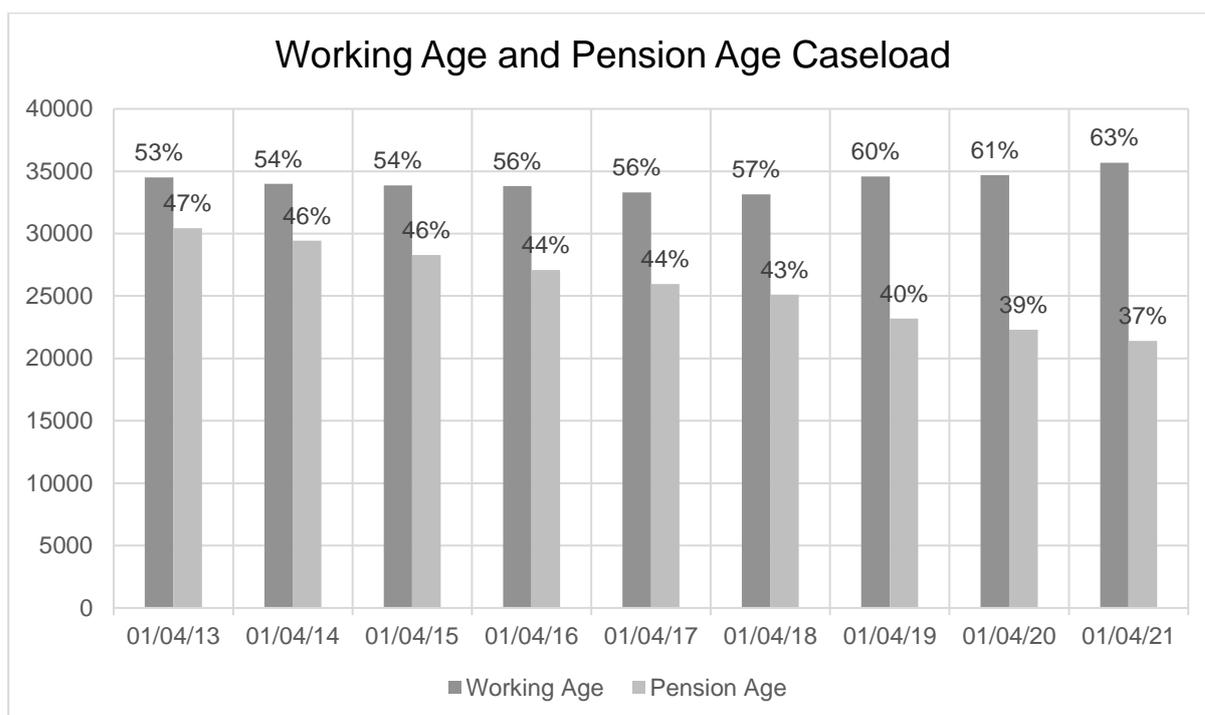
- 65 The table below shows the year on year differences in LCTR scheme costs over the last eight years. Whilst it is important to note that the council tax charges have increased across this period also, there was a significant increase in both caseload and costs in 2020/21 that is forecast to continue into 2021/22.



- 66 The council's LCTR scheme has seen a significant increase in demand as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The pension age caseload has continued a trend of year on year reduction. The working age caseload, however, increased dramatically in the first quarter of 2020/21 as an unprecedented number of new claims were received by customers adversely affected by Covid-19. At the peak, in May 2020, the working age LCTRS caseload was almost 3,000 higher than in January of the same year. As of April 2021, the number of working age LCTR claims has remained around 4% higher than pre-pandemic levels:



- 67 In Durham, there are now over 3,600 LCTR claimants currently classed as working age that would have been treated as pensionable age claimants prior to 2010, when the process of moving eligibility to state pension credit age from 60 to 66 began. There will then be a further move up to 67 between 2026 and 2028, then to 68 between 2044 and 2046.
- 68 Over the last eight years there has been a ten percentage point increase in the proportion of working age applicants within Durham. This means a higher proportion of our caseload is coming under the part of the LCTRS scheme that the Council has control over. Working age customers carry a much greater administrative burden as they have more frequent changes in their circumstances that need to be processed, producing multiple bills across the year.



69 It is important to consider any impact on the collection rate for council tax, that changes to the LCTRS can have. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) estimate that a quarter of the additional council tax liability created by cuts to LCTR since 2013 is not being collected in year.

70 After many years of continued improvement, the councils in-year council tax collection rate reduced slightly in 2018/19 to 96.65%, and further still in 2019/20 to 96.37%, but this still represents an improved position on the in year recovery rate achieved in 2012/23 (the year prior to the introduction of the LCTR scheme). Performance in 2020/21 was impacted significantly by the pandemic with recovery action largely suspended for the whole of the year. In year recovery performance was 93.43% in 2020/21.

71 The regional picture in terms of the current schemes in operation and comparison of in-year collection rates with that which existed pre LCTRS is shown below for the position to 31 March 2020. Comparisons for the position to 31 March 2021 are skewed by the coronavirus pandemic and significant periods of inaction in terms of formal recovery action being taken last year:

Local Authority	Basis of Scheme	Minimum Payment	Second Adult Reduction Offered?	Change in in-year council tax collection rate between 2012/13 and 2019/20
Durham	CTB	No	Yes	+1.37%points
Darlington	CTB	20%	No	+0.34%points
Gateshead	CTB	8.5%	No	-0.72%points
Hartlepool	CTB	12%	No	-1.80%points
Middlesbrough	CTB	15%	No	-4.40%points

Local Authority	Basis of Scheme	Minimum Payment	Second Adult Reduction Offered?	Change in in-year council tax collection rate between 2012/13 and 2019/20
Newcastle	Income Banded	10%	No	-0.08%points
North Tyneside	CTB	15%	No	-1.90%points
Northumberland	CTB	8%	Yes	-0.06%points
Redcar and Cleveland	CTB	12.5%	No	+1.11%points
South Tyneside	CTB	30% or 15% if vulnerable	Yes	-2.07%points
Stockton	CTB	20%	No	-3.05%points
Sunderland	CTB	8.5%	No	-2.31%points
All English Unitary Authorities	N/A	N/A	N/A	-0.50%points
All English Authorities	N/A	N/A	N/A	-0.80%points

- 72 As Members will be aware, if any changes are made to the scheme, these must be consulted on and be subject to an equality impact assessment. Councils are required to review and approve their schemes annually and have this agreed by a Full Council meeting before 11 March each year. In reality, decisions are needed much earlier than this given the impact on tax base calculations and the need to firm up the tax base forecasts much earlier in the budget planning cycle.
- 73 Pensioners, have to be protected from any changes, with any reductions applied to working age claimants only.
- 74 Nine years after the government abolished the national CTB system the council continues to have a LCTR scheme which mirrors the previous entitlement under the CTB system for all claimants. No LCTR claimants have therefore been financially worse off in the last nine years (including the current year) than they would have been under the previous national scheme.
- 75 The council has been mindful of the continuing impacts of the wider welfare reforms which are having a detrimental impact on many low income households and the fact that the additional council tax liabilities for working age households could have a significant impact on affected household budgets by around £100 to £350 a year based on a scheme whereby entitlement for working age claimants is set at a maximum of 90% entitlement. This would make collection of council tax more difficult and costly to recover from these low-income households.

- 76 In approving the scheme for 2021/22, the council gave a commitment to review the scheme on the grounds of medium term financial plan (MTFP) affordability and on-going austerity causing further MTFP pressures.
- 77 The reduction in Government Grant support towards maintaining these schemes in the first year (2013/14) was £5.1 million, after which the Local Council Tax Support Grant was subsumed into general formula grant, which was and subject to annual reductions up to 2019/20. To recover the full initial £5.1 million cost by reducing the benefit awarded to working age claimants, and factoring in a prudent collection rate of 80%, would require the maximum entitlement to be reduced from 100% to 85.35% based on current caseloads.
- 78 Should the Council review its scheme and reduce maximum entitlement to working age claimants, depending on the forecasted council tax collection from affected low income households, there would be scope to increase Council Tax revenues by between £3.49 million (based on a scheme that awarded maximum entitlement to working age households of 90% with a prudent collection rate of 80%) and £5.1 million (based on a scheme that awarded maximum entitlement of 85.35% with a prudent collection rate of 80%). This would impact circa 35,900 working age households across County Durham, where 6,750 (18.8%) are actually in low paid jobs rather than being unemployed.
- 79 Following careful consideration of the current financial position of the council and in light of the continuing impact of the coronavirus pandemic and welfare reforms including the continued roll out of Universal Credit Full Service, which commenced in October 2017 in County Durham; it is proposed that Cabinet recommend to Council that the current scheme should be extended for a further year into 2022/23 and, therefore, that no additional council tax revenues or pressures are built into the MTFP projections from a review of the LCTRS at this stage.
- 80 The reasons for extending the current scheme are due to the current scheme remaining within existing cost parameters for the Council. In addition, whilst the full impacts of the Government's welfare reforms are complex and difficult to track, demand for Discretionary Housing Payments; Social Fund Applications and Rent Arrears statistics in County Durham compared to others across the region, would suggest that the council tax benefit protection afforded to working age claimants, in addition to the wide-ranging proactive support that has been put in place, is continuing to have a positive impact on these households.
- 81 The council will need to continue to review the national situation and track what is happening in local authorities that have introduced LCTR schemes that have reduced entitlement to their working age claimants in terms of impacts and performance in terms of recovery of the council tax due.
- 82 The council will also need to keep track of the continuing impact of the roll out of Universal Credit (UC). This presents continuing challenges for the

administration of the LCTRS as it results in a much higher number of changes in circumstances and removes the administrative economies of scale currently achieved by administering Housing Benefit and LCTR claims side by side.

- 83 More significantly however, UC changes results in multiple reworking and changes to LCTR entitlement throughout the year and multiple bills being issued to individual households resulting in numerous changes to their net liability and instalment plans for any council tax balance they are responsible for.

Conclusion

- 84 The council continues to face significant financial uncertainty for the MTFP(12) period 2022/23 to 2025/26. The uncertainty relating to future government financial settlements is exacerbated by the ongoing impact of the pandemic alongside increases in base budget pressures from inflation, national living wage, social care and waste disposal.
- 85 Planning will continue in relation to the identification of savings to enable future years budgets to be balanced. The BSR of £12.6 million is available to support the protection of front line services although it is recognised that this reserve could be quickly exhausted if early decisions are not made.

Background papers

- Local Government Finance Act 1992
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations (as amended)
- The Impacts of Localised Council Tax Support Schemes – Institute for Fiscal Studies Report January 2019

Other useful documents

- Medium Term Financial Plan (11), 2021/22 to 2024/25 – Report to Council 24 February 2021
- Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/22 – Report to Council 2 December 2020

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The council has a statutory responsibility to set a balanced budget for 2022/23. It also has a fiduciary duty not to waste public resources.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished the national council tax benefits system (CTB), paving the way for new Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes (LCTRS) to be introduced under the auspices of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (“the 1992 Act”) requires each billing authority in England to make a scheme specifying the reductions which are to apply to amounts of council tax payable by persons, or classes of person, whom the authority considers are in financial need (“a council tax reduction scheme”).

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012 (“the 2012 Regulations”) prescribe matters which must be included in such a scheme in addition to matters set out in paragraph 2 of Schedule 1A to the 1992 Act.

Each year regulations amending the 2012 Regulations are made in November/December. The majority of the amendments are to ensure consistency with changes to social security legislation and these are subsequently included in our local scheme.

The LCTRS provides a ‘discount’ against the council tax charge, rather than a benefit entitlement and as such impacts on the council’s tax base.

Regulations made under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the council to calculate a council tax base for each financial year.

The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 which came into force on 30 November 2012 and applies to the financial years beginning 1 April 2013 onwards contains the rules which require the council to calculate the Council Tax Base.

A key element of the tax base calculation is the council’s policy in terms of its LCTRS.

There is a statutory requirement for the Council to adopt a local council tax support scheme for the ensuing financial year by 11 March each year. Where the council is proposing any changes to its scheme, there is a statutory requirement to consult on these proposals in advance of making any changes. Pensioners have to be protected from any changes, with any reductions applied to working age claimants only.

Finance

The report highlights that at this stage £7.9 million of savings are required to balance the 2022/23 budget with £43.7 million across the next four years. Work will continue over the coming months to identify savings to balance the budget across the MTFP(12) period.

The funding made available to support the Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes in 2013/14 (90% of the previous funding available under the Council Tax Benefit System) now forms part of the Council's formula funding arrangements.

The Council has continued to pass on the Town and Parish element of its formula grant over the last five years but in doing so continues to apply pro-rata reductions in the Council Tax Support Grant paid to Town and Parish Councils. Local Council Tax Support Grant payments to Town and Parish Councils is forecast to be £1.322 million in 2022/23.

The County Durham Association of Local Councils has, through the Town and Parish Councils' Working Group, requested that a review of "double taxation" is undertaken to inform further discussions. Work will commence shortly on this, however, the council has made it clear that any consideration on potential double taxation payments to town or parish councils would also need to consider whether the council continues to provide Local Council Tax Support Grant payments to Town and Parish Councils at the current levels and distributed in the same way

The Council is responsible for the costs of any increase in caseload as the level of Government support is fixed (and has been subject to reductions up to 2019/20) within formula grant.

In 2020/21 there was a significant increase in the LCTRS caseload as a result of the pandemic and caseloads remain higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Prudent estimates and provisions were built into the tax base forecasts for the current year at budget setting, and whilst the Council is subject to greater financial risk now, the current scheme remains within the budget provisions.

Should the Council review its scheme and reduce maximum entitlement to working age claimants, depending on the forecasted council tax collection from affected low income households, there would be scope to increase Council Tax revenues by between £3.49 million (based on a scheme that awarded maximum entitlement to working age households of 90% with a prudent collection rate of 80%) and £5.1 million (based on a scheme that awarded maximum entitlement of 85.35% with a prudent collection rate of 80%). This would impact circa 35,900 working age households across County Durham, where 6,750 (18.8%) are actually in low paid jobs rather than being unemployed.

Consultation

Information on the MTFP(12) consultation process are contained in the report.

If any changes proposed to the LCTR scheme, these must not impact on pension age claimants, must be consulted on and be subject to an equality impact assessment. Councils are required to review and approve their schemes annually and have this agreed by a Full Council meeting before 11 March each year. In reality, decisions are needed much earlier than this given the impact on tax base calculations and the need to firm up the tax base forecasts much earlier in the budget planning cycle.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 all public authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, “have due regard to the need to” eliminate conduct that is prohibited by the Act. Such conduct includes discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to protected characteristics but also requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a “relevant protected characteristic” and persons who do not. This means consideration of equality analysis and impacts is an essential element that Members must take into account when considering these savings proposals.

Nine years after the Government abolished the national Council Tax Benefits System the council continues to have a LCTRS which mirrors the previous entitlement under the Council Tax Benefit System for all claimants. No council tax benefit claimants have therefore been financially worse off in the last eight years than they would have been under the previous national scheme and if the proposals set out in this report and ultimately agreed by Council in the autumn this will continue to be the case.

The Government EIA on the LCTRS was published in January 2012 and is relatively brief. It considered equality impacts in relation to age and disability, concluding that protection for pensioners would be a positive impact and the effects on disabled people would depend on how each local authority responded to the reduction in council tax support. No impacts were identified in relation to gender or ethnicity and no other protected characteristics were considered and it was left to individual councils to identify full local impacts, based on local implementation.

Given the proposals to extend the current LCTRS into 2022/23 thereby continuing to protect current entitlement, there will be no negative equalities impact, with the financial position of claimants protected in 2022/23.

Should the council decide against extending the current scheme into 2022/23 and elect instead to pass on reductions to working age claimants, there would be a range of potential negative equalities impacts. These include financial impact for working age claimants and possible additional impacts in relation to health and wellbeing, housing and the consequences of debt or legal action. These impacts are most likely in relation to gender, age and disability with limited impacts for race and sexual orientation and no evidence of impact on transgender status, religion or belief.

Climate Change

The council budget will be developed to provide resource to enable the council to meet the requirements set out in the council's Climate Change Emergency Response Plan.

Human Rights

Any human rights issues will be considered for all proposals agreed as part of MTFP(12).

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

The impact of the MTFP upon staffing is detailed within the report.

At 31 March 2021 the council's workforce, excluding schools based employees, consisted of 9,459 posts (6,884.5 full time equivalent employees), of which 7,437 posts (6,373.2 full time equivalent employees) are the councils permanent workforce and 2,022 posts (511.2 full time equivalent employees) are classed as temporary or casual employees

Accommodation

None

Risk

A robust approach to Risk Assessment across the MTFP process will be followed especially in relation to any individual risk assessments of savings plans.

The report outlines a range of financial risks surrounding the LCTRS. These are being effectively managed at this time. Given that the proposal is to extend the current arrangements into 2022/23 there are no system development issues or risk associated with these proposals.

The council will need to continue to keep track of the impact of the roll out of Universal Credit (UC). This presents challenges for the administration of LCTRS as it results in a much higher number of changes in circumstances (experience is that the UC earned income element changes frequently as the person moves through the claimant commitment with their Work Coach) and removes the administrative economies of scale currently achieved by administering Housing Benefit and LCTRS claims side by side.

More significantly however, UC changes results in multiple reworking and changes to LCTRS entitlement throughout the year and multiple bills being issued to individual households resulting in numerous changes to their net liability and instalment plans for any Council Tax balance they are responsible for. After many years of continued improvement, our in-year council tax collection rate reduced

slightly in 2018/19 to 96.65%, and further still in 2019/20 to 96.37%. Performance in 2020/21 was impacted significantly by the pandemic with recovery action largely suspended for the whole of the year. In year recovery performance was 93.43% in 2020/21.

Procurement

None

Appendix 2: Medium Term Financial Plan – MTFP(11) 2021/22 – 2024/25 Model

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Government Funding				
Revenue Support Grant and Fair Funding Review	2,000	4,000	4,000	2,000
Reduction in Benefit Admin Grant	100	100	100	0
Bus. Rates / S31 - CPI increase (1%/1%/1.5%/1.5)	-500	-500	-750	-750
Top Up - CPI increase (1%/1%/1.5%/1.5)	-700	-700	-1,050	-1,050
New Homes Bonus	2,731	1,745	0	0
Other Funding Sources				
Council Tax Increase - 1.99% + ASC 22/23	-9,400	-4,800	-4,900	-5,000
Council Tax/Business Rate Tax Base increase	-1,500	-2,000	-3,000	-2,000
Estimated Variance in Resource Base	-7,269	-2,155	-5,600	-6,800
Pay inflation (2%)	4,650	4,800	4,950	5,100
Price Inflation (1.5%)	3,900	4,000	4,100	4,200
Base Budget Pressures				
National Living Wage	4,400	4,600	2,500	1,500
Employers Pension Contributions	0	0	0	0
Pension Fund Auto Enrolment costs	500	0	0	0
Social Care System Licenses	0	100	0	0
Adults Service Fees and Demographic Pressures	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Childrens Services Demographic Pressures	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Loss of School SLA Income and Sales support	100	0	0	0
Materials Recycling Facilities Contract	1,000	0	0	0
Waste Haulage Contract	200	0	0	0
Household Waste Recycling Contract	0	1,000	0	0

Net Zero Investment	0	0	0	0
Ongoing COVID impacts	0	0	0	0
Unfunded Superannuation	-100	-100	-100	-100
Prudential Borrowing	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Net Collection Fund Position after 75% Grant applied	1,284	0	-1,284	0
Short Term Investments				
Investment in climate change initiatives	-1,500	0	0	0
Additional investment in highways infrastructure	-2,500	0	0	0
Investment in Housing Initiatives	-500	0	0	0
Investment in clean and green neighbourhoods	-1,000	0	0	0
Investment in reducing poverty and inequality	-1,500	0	0	0
Investment in library services	-1,000	0	0	0
Investment in Childrens services initiatives	-1,000	0	0	0
Other One Off Initiatives	-1,000	0	0	0
TOTAL PRESSURES	11,434	19,900	15,666	16,200
Use of One Off funds				
Adjustment for use of BSR in previous year	3,778	0	0	0
Use of Budget Support Reserve	0	0	0	0
Savings				
Savings Agreed in MTFP(10)	-1,252	0	0	0
MTFP(11) Savings	-250	0	0	0
SURPLUS FUNDS (-)/ SAVINGS SHORTFALL	6,441	17,745	10,066	9,400
	TOTAL SHORTFALL			43,652

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**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

2 September 2021

**Resources - Revenue and Capital
Outturn 2020/21**

Ordinary Decision



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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide details of the final revenue and capital outturn position for the Resources service grouping in 2020/21, highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget.

Executive summary

- 2 In 2020/21 the service achieved a cash limit variance (underspend) of £1.473 million against a revised budget of £23.861 million. This compares to the previously forecast position (at quarter 3) of a £0.963 million underspend for the year. The outturn position was therefore £0.510 million more underspent than previously reported.
- 3 The Resources Cash Limit balance carried forward at 31 March 2021 is £2.462 million. Other earmarked reserves under the direct control of Resources total £17.267 million at 31 March 2021.
- 4 In arriving at the Resources Cash Limit variance, Covid-19 related expenditure and loss of income, net of Covid-19 related savings, of £3.482 million have been excluded from the outturn. Covid-19 related costs are being treated corporately and offset by Government funding.
- 5 Capital expenditure incurred in 2020/21 was £3.515 million, representing 97.4% of the revised Resources capital budget of £3.610 million. A request was made to the Member Officer Working Group to carry forward the £95,000 underspend to the current year to augment the 2021/22 Capital Programme.

Recommendation(s)

- 6 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is recommended to note the final outturn position against the 2020/21 revenue and capital budgets.

Background

7 County Council approved the Revenue and Capital budgets for 2020/21 at its meeting on 26 February 2020. These budgets have subsequently been revised to account for grant additions/reductions, corporate savings/adjustments, budget transfers between service groupings and budget profiling between years. This report covers the financial position for the following budget areas controlled by the Resources service grouping:

- a) Revenue Budget - £23.861 million (original £25.705 million)
- b) Capital Programme - £3.610 million (original £8.206 million)

8 The original Resources General Fund budget has been revised in year to incorporate a number of budget adjustments as follows:

	<u>£,000s</u>
Transfer to N&CC – Policy Officers	(71)
Transfer from CYPs (Education) – Research Post	94
Apprentices pay award	57
LCTSS Grant shortfall	1
Change in Employers NI contributions	(41)
Transfer to Business Support Reserve	(1,674)
Transfer from MTFP ER/VR Reserve	756
Transfer to ICT Reserve	(165)
Transfer from Legal Services Reserve	32
Transfer to Human Resources Reserve	(109)
Transfer to Residents Research Reserve	(45)
Transfer to Transformation Reserve	(162)
Transfer from iBCF Reserve	50
Transfer from Resources Cash Limit Reserve	152
Transfer from Commercial Reserve	50
Transfer from Insurance Reserve	6
Transfer from Revenues & Benefits Reserve	52
Transfer to Welfare Reforms New Burdens Reserve	(248)
Transfer from Microsoft Office 365 Reserve	59
Transfer from Procurement Development Reserve	26
Transfer from Resources Cash Limit Reserve	58
Transfer from Corporate Contingencies – Pay Award	1,675
Transfer from Other Services (iro Former TAP)	30
Transfer to Business Grants Scheme Reserve	(2,000)
Transfer to Corporate Procurement Reserve	(354)
Transfer to SFO Trading Reserve	(73)
TOTAL	<u>(1,844)</u>

The revised General Fund Budget for Resources is £23.861 million

- 9 The summary financial statements contained in the report cover the financial year 2020/21 and show:
 - a) The approved annual budget;
 - b) The actual income and expenditure ;
 - c) The variance between the annual budget and the forecast outturn;
 - d) For the Resources revenue budget, adjustments for items outside of the cash limit to take into account such items as redundancies met from the strategic reserve, capital charges not controlled by services and use of / or contributions to earmarked reserves.
- 10 The service achieved a cash limit variance (underspend) of £1.473 million against a revised budget of £23.861 million in 2020/21.
- 11 The tables below compare the actual expenditure with the budget. The first table is analysed by Subjective Analysis (i.e. type of expense), and the second by Head of Service.

Type of Expenditure (Subjective Analysis) (£000's)

	2020/21 Budget	Actual	Variance (under) / over spend	Items Outside Cash Limit	COVID-19 Outside Cash Limit	Cash Limit Outturn 2020/21 Variance	Memo: Cash Limit Variance QTR 3
Employees	65,853	65,189	(664)	(461)	76	(1,049)	(705)
Premises	6,062	2,219	(3,843)	3,791	(1)	(53)	7
Transport	816	304	(512)	-	446	(66)	(45)
Supplies and Services	16,527	16,868	341	334	(243)	432	235
Third Party Payments	50	32	(18)	-	-	(18)	(20)
Transfer Payments	-	17,238	17,238	(449)	-	16,789	22,875
Central Support and Capital	25,027	17,774	(7,253)	8,024	-	771	298
Gross Expenditure	114,335	119,624	5,289	11,239	278	16,806	22,645
Income	(90,974)	(98,534)	(7,560)	(6,959)	(3,760)	(18,279)	(23,608)
Net Expenditure	23,361	21,090	(2,271)	4,280	(3,482)	(1,473)	(963)
HB Transfer payments	115,739	122,568	6,829	(6,829)	-	-	524
HB Central Support and Capital	300	(149)	(449)	449	-	-	-
HB Income	(115,539)	(121,438)	(5,899)	5,899	-	-	(524)
HB Net Expenditure	500	981	481	(481)	-	-	-
TOTAL NET EXP	23,861	22,071	(1,790)	3,799	(3,482)	(1,473)	(963)

By Head of Service (£000's)

	2020/21 Budget	Actual	Variance (under) / over spend	Items Outside Cash Limit	COVID-19 Outside Cash Limit	Cash Limit Outturn 2020/21 Variance	Memo: Cash Limit Variance QTR 3
Central Establishment Recharges	(33,914)	(32,852)	1,062	(1,012)	-	50	-
Corporate Finance & Commercial Services	3,144	2,781	(363)	157	27	(179)	(128)
Financial & Transactional Services	8,308	4,513	(3,795)	5,530	(2,270)	(535)	(504)
Digital & Customer Services	16,950	17,551	601	(269)	(522)	(190)	25
Internal Audit and Insurance	1,081	1,065	(16)	40	(26)	(2)	(50)
Legal & Democratic Services	7,231	7,930	699	(235)	(680)	(216)	(241)
Service Management / Central Charges	721	710	(11)	(317)	(37)	(365)	3
People & Talent Management	2,248	2,217	(31)	35	(9)	(5)	(14)
Business Support	14,282	13,825	(457)	413	44	-	-
Transformation	1,567	1,691	124	(139)	(13)	(28)	(50)
Strategy	1,743	1,659	(84)	77	4	(3)	(4)
Net Expenditure Excluding HB	23,361	21,090	(2,271)	4,280	(3,482)	(1,473)	(963)
Housing Benefit	500	981	481	(481)	-	-	-
Net Expenditure	23,861	22,071	(1,790)	3,799	(3,482)	(1,473)	(963)

- 12 The table below provides a brief commentary on the variances against the revised budget analysed by Head of Service. The table identifies variances in the core budget only and excludes items outside of the cash limit (e.g. redundancy costs) and technical accounting adjustments (e.g. capital charges):

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	Year End (under) / overbudget £000s	Year End (under) / overbudget £000s
Central Establishment Recharges	Central Establishment Recharges	Increase in Resources Provision for Bad Debts.	50	50
Corporate Finance & Commercial Services	Management	£1,000 underbudget on employees. £5,000 overbudget on supplies & services	4	
	Financial Systems	£25,000 underbudget on employees. £4,000 overbudget on supplies & services.	(21)	
	Procurement	No material variances.	0	
	Pensions	No material variances.	0	
	Strategic Finance	£34,000 underbudget on employees. £1,000 underbudget on transport £75,000 overachievement of income.	(110)	
	Occupational Health	£19,000 overbudget on employees. £22,000 underbudget on supplies & services. £12,000 underbudget on agency & contracted services £75,000 underachievement on income.	60	
	Health and Safety	£14,000 underbudget on employees. £3,000 underbudget on supplies & services. £95,000 additional income.	(112)	
				(179)
People & Talent Management	People & Talent Management	£28,000 underbudget on employees. £6,000 underbudget on transport £35,000 overbudget on supplies & services.	(5)	(5)

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	Year End (under) / overbudget £000s	Year End (under) / overbudget £000s
		£2,000 overbudget on third party payments £8,000 additional income.		
Finance & Transactional Services	Management	£8,000 underbudget on employees. £2,000 overbudget on supplies & services. £16,000 additional income.	(22)	
	Payroll & Employee Services	£110,000 overbudget on employees. £8,000 underbudget on supplies & services. £49,000 underachieved income.	151	
	Financial Management	£62,000 underbudget on employees. £146,000 overbudget on supplies & services £178,000 overachieved income.	(94)	
	Revenues and Benefits	£503,000 underbudget on employees. £5,000 underbudget on transport £22,000 overbudget on supplies & services. £84,000 additional income.	(570)	
Digital and Customer Services	Digital and Customer Services	£390,000 underbudget on employees. £20,000 underbudget on premises £31,000 underbudget on transport. £209,000 overbudget on supplies & services. £300,000 overbudget on central expenses (£300,000 Direct Revenue Funding for three capital schemes)	(190)	(190)

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	Year End (under) / overbudget £000s	Year End (under) / overbudget £000s
		£258,000 overachieved income.		
Internal Audit and Risk	Insurance and Risk	£5,000 overbudget on employees. £6,000 underbudget on supplies & services.	(1)	(2)
	Internal Audit	£31,000 underbudget on employees. £2,000 underbudget on supplies & services. £4,000 underachieved income.	(29)	
	Corporate Fraud	£34,000 overbudget on employees. £18,000 overbudget on supplies & services. £24,000 additional income.	28	
Legal and Democratic Services	Corporate and Democratic Core	£38,000 underbudget on employees. £2,000 underbudget on transport £109,000 underbudget on supplies & services. £34,000 additional income.	(183)	(216)
	Legal and Other Services	£30,000 underbudget on employees. £12,000 underbudget on premises. £227,000 overbudget on supplies & services. £218,000 overachieved on income.	(33)	
Service Management	Service Management/Central Charges	£317,000 underbudget on employees £11,000 underbudget on transport £3,000 overbudget on supplies & services £40,000 overachieved income.	(365)	(365)

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	Year End (under) / overbudget £000s	Year End (under) / overbudget £000s
Strategy		£3,000 underbudget on supplies & services.	(3)	(3)
Transformation		£99,000 overbudget on employees. £44,000 underbudget on supplies & services £83,000 additional income.	(28)	(28)
Business Support		No significant variances.	0	0
Benefits Payments and Subsidy	Benefits		0	0
TOTAL				(1,473)

- 13 The final outturn position was £0.510 million more underspent than the forecast prepared at Quarter 3 and reported to Cabinet in March. This means that there is an increase in the cash limit reserve carried forward at year end.
- 14 In addition to the budgets controlled by Heads of Service there is a budget of £1.536 million for Centrally Administered Costs (CAC) covering corporate items such as the Town and Parish Local Council Tax Support Scheme Grant contributions, subscriptions to the LGA, etc.
- 15 There was an underspend of £0.489 million on this budget in 2020/21. The outturn position was due to reduced expenditure on bank charges, payment card fees, corporate subscriptions and increased income from de-minimis capital receipts.

Capital Programme

- 16 The original Resources capital programme was £8.206 million. This was revised in year for additions/reductions, budget transfers and to reflect

budget profiling. The final capital budget was £3.610 million. Summary financial performance to the end of March 2021 is shown below:

	Original Budget 2020/21	Final Budget 2020/21	Actual Spend 2020/21	(Under) / Over Spend in Year	Actual Spend as a % of Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Digital & Customer Services	7,124	3,346	3,234	(112)	97
Corporate Finance & Commercial Services and Finance & Transactional Services	82	57	56	(1)	98
Durham History Centre	1,000	207	225	18	109
TOTAL	8,206	3,610	3,515	(95)	97

- 17 The outturn position was reported to MOWG in May 2021 as part of the capital outturn and requests were made to carry forward the budget variances and incorporate these as changes to the 2021/22 budget. A full breakdown of schemes and actual expenditure to 31 March 2021 is given in Appendix 2.

Background papers

- a) County Council Report (26 February 2020) – Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21.
- b) Cabinet Report (16 September 2020) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2020/21 – Period to 30 June 2020.
- c) Cabinet Report (18 November 2020) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2020/21 – Period to 30 September 2020.
- d) Cabinet Report (17 March 2021) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 202/21 – Period to 30 December 2020.
- e) Cabinet Report (7 July 2021) – 2020/21 Final Outturn for the General Fund and Collection Fund.

Other useful documents

a) None

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Council's Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements. This report shows the forecast spend against budgets agreed by the Council in February 2020 in relation to the 2020/21 financial year.

Finance

Financial implications are detailed throughout the report which provides an analysis of the revenue and capital outturn position.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable.

Climate Change

Not applicable.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable.

Staffing

Not applicable.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Councils Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements.

Procurement

The outcome of procurement activity is factored into the financial projections included in the report.

Appendix 2 Resources Capital Programme 2020/21 – Detailed Monitoring Statement to 31 March 2021

Resources	Revised Annual Budget	Outturn Spend	In Year Variance – Over / (Under)	Actual Spend
	£000	£000	£000	%
Big Data	122	46	(76)	38
Broadband / Digital Durham	571	758	187	133
Code of Connection Compliance	160	160	-	100
Corporate Mail Fulfilment	55	22	(33)	40
Homeworking	92	59	(33)	64
ICT Business Continuity	13	7	(6)	54
Mobile Device Management	184	40	(144)	22
Ongoing Server replacement	411	411	-	100
Replacement of Desktop ICT Equipment	1,007	1,093	86	109
Sharepoint Architecture	-	-	-	-
Tanfield Datacentre LAN Switching Replacement	-	-	-	-
Applications and Development	9	9	-	100
Customer Relation Management System	8	8	-	100
Switch Replacement -Hardware	27	-	(27)	-
Middleware Software - Enterprise Application Integration	35	20	(15)	57
Integrated Customer Service Prog.	55	74	19	135
End Device Patching	152	148	(4)	97
ICT Performance Management	-	-	-	-
Technical Services	385	379	(6)	98
ICT Service Desk Replacement	60	-	(60)	-
ICT Services Include Design and Print Total	3,346	3,234	(112)	97
Civica Pension Fund Administration System	-	-	-	-
Migration of HR/Payroll Functionality	57	56	(1)	98
Financing Resources Total	57	56	(1)	98
Durham History Centre	207	225	18	109
Durham History Centre Total	207	225	18	109
RES Total	3,610	3,515	(95)	97

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**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

2 September 2021

County Durham Partnership Update

Ordinary Decision



Report of Corporate Management Team

**Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and
Climate Change**

Councillor Amanda Hopgood, Leader of the Council

**Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy
and Partnerships**

Electoral division affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to update the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP). The report also includes updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.

Executive summary

- 2 As we continue to follow the government roadmap out of lockdown, we are continuing to work together in partnership with both our statutory and non-statutory agencies so we can support our communities as we begin to slowly interact with each other more and reopen our economy.
- 3 A new Chair for the **Economic Partnership** has been appointed, who will lead the Partnership in very difficult circumstances and changing conditions for the local economy.
- 4 **All 14 AAPs** have received increased resources of £1.4 million to carry on the work around Covid-19 recovery. The work that Area Action Partnerships has carried out around Covid-19 emergency support has been recognised as good practice.

- 5 On 8 November 2020, the government announced that the holiday activities and food programme will be expanded across the whole of England in 2021. To further support the work that has been undertaken, and was highlighted in the last report in relation to holiday activities with healthy food, Durham County Council has received an indicative allocation of £2,383,860 from the Department for Education to coordinate and deliver Holiday Activities with Healthy Food in the Easter/Summer and Christmas holidays during 2021.
- 6 The **Health and Wellbeing Board** agreed the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25 at their meeting in March 2021. The plan is underpinned by evidence in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment focussed on health, wellbeing and the wider determinants of health. This has been coupled with the major policy drivers for improving health and reducing health inequalities.
- 7 The **Safe Durham Partnership** agreed the Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2021-25 at their meeting in March 2021. The plan has been informed by the community safety Strategic Needs Assessment which provides the evidence base on which the priorities have been developed.
- 8 The National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) will transform into the new Probation Service as of 25 June 2021. This will mean the NPS and Durham Tees Valley CRC will no longer exist. The new Probation Service will come into being and will be undertaking a business as usual approach to service delivery.
- 9 The Domestic Abuse Bill passed both Houses of Parliament and was signed into law on 29 April 2021. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 will provide further protections to the millions of people who experience domestic abuse, as well as strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators.
- 10 The **Better Together Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Forum**, which brings together senior representatives of larger or specialist VCS organisations with a countywide remit to share best practice and look for new opportunities to collaborate are actively engaged with the **County Durham Together Partnership (CDT)**. CDT was developed based on the Wellbeing principles and worked to ensure the community was empowered to self-help as much as possible and reach those most in need through an intelligence led approach from the outset. At the point of need the hub was there to consider the whole person and embed back into community networks as much as possible thus fully utilising the VCS to the maximum.
- 11 Eleven VCS leaders are contributing to six of the CDT Workstreams to ensure the VCS voice is heard as an equal partner and that their role in

recovery is recognised. One of the workstreams is specifically focussed on VCS sustainability and how to empower the VCS to grow and play a stronger role in achieving the County Durham Vision.

- 12 In April, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visited the Cheesy Waffles Project in Belmont, a project for children, young people and adults with additional needs from across County Durham, funded by **Durham AAP**. They joined in with fun events and social activities and learnt more about the project.
- 13 The **County Durham Partnership** has hosted two successful annual events, with the 2018 event focusing on tackling the stigma and discrimination attached to mental health and the theme for 2019 event being the new County Durham Vision and the impact cultural events can have on achieving the vision ambitions, as part of County Durham's Year of Culture.
- 14 The **County Durham Partnership** event did not take place in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. The event this year will take place in the autumn and will focus on green recovery and support the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference (known as COP26), which is scheduled to be held in Glasgow from 1 to 12 November 2021 under the presidency of the United Kingdom.

Recommendation

- 15 COSMB is recommended to:
 - (a) note the contents of this update.

Background

- 16 The **County Durham Partnership** including the board and forum (which bring together the board and local communities), five partnerships (**Health and Wellbeing Board, Safe Durham Partnership, Economic Partnership, Environment and Climate Change Partnership** and **County Durham Together Partnership**), **Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership** and the **Durham Safeguarding Adult Partnership, Better Together VCS Forum** and all **Area Action Partnerships** lead on key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.

County Durham Partnership board and forum

- 17 The **County Durham Partnership** Board met in January to give partners an update on the work taking place to address Covid-19 and an opportunity to discuss their collective local response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which included the vaccination programme, local tracing partnership and business compliance, which is very good across the County. Covid-19 is a standing item for discussion on this agenda to ensure partners are kept up to date on the changing landscape.
- 18 Discussion also focused on the work of the Durham Youth Council (DYC) and the DYC awards which took place in April. Partners used the opportunity to make links with the Youth Council for their respective areas of work, including the impact of the pandemic on young people and young people's views about volunteering and local community services.

- 19 The DYC's Young People's Awards Event 2021 recognised the achievements of children and young people across County Durham. The young people planned and facilitated the awards. Young people and advocates of young people were nominated for awards and their accomplishments were celebrated over a weeklong Facebook event. The event played host to a number of guest speakers who



Oxhill Youth Club – Youth Group category winners at the DYC Awards 2021

introduced the award categories and gave words of encouragement and congratulations. The event also included some exclusive live music recordings from some local musicians.

- 20 The Award winners each received an award, which was posted out to them. Following this event, the Youth Council have been approached by a number of other youth groups wanting to organise similar Youth award events and seeking advice on how to organise this.
- 21 In March, in addition to continuing discussions relating to Covid-19 the focus was on levelling up and investment for County Durham and emphasised the external opportunities for strategic funding and the importance of County Durham receiving significant government investment to ensure levelling up is delivered.
- 22 In February 2021, **the County Durham Partnership Forum** meeting resumed virtually after not meeting for a year due to the pandemic. The focus of the meeting was two workshops relating to:
- (a) Covid-19 and how we work with and engage our communities to take forward the road map as announced by the government on 22nd February and
 - (b) Towns and Villages and how we can work with AAPs to ensure the opportunity to revitalise their towns and villages is maximised

County Durham Partnership Annual event

- 23 The event this year will take place in the autumn and will focus on green recovery and support the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference (also known as COP 26), which is scheduled to be held in Glasgow from 1 to 12 November 2021 under the presidency of the United Kingdom.
- 24 Green recovery focuses on policies and solutions that will benefit people and the planet for years to come. Safeguarding the environment, through protecting ecosystems and fighting the climate crisis, is a big part of it, but so is investing in clean-energy jobs, ensuring everyone's health, safety, and civil rights, and prioritising climate justice.



Gala Theatre LED lighting

- 25 Covid-19 has further exposed and deepened inequalities, and threatens to undermine progress towards climate, nature and development goals. Unless recovery measures are fair and inclusive, decades of development gains could be wiped out, which highlights the importance that everyone has a role to play in the climate challenge.
- 26 Potential keynote speakers, ranging from national speakers, local speakers who influence national and local developments and representation from the Durham Youth Council to support youth participation are being currently being finalised.
- 27 A number of themed seminars at the event based around green recovery are also being developed, including showcasing innovation of businesses in County Durham, the latest developments on energy decarbonisation and developing a local strategy for improving the natural environment and biodiversity and addressing our ecological emergency as identified in the current Environment Bill.
- 28 The event will support the work of the newly formed Environment and Climate Change Partnership, who had their inaugural meeting in March 2021. Feedback from the event will form part of the consultation mechanism for developing the new Climate Emergency Response Plan 2022-24 and the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy to improve the natural environment and biodiversity and address our ecological emergency as highlighted in the current Environment Bill.

County Durham Together

- 29 The **County Durham Together Partnership (CDT)** has met three times and made positive progress in all areas. The seven established workstreams have all met and agreed their key deliverables. This approach to working with communities (not doing to) will see a significant shift and will put co-production very much at the centre of how services and solutions are explored and developed. Through the full partnership approach, including DCC, Police, County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group, VCS and the public, work areas including the following are being developed:
 - (a) Skills and competencies framework including link worker/connector roles using the Making Every Contact Count approach
 - (b) digital alignment and consultation regarding an online signposting solution so that residents are aware of what is available within their community to help them support themselves
 - (c) working with residents to co-produce deliverables – people know what solutions work best for them. A group of volunteers will help

focus this workstream on what communities already have and need

- (d) Place Based approaches in Horden and Bishop Auckland.
- 30 The leads of all workstreams now also meet bi-monthly to ensure collaboration and shared learning and leadership is happening and to avoid duplication.
- 31 **The Better Together VCS Forum** which brings together senior representatives of larger or specialist VCS organisations with a countywide remit to share best practice and look for new opportunities to collaborate, are actively engaged with the County Durham Together change programme. Eleven VCS leaders are contributing to six of the CDT Workstreams to ensure the VCS voice is heard as an equal partner and that their role in recovery is recognised. One of the workstreams is specifically focussed on VCS sustainability and how to empower the VCS to grow and play a stronger role in achieving the County Durham Vision. The last Forum meeting had a focus on safeguarding, ensuring the VCS were aware of the work of the Durham Safeguarding Children/Adults Partnerships.

Covid-19

- 32 Accurate information is crucial to ensuring people are safe and supported during the pandemic. Our **Covid-19 Community Champions** programme empowers County Durham residents to become trusted voices in their local areas, sharing key public health messages, while also highlighting the support available. Since launching the programme in November, more than 80 people from across the county have signed up.
- 33 The **VCS Local Infrastructure Organisation**, Durham Community Action (DCA), has been funded by the NHS County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group to coordinate volunteer recruitment for Covid-19 vaccination clinic support marshals to support the local Primary Care Networks deliver their Covid-19 vaccination programme across County Durham. They have also recruited volunteers to help at Lateral Flow Testing sites.



- 34 By mid-April, 313 Vaccine Support Marshalls and 118 Lateral Flow Testing Volunteers had been recruited through the County Durham Volunteering website managed by DCA. Sixty-Six people are undertaking both roles.
- 35 The **County Durham Armed Forces Forum** met virtually in March and duly acknowledged the role of the Armed Forces contribution to the Covid-19 response through membership of the Local Resilience Forum and assistance with vaccination centres.

Holiday activities with healthy food countywide programme

36 On 8 November 2020, the government announced that the holiday activities and food programme will be expanded across the whole of England in 2021. To further support the work that has been undertaken, and was highlighted in the last report in relation to holiday activities with healthy food, Durham County Council has received an indicative allocation of £2,383,860 from the Department for Education (DfE) to coordinate and deliver Holiday Activities with Healthy Food in the Easter/Summer and Christmas holidays during 2021. DCC will receive the money in instalments and be required to report on the total numbers of children accessing provision across these holiday periods to ensure ongoing funding is secured.



- 37 A communications and marketing plan has been developed to ensure the programme is promoted and that children, young people and families know what provision is available near to where they live. The programme has been branded as 'Fun and Food' in County Durham. A dedicated webpage is now available for families and providers www.durham.gov.uk/funandfood.
- 38 The first DfE funded holiday activities with food took place over the recent Easter school holidays. 90 projects took place across the county, 73 were funded through the AAPs, 6 schools, 4 short breaks providers and 7 Family Centre hubs.

- 39 A total of 6,862 children and young people took part in Easter activities including 757 children with additional needs.
- 40 Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the majority of activities were delivered remotely, including online cookery and physical activity sessions. A range of activity packs were also provided and either delivered to family's homes or collected from community venues, these included growing kits, arts and crafts and cooking on a budget. There was limited face to face delivery which included the production of an interactive experience the 'Beatrix Potter Experience'.

Safeguarding

- 41 The **Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnership (DSAP)** have continued working towards achieving its Strategic Plan for 2020-2022 with a focus upon Covid-19. Recent developments have included a refresh of the DSAP Communications Plan and the accessible information through posters and contact cards to support all agencies in providing essential contact information to ensure adults remain safe. In April 2021, a regional radio campaign took place sponsored by the Association of Directors for Adult Social Services (North East) in support of reaching wider communities with details of how to raise concerns.
- 42 In recent months the DSAP has shared key briefings with its partners and workforces related to Covid-19 which include:

- (a) Information related to Covid-19 test, trace and vaccination scams
- (b) Domestic Abuse and the national 'Ask for ANI' domestic abuse codeword scheme
- (c) Publication of DSAP newsletters
- (d) Raising awareness of whistleblowing and how to report concerns



- 43 The DSAP has continued to seek assurance from statutory and relevant partners in line with its programme of work which continues to place a focus upon the recovery of Covid-19. In addition, the DSAP is proactively learning from emerging themes during Covid-19 to inform its activity moving forward and beyond the pandemic.

- 44 **Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP)** continues to fulfil its obligations under the Statutory Guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 who operate under a now well-defined set of Vision and Values:
- (a) **Prevention Through Early Intervention** – we will work together to prevent harm at the earliest opportunity
 - (b) **Joined up Response** - we will respond promptly drawing on appropriate expertise of others
 - (c) **Listening** – we will listen to and observe children to ensure their voice is heard even when they don't or can't speak out
 - (d) **Identifying** – we will identify those most likely to be harmed by sharing information and data effectively
 - (e) **Challenging** – we will challenge, learn and continuously improve.
- 45 Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic it has been about working differently and more flexibly to ensure that across partner agencies key frontline services are maintained and supported to keep children safe. Agencies have supported each other through their own Business Continuity Plans, so gaps did not develop in service provision. A notable example of this is how the training offer has been modified from being predominantly face to face to one which is entirely online using technology, and this will continue to play a big part of any hybrid approach to multi-agency learning and development.
- 46 Over recent months a significant amount of work has taken place examining the learning from local, national and regional sources. These findings have been streamlined into four Practice Improvement Themes which the partnership will focus on over the next 12 months:
- (a) Voice and Lived Experience of the Child
 - (b) Risk Assessment and Cumulative Harm
 - (c) Decision Making and Management Understanding
 - (d) Child Sexual Abuse
- 47 The DSCP has taken an active role in supporting the implementation of the Signs of Safety Practice Framework, led by Children and Young People's Services, with strong engagement across a number of agencies.
- 48 There is strong evidence of effective partnership working, a good example being the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), and the

use of the Child Exploitation Vulnerability Tracker to identify those children most at risk of harm. Through this, early and appropriate interventions are followed.

- 49 Additionally, in terms of communication the DSCP are due in the summer to launch a new website and a new e-bulletin will improve stakeholder access to key information and DSCP messages.

Domestic Abuse Act

- 50 It is estimated that over 2.4 million people are affected by domestic abuse each year in England and Wales. In order to tackle this the government has passed the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 51 This act aims to support victims, including children and young people to live lives free from abuse, coercion, and control. The act received royal ascent on 29 April 2021 and has introduced a range of legislative measures to support victims of domestic abuse including their children.
- 52 Key changes include an update to the statutory definition of domestic abuse which now includes children and young people as victims in their own right and recognises emotional, coercive and controlling and economic abuse as well as physical violence. It also places a statutory requirement on local authorities to provide residents of County Durham, and those who travel from different local authority areas, a range of safe accommodation options and broader wrap around support.
- 53 Durham County Council (DCC) have received over £1.8m through the New Burdens Fund for the financial year 2021/22 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure that the requirements of the act are successfully implemented.
- 54 It will also establish in law the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, to stand up for victims and survivors, raise public awareness, monitor the response of local authorities, the justice system and other statutory agencies and hold them to account in tackling domestic abuse.
- 55 Just for Women received **Stanley AAP** funding for the delivery of their counselling and crafting to wellness programme. This programme provides counselling sessions and crafting to wellness and anxiety workshops to support the mental health of victims of abuse, and to alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety. The sessions teach coping strategies,



Taking part in the Crafting for Wellness programme at Just for Women

help women to develop healthy behaviours, reduce stress, and improve their general wellbeing. To adhere to social distancing, groups of four meet twice per week for two hours to reduce social isolation. This allows the women the opportunity to meet new friends and create a strong support network, offering and receiving support. As the women's situations improve, they are moved onto other support programmes to allow other women to benefit from the programme.

- 56 The programme is available for all who need it with no time restrictions, and Just for Women try to ensure low waiting times. This weekly contact with their counsellor is provided in a supportive and safe environment. This is essential as women who are victims of abuse (especially domestic abuse) require a safe space outside of the home to receive this support. All women who receive support at the Just for Women Centre can access wraparound support of training, workshops, 1:1 support, craft therapy and bespoke programmes.

Vision 2035: More and better jobs

- 57 Glyn Llewellyn has been appointed as the new chair of the **Economic Partnership**. Glyn is a director at the North East law firm, Mortons Law and he brings with him a wealth of experience in business consultancy and manufacturing and will lead the Economic Partnership in very difficult circumstances and changing conditions for the local economy.
- 58 An Economic Statement has been developed which is a short document setting out the county's high-level economic strengths and challenges. The Economic Statement will bridge the gap until a new Economic Strategy is published in summer 2022.
- 59 The Statement builds on research that has been commissioned from external consultants, who will also support the development of the Strategy. Many of the impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit are yet to be understood so, as these emerge over the coming months, they will be interpreted as part of the evidence for the Strategy.
- 60 The Levelling Up Fund for England is £4 billion and as a Tier 1 area, County Durham should receive priority funding. County Durham is identified as one of the areas of greatest need in the UK and local areas (based on parliamentary constituency areas) will be able to apply for up to £20 million from the fund to spend on projects which command local support, including from local MPs.
- 61 The Community Renewal Fund has £220 million available nationally. A maximum of £3 million is available for County Durham for submission to UK government. Bids will focus on business development, innovation, employment, skills and green recovery.

62 **East Durham Rural Corridor AAP** supported Livin to set up a discretionary fund to be delivered through their Livin Futures Employability team, with grants payable to applicants who can demonstrate that there are jobs available upon completion of the training or that the skills and support gained will enable applications to be made into the essential skills sector. The maximum grant that is given is £400 per person and is not a cash payment and supports, for example:

- (a) Training courses and qualifications
- (b) Clothes/travelling expenses for interview
- (c) Tools for the job

63 **Chester-le-Street AAP** have supported a project to support young adults, and adults who are at a disadvantage because of physical, learning or mental health needs. Back from the Edge participants will be provided with free, practical training and education to develop woodcraft, DIY, traditional crafts and trade skills. This will enhance their employability skills while also creating a sense of value and self-worth. The concept is to find a unique interest within each individual to enhance and develop their skills in that area and will have a positive impact on their quality of life and may even lead to them setting up a micro business.

64 Following discussion at the **Health and Wellbeing Board** meeting in January 2021, a letter has been written to government relating to levelling up across the country and more support for people in County Durham who are living in poverty. Particularly with reference to County Durham seeing increasing demands on public services, coupled with the reduction of resources, the pressure on our communities is increasing which has been further exacerbated by the impact of Covid-19 on our local economy plus the ageing demographic of our population.

65 To support our vision that fewer people are affected by poverty and deprivation in the County, a number of **AAPs** have provided a range of valuable support for the local community, including hot meal provision to families during the schools holidays and those that are isolating and help for



Preparing care packages in Teesdale with support from Teesdale AAP

community centres to be used as local distribution points for foodbanks.

66 Business Durham ran a campaign on Facebook promoting support through the Durham Business Opportunities Programme. The social media campaign targeted rural areas and areas with low support engagement across County Durham including Barnard Castle, Stanhope, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Willington, Spennymoor, Crook, Ferryhill, Seaham, Easington, Quarrington Hill, Wheatley Hill, Kelloe and Fishburn.

67 The campaign targeted businesses with a postcard demonstrating how engaging with the Durham Business Opportunities Programme could benefit them using examples from others. This generated 47 leads, including a number of new businesses that have not previously engaged with Business Durham or taken up support.

68 As part of support for rural communities, Barnard Castle will get free public wi-fi as part of plans to boost the resilience of County Durham communities. It is hoped the installation of wi-fi in Barnard Castle will increase footfall and encourage visitors to spend more time in the town centre once coronavirus restrictions are eased.



Chocolate Fayre benefiting from free public wi-fi in Barnard Castle

Funded by Durham County Council and **Teesdale AAP** the project will also provide another way for businesses to connect with customers, with new local apps being developed to promote special offers and encourage people to explore the town.

People lives long and independent lives

69 The **Health and Wellbeing Board** agreed the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25 at their meeting in March 2021. The plan is underpinned by evidence in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment focussed on health, wellbeing and the wider determinants of health. This has been coupled with the major policy drivers for improving health and reducing health inequalities.

70 The vision of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy is 'County Durham is a healthy place, where people live well for longer' with priorities of Starting Well, Living Well and Ageing Well and the six objectives of how success will be measured being:

- (a) Improve healthy life expectancy and reduce the gap within County Durham and between County Durham and England
- (b) We will have a smoke free environment with over 95% of our residents not smoking and an ambition that pregnant women and mothers will not smoke
- (c) Decrease overall levels of unemployment and specifically close the employment gap between the general population and those living with a long term physical or mental health condition, or with a learning disability
- (d) Over 90% of our children aged 4-5 years, and 79% of children aged 10-11 years are of a healthy weight
- (e) Improved mental health and wellbeing evidenced by increased self-reported wellbeing scores and reduced suicide rates
- (f) Increase the number of organisations involved in the Better Health at Work Award (to improve health and wellbeing interventions at work)

- 71 The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy also includes how addressing climate change also realises benefits to health and wellbeing (for example through active travel) and how the **Health and Wellbeing Board** will work with the **Environment and Climate Change Partnership** to realise these benefits.
- 72 The new 'County Durham Care Partnership Executive' arrangements to further integrate health and social care services came into place in April 2021. This will stand County Durham in good stead for the proposals outlined in the Health and Social Care White Paper relating to integrated care systems coming into force. Health and Wellbeing Boards will continue to have a leadership role at the place-based level in these new arrangements to represent the views of County Durham.
- 73 Physical Activity is a key priority area for partners and is key to delivery of the County Durham Vision 2035 and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Physical Activity Strategy Committee (a subgroup of the Health and Wellbeing Board) is responsible for encouraging partners to work together and promote change that ensures an active lifestyle is an easy choice for all residents of County Durham, which also positively impacts on mental wellbeing.

74 A number of AAPs have supported a range of initiatives relating to promoting an active lifestyle. This includes **Bishop Auckland and Shildon (BASH) AAP** who have supported the Active Families Project, delivered by Family Action to bring families together to improve health and wellbeing by increasing their physical activity through fun, educational activities. Sessions include at least 30 minutes of physical activity and a food bag will be provided each week with ingredients to make a meal at home including recipe cards and a video tutorial. As lockdown restrictions ease, they hope to be able to make a hot meal using the school kitchens and families eat together during the sessions.



Learning new skills and having fun at an Active Families session

75 Family Action work closely with schools to identify and engage the families who will benefit from this project most. Sessions are delivered outside by a Project Worker and supported by volunteers. Each 12-week programme will be based in a primary school in the BASH AAP area and they aim to work with seven schools over a 12-month period and will accommodate a group of around 15-20 participants at each school.

76 Residents in the **4 Together AAP** area also benefited from improved health and wellbeing through the Learn Healthy Live Healthy project which aims to encourage members of the community to live healthier and happier lives and to increase knowledge and awareness of serious illness with advice on how even simple lifestyle changes can help prevent it.



Learn Healthy Live Healthy participants

77 Prior to lockdown and during lockdown restrictions the Ladder Centre successfully delivered a range of activities to support active lifestyles and improve mental wellbeing:

- (a) Taster Seated Exercise sessions
- (b) Small group health walks
- (c) Jog and Talk introduction to running session
- (d) Virtual Tai Chi (video sessions provided by a qualified Tutor)
- (e) Healthy eating courses with wellbeing for life
- (f) An understanding mental health focus group
- (g) An improving physical and mental health through exercise focus group
- (h) Park Football "kick abouts".

78 In addition, they delivered 25 Health at Home packs to project members during lockdown and set up a very popular virtual walking group and mentored those taking part. Eight project members completed Durham County Council Walk Leader training and are regular contributors to Thrive Durham Volunteer Health Walks. Two of them have completed Durham County Council Run Leader training and going forward will be delivering Couch to 5K and Run Happy sessions in the AAP area.

79 The **Derwent Valley AAP** have supported Clart About Ltd to develop a 'My Mammy/Mummy Matters' project which will create a facilitated support group for new parents who have given birth during the pandemic lockdown. The project will offer sessions around sensory play, peer support and bonding through parent led activities. The overall aim of the project is to promote positive mental health and reduce social isolation and it will be delivered to new parents over the course of 45 weeks.



80 **East Durham AAP** have funded Durham Deafened Support to support a community uniquely affected by some of the social distancing measures around mask wearing. This has made lip reading impossible (which for some people is their main form of communication) and can therefore lead to greater isolation.

81 The **Armed Forces** Covenant Local Action Plan annual report, amongst other things, highlights the work of the Armed Forces Outreach Service

(AFOS). In partnership with other local authorities, Durham County Council funds AFOS which provides help and support to all force's personnel, reservists, veterans and their families.

- 82 The AFOS are preparing to roll out an Armed Forces Awareness training package for front line workers, especially those in Adult Care.

Connected communities

- 83 The **Safe Durham Partnership** agreed the Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2021-25 at their meeting in March 2021. The key risks and threats contained in the community safety strategic assessment that crime and disorder pose to the communities of County Durham have informed the priorities of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan, which sets out the strategic approach that will be used to tackle crime and disorder throughout the County.

- 84 The vision of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan is 'Durham is a county where every adult and child will feel and be safe', with the six strategic priorities being:

- (a) Promote being safe and feeling safe in your community
- (b) Support victims and protect vulnerable people from harm
- (c) Prevent Strategy: Countering Terrorism, Radicalisation and Violent Extremism
- (d) Reduce reoffending
- (e) Alcohol and substance misuse reduction
- (f) Tackle and prevent cyber enabled crime

- 85 The National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) transformed into the new Probation Service as of 25 June 2021. This means the NPS and Durham Tees Valley CRC will no longer exist. The new Probation Service will be undertaking a business as usual approach to service delivery.

- 86 For the short term, all operational delivery will continue in the pre transition format and the move to integrate caseloads and service delivery will take place within a likely six-month timeframe. There should be no changes to overarching risk management, community safety or service delivery throughout the transition period and beyond.

- 87 Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". PREVENT is about working together to safeguard and support people who might

be vulnerable to radicalisation. Prevent is one of the four elements of CONTEST, the government's counter-terrorism strategy and aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

- 88 The new annual Counter Terrorism Local Profile has been produced, which identifies the current threat and risks within County Durham in relation to radicalisation, extremism and terrorist related activity. This document is produced by Special Branch within Durham Constabulary in consultation with partners giving a local context. Areas were identified that needed to be addressed, which included the need to improve the reporting of concerns about vulnerable people being radicalised from sources other than education. To address this, free training on Prevent is being rolled out to other agencies and voluntary groups so they are aware of how to make these referrals to ensure this issue is addressed.
- 89 The new **Environment and Climate Change Partnership** met for the first time in March 2021. Three strategic priorities for the new partnership have been established and three workstreams have been set up with partners who will use their shared knowledge and skills to find innovative solutions to environmental issues which affect County Durham.
- (a) Climate emergency: to support the reduction of carbon emissions from all sectors across County Durham to tackle the climate emergency and hit our target of net zero for the whole county by 2050 at the latest
 - (b) Ecological emergency: provides strategic but practical guidance to support organisations and communities in County Durham to reverse the decline in our biodiversity and restore habitats and species across the county. The priority for the first year is to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for County Durham
 - (c) Place, health and communities aims to promote engagement and activity to improve environmental outcomes in communities across County Durham and promote sustainability and health and wellbeing across the Environment and Climate Change Partnership.
- 90 Ecological mapping work is a practical example of a project the **Environment and Climate Change Partnership** is supporting. The mapping will provide the baseline for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, by providing information on core areas of habitat and where the most ecologically sound areas are for habitat creation in order to enhance core areas and create ecological connectivity. Partners have mapped grasslands and woodlands and work is currently taking place with the Environment Agency to map wetlands. Further mapping will be

required for accessible semi-natural habitats (which can also be used to support the health agenda) and potentially 'high carbon habitats' such as arable and grass leys in order to help direct woodland planting to sites that will create the best carbon reductions. Mapping is already used to inform woodland planting in the county, and has proved to be an invaluable project management tool.

- 91 The current Climate Emergency Response Plan 2020 – 22 has undergone a one-year review, which has shown there has been significant progress, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. A new Climate Emergency Response Plan is being developed for 2022-24, which will emphasise the importance of the cross-cutting issues of green recovery, skills development, rural decarbonisation, adaptation to a changing climate and a fair and just transition.
- 92 Groundwork North East have been awarded funding by **3 Towns AAP** to improve accessibility to Kitty Woods enhancing biodiversity, providing direct training and volunteering opportunities. It will increase access to nature for both participants and for local residents which will improve the health and wellbeing of the wider community tackling both obesity and social isolation. Alongside volunteering opportunities, the programme will provide engagement activities to safely involve the local community in the woodland and other underutilised green spaces in Crook and the wider 3 Towns AAP area. Examples of engagement activities will include guided walks, wildlife spotters, bio blitz, treasure trails, bird/bat box making, bug hotels, den making and seasonal activities such as bird feeders and dawn chorus walks.

- 93 **Weardale AAP** has been identified as a demonstrator area to support electric charging points. Stanhope will have ten charging points; this will broaden the offer to visitors to the Dales and increase the economic wellbeing of the area.



Introducing electric vehicle charging points

- 94 The 31st County Durham Environment Awards for 2020 could not happen safely in the usual format due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, an online programme went ahead which culminated in a virtual ceremony held on the evening of 19 February 2021. There was a 20-minute video of winning entries streamed on the council's You Tube channel and presented by the Awards judging panel. Numbers were understandably down on previous years but

applications were of a good quality, with much of the focus being on recognising and celebrating a continued strong community spirit and the relevance of the local environment in enabling a level of neighbourhood-based activity during the pandemic.

- 95 Increased resources of £1.4 million have been made available to all 14 AAPs to carry on the work around Covid-19 recovery. All AAPs have ensured their communities remain supported based on individual needs and a number of examples are shown below of projects which help support our communities as we are on the road to recovery from the pandemic
- 96 **Great Aycliffe and Midridge AAP** supported the Newton Aycliffe Play Café project who have provided much-needed food and household essential parcels to families across Aycliffe. The organisation was faced with an increase in demand for their service during the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, receiving more referrals week on week. The funding received helped greatly in supporting the additional families and the Play Café has provided an essential service to the community throughout the pandemic and continues to operate their service to those who require support. The Play Café received fantastic support from the community, including Newton Aycliffe Working Men's Club, who provided free use of their concert room, where all packs were prepared safely, adhering to government guidelines.
- 97 Brandon Carrside Youth and Community Project have been funded by **Mid Durham AAP** to provide free activity packs to more than 80 families. The packs included the materials to make sunshine window decorations and a live 'craft along demonstration' was included in an online event on Pancake Day, plus ingredients for pancakes with healthy fruit toppings. Children were encouraged to display their sunshine pictures in windows to raise people's spirits on their daily walks, runs and cycles.
- 98 Children also had the opportunity to engage in a live Toy Story show which included singing and dancing. Brandon Carrside have continued provision throughout lockdown providing much needed support to families, combating loneliness and isolation for the elderly with weekly doorstep chats and deliveries, wellbeing support via schools and online Youth Clubs. The project coordinator also jointly won North East Youth Projects with Pride Youth Worker of the Year Award for leading her staff with commitment and dedication to the local community during the pandemic. The staff and the project were also awarded the High Sheriffs Award for County Durham being the overall winner at the ceremony in March 2021.

99 The Cheesy Waffles Project which supports children and young adults with additional needs has received support from **Durham AAP** and the local County Councillors on a number of occasions. Over the last 12 months funding has helped them to keep in touch online and also run training sessions for the young people on Covid-19 awareness. The project offers a safe fun space and their hard work was recently recognised with a visit from the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge



The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge making friends at Cheesy Waffles

who visited the project at their base at Belmont Community Centre. The Duke and Duchess joined in with fun events, social activities and even played golf. One of the young people from the project summed the visit up when they said “Today has been brilliant. It’s the best thing that has happened to me in my heart”.

100 **Spennymoor AAP** has provided funding to Spennymoor Youth and Community Centre Association (SYACA) to develop a Community Takeaway service for 12 months. The project will support residents in the Spennymoor area who have been affected financially or socially by Covid-19 with twice weekly meals cooked in the Centre's community kitchen and delivered safely by SYACA drivers to those identified. The Community Takeaway will provide traditional nutritious meals and desserts with capacity for at least 50 meals per week (with all income reinvested into sustaining and developing the project).

101 The project will employ a cook, drivers and kitchen assistants as well as being supported by four volunteers who will be involved in the project including helping in the kitchen, delivering additional meals and promoting the project.

102 The project will also link with the SYACA Covid-19 helpline and volunteer team to provide safe social contact through doorstep conversations and regular wellbeing calls with vulnerable and self-isolated residents to ensure health and wellbeing needs are being met and referrals to professional support, advice and guidance which can help resolve other issues cause by the Covid-19 crisis.

103 **Churches and Faith groups** have continued their active support for local communities during the pandemic and play a vital role in helping communities come together and support each other. Faith groups and schools contributed poetry and artwork to the County Durham online Holocaust Memorial Day event on the theme ‘Be the light in the

darkness'. Members of the County Durham Faiths Network are being consulted and are contributing to the development of the Faith Museum as part of the Auckland Project. This will be the first museum in England to contemplate faith in Britain and what it means in the present day and help people to understand today's multi-faith society.

- 104 The **Armed Forces** Covenant Fund Trust has awarded £15,000 to the council to support community engagement for the 'Through Soldiers' Eyes' exhibition which will share through art the experiences of our Armed Forces, their journey in war, in peace and beyond. The exhibition will take place in Bishop Auckland Town Hall 10th September – 18th November 2021.

Conclusion

- 105 The scale of the coronavirus pandemic and is still having an impact on all services across the County Durham. As we continue to follow the government roadmap out of lockdown and begin to slowly interact with each other more and reopen our economy we continue to work in partnership.
- 106 The County Durham Partnership, including our Safeguarding Boards, Better Together VCS Forum and our fourteen Area Action Partnerships will continue to work together to prevent health and wellbeing inequalities widening even further and work with our communities as true and equal partners through this difficult time. Our relationships with other agencies and with our communities are built on a robust foundation and will continue to provide a basis for improving outcomes for our local people during the recovery and restoration phases to meet the County Durham Vision.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None

Finance

Area and neighbourhood budgets are utilised and delivered through the 14 AAPs and ensure the council (and AAPs) receive improved information on the outputs achieved through use of locality budgets.

Consultation

The County Durham Partnership framework is a key community engagement and consultation function of the Council and its partners. The recommendations in the report are based on extensive consultation with AAP partners.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The actions set out in this report aim to ensure equality and diversity issues are embedded within the thematic partnerships and the working practice of AAPs.

Climate Change

This is recognised throughout partnership activities.

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to form a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment and to reduce re-offending. In County Durham, the CSP is the Safe Durham Partnership.

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

None

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**Corporate Overview and
Scrutiny Management Board**

2 September 2021



Update in relation to Petitions

Report of Corporate Management Team

Helen Lynch, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

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

Recommendation(s)

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

Background

- 3 Following the introduction of The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 all of the petitions that have been received by the Authority are processed by democratic services in line with its petitions process.
- 4 The Board have received update reports on petitions since September 2008, and this function has now passed to the new committee.
- 5 From the 15 December 2010, the Authority has provided a facility for members of the public to submit e-petitions on the Council's website.

Current Notice of Key Decisions

- 6 Since the last update no new e-petitions have been submitted.
- 7 Three new paper petitions have been submitted, two of which have been completed and responses are awaited for the other one. A list

giving details and current status of all active petitions is attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

Contact: Ros Layfield

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

None.

Consultation

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

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

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Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
<p>Petition 394</p> <p>To implement restrictions on HGVs travelling through the villages of Pittington, Littleton, Sherburn and Sherburn Hill</p> <p>E-Petition Petition received 31.10.20 No. of signatures – 113 Paper Petition – 228 signatures</p>	<p>Michelle McIntosh Traffic Assets Team Leader</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to implement restrictions on HGVs travelling through the villages of Pittington, Littleton, Sherburn and Sherburn Hill.</p> <p>HGV Traffic/Weight restriction and limit HGV usage on least suitable routes</p> <p>The HGV traffic travelling through Low Pittington, High Pittington, Sherburn, Sherburn Hill and Littleton has been raised a number of times over the years and we have previously advised the SPL Community Group that we would not consider introducing a weight restriction on this road as there is no structural reason i.e. there is no weak bridge and the road serves local communities and businesses, all of which require deliveries by HGV. There are structures within the highway on this route but they are regularly inspected and do not require that any restriction is placed to regulate the weight of vehicles passing over them.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the use of the relaxation of ‘except for access’ opens the restriction to easy abuse by drivers and can render the restriction unworkable. Therefore, in legal terms we would not be able to satisfy our duties as Highway Authority under the relevant pieces of legislation if we were to attempt to introduce such a restriction. There is also no option to try and direct HGV traffic as suggested onto the ‘least suitable routes’ as this would be subjective and opinion on which routes are the least suitable would likely vary depending upon where those asked reside. Additionally while there are no avoidable or prohibited movements for Taylormade traffic we have generally had a good line of communication with the company and are aware that they work to vary their routes and consider local impact when planning movement of materials to/from their site.</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>There are currently no weight restrictions through Low Pittington, High Pittington, Sherburn, Sherburn Hill and Littleton and while residents might consider that such a restriction should be introduced on environmental grounds it remains the case that there is no viable alternative route. There are no plans to introduce restrictions or any scope to limit the numbers of vehicles using the route. We are also unable to influence which routes they take.</p> <p>Structures/Bridges</p> <p>As mentioned there are 2 structures within the adopted highway at Low Pittington and High Pittington and it was suggested these structures were subject to 'very limited inspection'.</p> <p>The inspections are carried out to the relevant code of practice. This code was updated to Code of Practice "Well-managed highway Infrastructure" in October 2016. More emphasis in the updated code was placed on managing the asset through the risk assessment process and Durham have adopted the new Code from October 2018 therefore allowing a full review of inspection intervals to be completed which has extended timescales between Principal Inspection from 6 years to either 8yrs, 10yrs or 12 yrs using the guidance in Interim Advice Note 171/12 Risk Based Principal Inspection Intervals.</p> <p>The current position with the structures is summarised below ;</p> <p>B0544 Pittington Village Bridge - This structure had a Principal Inspection carried out by an external contractor in January 2015, a General Inspection in February 2017 and again in February 2019. A Principal Inspection for this bridge was programmed to be carried out by the end of the 20/21 financial year and is confirmed to have been undertaken on 15th March 2021.</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>There are works identified for this structure in the medium to long term but there is nothing which gives concern over its structural integrity in terms of vehicular loading at this time.</p> <p>B0135 Coalford Lane Bridge - This structure had a Principal Inspection carried out by an external contractor in December 2014, a General Inspection in April 2017 and again in August 2019. This bridge will now not receive a further Principal Inspection until 2022/23 financial year following the updated review under IAN 171/12 which has extended the requirement for a Principal Inspection to every 8 years.</p> <p>There are works identified for the medium to long term but there is again nothing which gives concern over its structural integrity in terms of vehicular loading. The issues raised are more cosmetic in nature than structural.</p> <p>In conclusion there are no issues with these structures that would result in the necessity to restrict the size of vehicles using the road.</p> <p>Existing traffic calming and comparison raised in relation to scheme on B1285 Murton</p> <p>The existing traffic calming scheme for High Pittington was introduced to reduce vehicle speeds and through traffic in the village, as both the Police and County Council received many justified complaints regarding vehicle speeds. It was therefore necessary that the measures had to be effective to have a positive improvement in reducing vehicle speeds. Apart from taking account of motorists' views, we also had to consider all highway users including pedestrians using this road.</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>During the development of the scheme the various types of traffic calming feature were considered to identify which was the most suitable to achieve the objectives of the project. Following this process the most appropriate feature was determined to be a series of sets of speed cushions, which is due to the various site constraints, the road being a bus route and the need to reduce speeds over a long distance.</p> <p>While it was stated that the group do not consider there was sufficient public consultation for the existing traffic calming scheme I can confirm that a consultation was undertaken with residents of Low Pitlington and High Pitlington, where all properties, a total of 611 at the time, were issued with details of the proposed scheme and invited to make comment. In addition, the statutory consultees, including the emergency services, were also consulted with regard to the proposals and inviting their comments. 215 responses were received from individual properties with a majority of those who responded being in favour of progressing the proposals. The proposal was also advertised by notices posted on site, in the local press and available to inspect at named Durham County Council offices.</p> <p>Additionally the proposal having received objections was subject to review at Durham County Council’s Highways Committee, which is part of our democratic process, with a report outlining the details of the scheme, the consultation and the nature of the objections.</p> <p>Speed surveys were carried out both before and after the scheme was introduced which determined that the scheme had been successful in reducing vehicle speeds. While there have been requests to alter, relocate or remove the traffic calming features they are still considered appropriate for maintaining lower speeds through the village.</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>The B1285 location mentioned at Murton is subject to an historic 18T weight limit ‘plug’ which is a restriction over a short distance that effectively prevents vehicles of a certain weight from passing through a point so while the route beyond is not restricted vehicles cannot access from that direction. While this effectively forces restricted vehicles to use more suitable alternative routes, rather than pass through, no such alternative exists for Low Pittington, High Pittington and Littleton as all routes are similar in nature and are the only viable options for access to the Taylormade site as well as any deliveries that need to be made by HGV in the villages.</p> <p>Murton also has speed table traffic calming features introduced to replace previous traffic calming, which comprised priority give way ‘pinch points’. These ‘pinch point’ features were removed following complaints about noise, Anti-Social behaviour and difficulties reported with adjacent access and parking. While such features were considered for High Pittington there are a number of issues relating to speed tables that resulted in the chosen cushion arrangement with one example being that such features are costly due to the requirement for alterations to highway drainage, which is not an issue with cushions. If this option had been introduced it would have meant a much shorter scheme would have been delivered and only have influenced the speeds over a shorter distance. It is possible that such a scheme would not have resulted in the successful speed reduction achieved by the current scheme over the wider area.</p> <p>Road Safety & Bend at Low Pittington</p> <p>We have investigated road safety concerns raised in relation to the bend at Low Pittington there is no scope to widen this section due to the existing levels of adjacent private land. We</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>have acknowledged previous concerns in relation to vehicle overrun of footways at this location and any actionable defects have been addressed.</p> <p>Additionally, having checked the accident recording database shared with Durham Constabulary I can confirm there have been no recorded ‘personal injury’ accidents on the section of road through the bend at Low Pittington in the last 4 years, this being our standard search criteria. This represents a favourable accident record when compared to many other roads in the County which remain as priority to address from limited road safety funding which must be directed to deal with those locations having the worst accident records.</p> <p>Sherburn mini roundabout</p> <p>This junction was previously a typical cross-roads with a slight stagger between the north and south legs. Such layouts introduce uncertainty over priority and do nothing to slow traffic on the straight through leg, which can also lead to risk taking by motorists on the minor road legs. The roundabout has been in place for many years yet is still a location where accidents as the result of driver error/judgement are recorded. We have made changes in recent years to attempt to address this and the layout is still considered appropriate due to limited scope for alternative arrangements.</p> <p>A traffic signal installation was previously considered as an option prior to the decision to introduce the mini-roundabout, however it was discounted at that time due to a number of reasons including existing layout and available space, likely to control peak flows but would create unnecessary delays at other times and stop lines would have to be set back to accommodate the turning paths of large vehicles and this introduces further</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>delays in the signal timings. The proximity of side roads close to the junction creates an issue over keeping the entrances clear whilst accommodating the queues of vehicles and in such layouts the junction can easily become blocked if the accesses are obstructed and vehicles want to turn in. Traffic signals would remove the issue of bad driving in negotiating the roundabout, but signals generate damage only, rear-end shunt type accidents and ones associated with red-light jumping. From the aesthetic perspective, a signalised junction would look out of place in Sherburn and as it would also cost upward of £100,000 such an improvement is not considered justified or appropriate.</p> <p>Reported/recorded incidents & Carriageway Inspections</p> <p>When images, recordings or anecdotal statements detailing potential road safety issues or incidents are received this information is reviewed however if the material received is incomplete, unclear or the issue suggested is not defined, DCC are unable to take any action. For example an image showing an HGV on the wrong side of the road, where due to the scope of the photo, it is unclear if a wider picture might offer an explanation such as overtaking a stationary vehicle. If information or footage showing an example of an issue raised, but where there is insufficient supporting evidence such as clear picture of the licence plate or date and time of the incident, the Traffic Assets team will note the occurrence but cannot action further. If there is clear evidence of an actionable issue this can be escalated to a number of parties such as; dangerous driving to the police or, the operator of the business. Issues such as items on the road or reported carriageway/footway defects will be logged for investigation by the DCC team responsible but these will also be picked up as part of routine inspections carried out by the Highways Inspector during the course of his/her regular duties.</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>Dangerous driving or behaviour may also be reported directly to Durham Constabulary on the non-emergency 101 telephone number.</p> <p>20mph speed limit</p> <p>The road through High and Low Pittington would not meet the criteria for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit or zone. We do remain open to the progression of an advisory 20mph on Hallgarth Lane passed the Primary School if third party funding can be identified.</p> <p>Origin and destination surveys</p> <p>Origin and destination surveys, as the name suggests, are carried out to determine where a vehicle has travelled from and is where it intends to travel to as well as collecting other data . These surveys require a police officer with the powers to stop a vehicle as well as someone to ask the questions required for the scope of the survey. This type of survey is, due to the set up required, a costly undertaking and can potentially create delays to the travelling public so it is not something we would undertake unless there was a valid reason to collect this data. As we do not propose to investigate the imposition of a weight limit there is no justification to carry out such a survey.</p> <p>We have already agreed with the local County Councillor to carry out a classification survey to determine levels of HGV traffic using the villages of Low Pittington, High Pittington, Sherburn, Sherburn Hill and Littleton when typical traffic patterns resume as this survey was previously postponed due to concerns that changes in lockdown rules would not offer suitable data. This would provide data on the number of vehicles using</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>the different routes however we are not using this data to determine a proposal so all this will confirm is how many HGVs use the route.</p>	
<p>Petition 399 Reinstate the DLI Museum</p> <p>E-Petition Petition received 9.04.21 No. of signatures – 121</p>	<p>Alison Clark Head of Culture, Sport & Tourism</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to reinstate the DLI Museum and it's artefacts.</p> <p>On 21 October 2015, Cabinet agreed to new arrangements for the storage and display of the DLI collection which included the storage of items at the Sevenhills facility and proposals for the loan of items to a number of venues including Palace Green Library, Bishop Auckland Town Hall, Spennymoor, Newton Aycliffe and Seaham. This was part of an approach to widening the exposure of the history of the DLI to wider groups whilst also achieving medium term financial plan (MTFP) savings. More substantive arrangements for a permanent display were agreed by Cabinet on 17 January 2018 where, as part of consideration of a report on the development of the Aykley Heads site as a Strategic Employment Site and the relocation of the DCC Headquarters to the city centre, the new History Centre development, which includes a permanent display for DLI collection, was agreed. Subsequent to that report, further updates on the development of the History Centre have been considered by Cabinet on 17 October 2018 and 16 January 2019.</p> <p>Following the local elections in May this year, the Council's new Joint Administration has requested a review of the proposed arrangements for the care, storage and display of the Durham Light Infantry Collection, archive, museum building and grounds.</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
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		<p>This is a key priority to review and ensure that the proud and significant military history of County Durham is recognised.</p> <p>Whilst not a direct response to this petition, the review by the Joint Administration is seeking to respond to 2 questions, the first of which will address the subject of the petition ‘We the undersigned petition the Council to Reinstate the DLI museum, restoring all artefacts and exhibits within its own bespoke building’:</p> <p>Question 1: Can the former DLI building be brought back into use to house the DLI collection? Question 2: What are the options to repurpose the former DLI building/site for an alternative use?</p> <p>The output from the review will be a high-level report which sets out information on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options for displaying and storing and care of DLI collection in the existing DLI building. This is to include a full assessment of costs, risks, financial, legal and value for money issues associated with the options considered. • An impact assessment on the plans for the new History Centre including funding impact • Impact on the storage, display, and care of other DCC collections • High level options assessment which will include any suitable alternatives uses for the former DLI building and with regard to the grounds and environment around the site. This will include indicative high-level costs and opportunities for income generation. <p>The review will be informed by a Special Meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board which was held in</p>	
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Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>the Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on Wednesday 28 July 2021 at 1.30 pm.</p> <p>The outcome will be considered by Cabinet by September 2021.</p>	
<p>Petition 400</p> <p>Community Petition to extend the 30mph zone on the A6076 Howden Bank</p> <p>E-Petition</p> <p>Petition received 13.05.21</p> <p>No. of signatures – 81</p>	<p>Michelle McIntosh</p> <p>Traffic Assets Team Leader</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to extend the 30mph speed limit at least 300m NE from it’s current location, to beyond the entrance to Maiden View and Willow Burn Hospice. Additionally, to consider a 40mph limit for the remaining distance of approximately 700m to the 30mph restriction in Maiden Law Village.</p> <p>It is appreciated that residents often have a desire for a lower speed limit outside their properties. The County Council take these concerns seriously and give them full consideration when we evaluate changes to speed limits. Speed Limit changes are undertaken using guidance issued by the Department for Transport and our own considerable local experience of implementing speed limits within the County. We also work closely with Durham Constabulary when considering changes to speed limits.</p> <p>It is an intention of the Department for Transport guidance to ensure that speed limits are credible with the aim that they become self-evident and self-enforcing, by virtue of their surroundings.</p> <p>Speed limit reviews take into account many factors that are considered and evaluated. Examples of such include the existing vehicle speeds, nature of the road and its surroundings, local needs, existing highway infrastructure, development, highway signs, road markings and street lighting, the various</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>road users, the credibility of the speed limit and accident history. The length of speed limit, distance between speed limit terminal points and the number of changes along the route are also considered.</p> <p>A speed limit which lacks credibility results in a significant proportion of motorists ignoring the limit and potentially driving at even higher speeds and can also lead to greater risk taking. In addition the imposition of non-credible lower limits can raise residents' expectations that the speeds of vehicles will suddenly reduce but this is seldom being achieved in practice, thus creating further annoyance for both residents and motorists, and also unfair criticism of the police who have to enforce the speed limits.</p> <p>This length of A6076 has for a number of years been the subject of speeding complaints which in part is due to the lack of credibility of the speed limit over some sections. On Howden Bank there is intermittent property /development frontage mainly on one side of the road, with the road widening to three lanes over part of the bank. This, in conjunction with other factors creates a roadside environment which does not validate the perception by drivers as being a location where a lower limit is expected or appropriate. The new development at Maiden View offers no additional frontage development and no contribution to changing the roadside environment and for this reason the speed limit was not changed for the development at the planning stage.</p> <p>New developments such as Maiden View are subject to review at the planning stage by the Development Management Team, where the highway elements and impacts are considered. This would have included the access to the development being reviewed and designed to current standards which would have</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>been undertaken to the design appropriate for the existing speed limit. The localised widening to accommodate the road markings for the turn was to ensure sufficient width for the layout and it is not unusual to for markings to wear at some points on a layout due to vehicle overrun. Drivers are encouraged to follow a path but as an intermittent line marking they are permitted to enter the hatching as stated in Rule 130 of Highway Code ‘you should not enter the area unless it is necessary and you can see that it is safe to do so’, so it is possible that this wear is as a result of legitimate driving. We will, as with all highway lining countywide, recover worn areas of road markings when considered necessary.</p> <p>The existing speed limits on this section of A6076 are still deemed to be appropriate and I hope you can appreciate that it is not an easy task to review speed limits as inevitably any decision not to lower a limit or where a limit is raised is not what some people want, but decisions are based on full consideration of all factors. Additionally, having checked the accident recording database shared with Durham Constabulary I can confirm there has been 2 recorded ‘personal injury’ accidents on the section of A6076 from the junction with A691 to Maiden Law crossroads at Tower Road in the past 4 years, this being our standard search criteria. I can confirm that both of these accidents were single vehicle accidents where the causation was recorded as winter weather conditions and there was no suggestion that the accidents were attributable to speed or the highway. While we would prefer to see no accidents this represents a favourable accident record when compared to many other roads in the County with priority continuing to be directed to locations with known and proven accident problems. We therefore do not propose any changes at this location.</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>Speed Complaints</p> <p>As part of our partnership approach to improving road safety, joint working with Durham Constabulary all speeding complaints are directed towards Durham Constabulary and their Police and Communities Together (PACT) Meetings, enabling the appropriate level of intervention and action to be considered.</p> <p>Durham Constabulary would normally be able to advise of the date, time and venue of the next PACT meeting should you or your constituent wish to attend however at this time, with such public gatherings suspended, contact could be made with local officers on the non-emergency 101 telephone number.</p>	
<p>Petition 401</p> <p>Compulsory Purchase Order on the Station Pub and 2 Houses on the end at St. Helen Auckland</p> <p>Petition received 21.05.21 No. of signatures – 150</p>	<p>Stephen Grundy Senior Asset Strategy Officer</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to Compulsory Purchase Order on the Station Pub and 2 Houses on the end at St. Helen Auckland.</p> <p>The Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process is a lengthy process made up of a number of stages. It is only when the CPO has been confirmed by the Confirming Authority, usually the Secretary of State, does an Acquiring Authority, The Council in this situation, have the powers to compulsorily purchase properties. The process leading up to confirmation can take between 12 and 18 months.</p> <p>CPO is an acquisition by last resort and therefore The Council must demonstrate that it has exhausted all other avenues to purchase the land. This would include working with the owners of the properties to bring them back into use, taking enforcement action through Building Control and entering into discussions to purchase the properties by negotiation. The Council will also have to provide details to demonstrate that a viable scheme is in place for the properties to be acquired.</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>As part of the CPO process, The Council will have to prepare Statement of Reasons, which will demonstrate that the proposed scheme and consequently the CPO is in the public interest and will deliver social, environment and economic well-being. These are the criteria upon which a CPO is judged. The Statement of Reasons will also have to demonstrate that all other avenues have been exhausted as mentioned above.</p> <p>The Council have been working with the new owner of the Station Pub since she acquired the property in June 2020 to support the process of bringing the property back into use. Whilst the property was purchased during the COVID-19 pandemic, at the time of the purchase lockdown restrictions were starting to ease and the new owner intended to start renovating the property. However, further COVID-19 lockdowns have hampered the renovation progress. To date the owner has made the property water tight due to serious issues with water ingress.</p> <p>The Council have further supported the owner by offering her assistance in developing an application for a Business Improvement Grant, which will be used to help bring the property into a useable condition. An application has subsequently been submitted and is currently being assessed by colleagues.</p> <p>In terms of the residential properties adjacent, 62 Station Road has recently been sold on 29 March 2021 to a Lettings Company. With regard to 64 Station Road, the Council have recently been in dialogue with the solicitor acting on behalf of the property freeholder who has confirmed that the freeholder has actually agreed to dispose of the freehold interest to the current leaseholder.</p>	

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>The information above will be used to in Statement of Reasons to demonstrate that The Council have entered into dialogue with the respective property owners to support them in bringing the properties back into use. The new owners of 62 and 64 Station Road will be contacted to establish their plans for the properties with Building Control engaging with them as a matter of urgency.</p>	
<p>Petition 402</p> <p>To demolish or rebuild Ashley House, Thornley Road, Trimdon Station</p> <p>Petition received 24.05.21 No. of signatures – 50</p>	<p>Geoff Paul Regeneration, Economy and Growth</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to demolish or rebuild Ashley House, Thornley Road, Trimdon Station.</p>	<p>Awaiting response.</p>
<p>Petition 403</p> <p>Request for Parking Bays and the Removal of Trees at Kemp Road, Peterlee</p> <p>Petition received 12.7.21 No. of signatures – 19</p>	<p>Dave Wafer Head of Transport and Contract Services</p>	<p>Petition asking for parking bays and the removal of trees at Kemp Road, Peterlee.</p> <p>The conversion of open space amenity land to off street parking spaces is possible in most instances but it can be extremely costly and cost an estimated £5000 per parking space. This estimate can rise dramatically if any public utility apparatus is affected. Unfortunately we do not have a budget for this purpose and therefore are unable to take your request forward for additional parking at this stage.</p> <p>However, you may wish to consider approaching your local Area Action Partnership or local Councillors who may have access to a suitable funding stream.</p> <p>With regard to the removal of trees I can confirm that our Senior Tree Officer has inspected the trees. The trees in the street comprise a mixture of Sycamore, Lime, Swedish Whitebeam and Cherry and are currently in a reasonable condition, although</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>their health is being impacted by the increase in informal parking on their root plates. These trees provide a positive contribution to the local area and it is not in the Durham County Council Tree Management Policy to remove otherwise healthy trees to allow for increased parking areas. More advise can be given with regards to a proposed scheme which could accommodate tree retention.</p>	
<p>Petition 404</p> <p>Controlled crossing in Dipton</p> <p>Petition received 15.8.21 No. of signatures – 94</p>	<p>Michelle McIntosh Traffic Assets Team Leader</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council for a controlled crossing in Dipton.</p>	<p>Awaiting response</p>
<p>Petition 405</p> <p>Bus Services through Picktree Village</p> <p>Petition received 15.8.21 No. of signatures – 23</p>	<p>Andy Leadbeater Integrated Passenger Transport Manager</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to lobby for improvements to the bus services through Picktree Village.</p> <p>Go North East is already making changes to its services that will see a full evening and Sunday timetable introduced to the Stanley – Chester-le-Street – Washington – Sunderland service 8, which will operate every 60 minutes. This replaces the mid-evening journeys that have operated via Picktree until now as service 8A. This forms part of extensive changes to their network, starting on 5th September.</p> <p>At the same date, the current Chester-le-Street – Washington – South Shields service 50A is replaced by journeys operating as service 50 on the standard route of service 50 i.e., omitting Picktree Village. The net effect of the change is that Picktree Village gains more later evening and Sunday buses while having slightly fewer in mid-evening.</p> <p>Durham County Council is currently working with regional partners to introduce a new “Enhanced Partnership”</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
		<p>arrangement for bus services in the north east, in line with recent changes in government policy. This introduces a new relationship between councils and bus operators, considerably changing the “deregulated” regime introduced by the Transport Act 1985 which gave bus operators the freedom to choose which services to operate on a commercial (unsubsidised) basis. In future, the intention is that the way services operate will be on the basis of meeting agreed standards including frequencies, routes and fares. In line with the new arrangements, the Partnership is currently working on a Bus Service Improvement Plan to be submitted to government in late October, with a view to winning funding for a programme of measures intended to transform the attractiveness of bus services, starting from April 2022. While part of the plan will need to address the headwinds created by travel changes arising from the pandemic, it is hoped that ambitious measures can significantly enhance the role of bus services in society, and contribute to the actions that are necessary to address concerns about climate change. For further details, please see the Transport North East website at https://www.transportnortheast.gov.uk/ and especially the news item regarding the “Big Bus Conversation”.</p>	

**Corporate Overview and
Scrutiny Management Board**



2 September 2021

Notice of Key Decisions

Report of Corporate Management Team

Helen Lynch, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To consider the list of key decisions that is scheduled to be considered by the Executive.

Recommendation(s)

- 2 You are recommended to give consideration to items listed in the notice.

Background

- 3 New rules in relation to Executive decisions were introduced by The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force on 10 September 2012.
- 4 The regulations took away the requirement for the Executive to produce a Forward Plan of key decisions, however introduced that the decision maker cannot make a key decision unless a document has been published at least 28 clear days before the decision is taken, unless either a general exception or special urgency requirements have been met. The document which has to be published must state:
 - a) that the key decision is to be made on behalf of the relevant local authority
 - b) the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made

- c) where the decision maker is an individual, that individual's name and title if any and where the decision maker is a decision making body, its name and list of its members
 - d) the date on which or the period within which the decision is to be made
 - e) a list of the document submitted to the decision maker for consideration in relation to the matter of which the key decision is to be made
 - f) the address from which, subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure copies of, or extracts from any document listed as available
 - g) that other documents relevant to those matters may be submitted to the decision maker
 - h) the procedure for requesting details of those documents (if any) as they become available.
- 5 The requirements also apply to an exempt matter as previously it did not strictly have to be included in the Forward Plan. Now a publicity document must contain particulars of the matter, but may not contain any confidential exempt information or particulars of the adviser or political adviser or assistant.
- 6 Notices of key decisions that are being produced meet the legal requirements of publication, as well as continuing to provide information for a four month period. Members will therefore be able to consider key decisions as previously for the four month period.

Current Notice of Key Decisions

- 7 The notice of key decisions that is attached to the report at Appendix 2, is the latest to be published prior to the papers for the Board being dispatched to members. The notice complies with the requirements for Cabinet to be able to take key decisions at the meeting on 15 September 2021. It also contained information on those key decisions that are currently scheduled to be considered by the Executive up to 31 December 2021.

Contact:	Ros Layfield	Tel: 03000 269708
	Andy Palmer	Tel: 03000 268551

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet. To publish the notice of key decisions in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Finance

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Consultation

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Climate Change

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Human Rights

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Crime and Disorder

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Staffing

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Accommodation

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Risk

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Procurement

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

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SECTION ONE - CORPORATE

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Scrutiny Involvement
CORP/R/21/05	13-Oct-21	Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Support Payments.		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leader of the Council		Mary Readman, Head of Transactional Services, Tel. 03000 268161	
CORP/R/21/02	13-Oct-21	MTFP(12) Update on development of MTFP(12) including consideration of options for consultation.		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leader of the Council		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services, Tel. 03000 261946	Scrutiny members will have input into the formulation of MTFP 12 through Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meetings
CORP/R/21/03	17-Nov-21	Council Tax Base 2021/22 and Forecast Surplus / Deficit on Collection Fund.		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leader of the Council		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services, Tel. 03000 261946	

SECTION ONE - CORPORATE

CORP/R/21/02	15-Dec-21	MTFP(12) - Update on development of MTFP(12) including analysis of the Comprehensive Spending Review.		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leader of the Council		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services, Tel. 03000 261946	Scrutiny members will have input into the formulation of MTFP 12 through Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meetings
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SECTION TWO - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information
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SECTION THREE - ADULT AND HEALTH SERVICES

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

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Scrutiny Involvement
REG/04/21	15/09/21	Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document and Developer Contributions, Parking and Accessibility and Residential Amenity Supplementary Planning Documents		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships		Mike Allum Spatial Policy Manager, Tel: 03000 261906	The Economy and Enterprise and the Environment and Sustainable Communities OSCs have previously fed into the stage 1 consultation on the Minerals and Waste Development Plan and the Parking and Accessibility SPD. The committees will be involved in the second stage of consultation on both documents. It is intended that all O&S members will have the opportunity to participate in the consultation relating to the Developers Contribution SPD.
REG/05/21	15/09/21	NETPark Phase 3 Development Funding		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships		Peter McDowell, Property and Business Services Director, Tel: 03000 265506	
REG/06/21	29/09/21	Strategic Investment Proposals (Exempt Report)		Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships		Susan Robinson, Head of Corporate Property and Land, Tel: 03000 267332	

SECTION FIVE - NEIGHBOURHOODS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information
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**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

2 September 2021

**Information update from the Chairs of
the Overview and Scrutiny Committees**



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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present to members an information update of overview and scrutiny activity from June 2021 – September 2021.

Executive summary

- 2 This report sets out a chairs' update of all scrutiny activity for the period from the start of this municipal year up to September 2021.
- 3 The report is for information only and will be submitted to all Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Boards.

Recommendation(s)

- 4 Members are invited to receive the report and note the information.

Background

- 5 Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) are encouraged to be involved in any area of overview and scrutiny activity via thematic committees and talk to scrutiny committee chairs and overview and scrutiny officers on areas of project and overview activity.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report on for this period.
Scrutiny Review Activity	<p>A special COSMB meeting was held on 28 July 2021 to enable the Board to contribute to a review by Cabinet of the options for the future storage, care and display of the Durham Light Infantry Collection, archive, museum buildings and grounds.</p> <p>A report containing the comments from the special COSMB meeting will be reported to Cabinet as part of their review to be considered on 29 September 2021.</p>
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>COSMB on 18 June 2021 received reports on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q3 & Q4 2020/21 Council's use of powers under RIPA • Q4 2020/21 Customer Feedback • State of the County report 2021/22 • Refresh of the Work Programme • Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 • Update on Petitions • Notice of key decisions

Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (AWH OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report on for this period.
Scrutiny Review Activity	No scrutiny review activity currently identified.
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>AWH OSC on 28 July 2021 received reports and presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Social Care Overview and Update • Public Health Overview and Update • Shotley Bridge Hospital Update • Local Outbreak Management Plan Update • Health Protection Assurance • Q4 2020/21 Performance Management • NHS Foundation Trusts Quality Accounts 2020/21 • Refresh of the Work Programme

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

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report for this period.
Scrutiny Review Activity	No scrutiny review activity currently identified
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>The CYP OSC on 23 July 2021 received reports and presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Children and Young People's Services Overview • Children, Young People and Families Partnership Overview • Q4 2020/21 Performance Management • Refresh of the Work Programme

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (E&E OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report on for this period.
Scrutiny Review Activity	No scrutiny review activity currently identified.
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>A meeting of the E&E OSC on 21 July 2021 considered reports and presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Regeneration, Economy and Growth Service • Q4 Performance Management • Refresh of the Work programme • Minutes of the County Durham Economic Partnership meeting 5 May 2021

Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (E&S OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report for this period.
Scrutiny Review Activity	No scrutiny review activity currently identified
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>ESC OSC on 16 July 2021 received reports and presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhoods and Climate Change – Overview • Environment and Climate Change Partnership – Overview • Q4 Performance Management 2021/21 • Refresh of the Work Programme <p>In addition, a briefing report updating on the activities undertaken by the Community Action Team (CAT) together with the full programme of visits planned for 2021-2023 was circulated to members of ESC & S&S OSCs for comment and questions.</p>

Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SSC OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report on for this period
Scrutiny Review Activity	The Committee agreed its work programme to include focused activity on the partnership approach to tackling arson within the east Durham area.
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>SSC OSC on 9 July 2021 received reports and presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q4 Performance Management • Safe Durham Partnership Plan • Refresh of the Work Programme

Regional Scrutiny

- 6 A meeting of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System and North and Central Integrated Care Partnership was held on 28 June 2021. Agenda items discussed at the meeting included:
- Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee
 - Joint OSC Protocol and Terms of Reference
 - ICS response to the OSC Questions on the Government White Paper on the future direction of the NHS/ICS
 - Update on the Government White Paper on the future direction of the NHS/ICS
 - Provisional work programme.
- 7 The next meetings of the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the NECA & North of Tyne CA Joint Transport Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee are due to be held on 14 October 2021.

Conclusion

- 13 This report contains the key issues considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the period June – September 2021 and is provided for members information only.

Contact: Andy Palmer

Tel: 03000 268551

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

N/A.

Finance

N/A.

Climate Change

Any climate change implications will be included in individual reports to the appropriate scrutiny committee.

Consultation

N/A.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

N/A.

Human Rights

N/A.

Crime and Disorder

N/A.

Staffing

N/A.

Accommodation

N/A.

Risk

N/A.

Procurement

N/A.