



Cabinet

Date **Wednesday 19 April 2023**

Time **9.30 am**

Venue **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

Items which are open to the public and press

1. Public Questions
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2023 (Pages 3 - 8)
3. Declarations of Interest

Ordinary Decisions:

4. Health Protection Assurance Annual Report - Joint Report of Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services and Director of Public Health (Pages 9 - 46)
5. Quarter Three, 2022/23 Performance Management Report - Report of Chief Executive Officer (Pages 47 - 108)
6. Consultation on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 4 (ROWIP4) - Joint Report of Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 109 - 180)
7. Corporate Asset Management Plan 2023-2025 - Report of Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 181 - 232)
8. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.
9. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information.

Part B

Items during which it is considered the meeting will not be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)

10. 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
11 April 2023

To: **The Members of the Cabinet**

Councillors A Hopgood and R Bell (Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council), Councillors T Henderson, C Hood, S McDonnell, J Rowlandson, E Scott, A Shield, J Shuttleworth and M Wilkes

Contact: Michael Turnbull

Tel: 03000 269714

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Cabinet** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 15 March 2023 at 9.30 am.**

Present:

Councillor A Hopgood (Leader of the Council) in the Chair

Cabinet Members:

Councillors R Bell (Deputy Leader of the Council), T Henderson, C Hood, S McDonnell, E Scott, A Shield, J Shuttleworth and M Wilkes

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James Rowlandson

The Leader of the Council referred to the passing of the Chair of the Council, Councillor Beaty Bainbridge and paid a warm tribute.

The Cabinet then held a moments reflection as a mark of respect.

The Leader of the Council informed Cabinet that she had agreed to re-order the business on the agenda and would take Item No. 6 (Providing a Sustainable Solution for Wellfield School) following Item No. 3 (Declarations of Interest).

1 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any items of business on the agenda.

4 Providing a Sustainable Solution for Wellfield School

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and Corporate Director of Resources which provided details of the current position of Wellfield school and detailed the steps taken since 2016 to prevent the school's significant deficit budget, increasing further. The report set out the challenges the school was facing and the difficulty of current curriculum planning, whilst still being impeded by its historic financial position.

The report recommended that the Council writes off the accumulated deficit of the school at the point of conversion to academy with New College Durham Academies Trust (NCDAT) Multi Academy Trust. This would support the Trust and school to secure the current good standard of educational provision for the communities the school serves (for copy of report see file of minutes).

Councillor T Henderson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services supported the proposals set out in the report. Joining an established Multi Academy Trust would be enabled by the Council writing off the historic deficit to provide sufficient high quality education to children living in the area.

The Council had a strong and effective working relationship with the academy trust and the Department for Education were supportive of the proposal to develop and expand the Multi Academy Trust. This would be a viable financial solution for the future of the school in terms of sustaining and maintaining educational standards.

Councillor R Bell, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance supported the proposals set out in the report and explained that the financial issues at Wellfield started over ten years ago due to falling standards. It had been agreed in 2018 to write off the deficit if the school joined a Multi Academy Trust, however, the move never materialised. Since that time the school had worked hard to improve standards of learning and found itself in a much better position. There was a continuing challenge because of the legacy deficit. The full allocation of money to support curriculum development and learning would be met from earmarked reserve and was consistent with previous Cabinet decisions.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

5 Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2022/23 - Period to 31 December 2022 and Update on Progress towards achieving MTFP(12) savings

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided information on:

- (a) the updated forecast revenue and capital outturn for 2022/23, based on the position to 31 December 2022;
- (b) the dedicated schools grant and updated forecast schools position as at 31 March 2023, based on the position to 31 December 2022;
- (c) the updated forecast for the council tax and business rates collection fund position at 31 March 2023, based on the position to 31 December 2022; and
- (d) details of the updated forecast use of and contributions to earmarked, cash limit and general reserves in 2022/23 and the estimated balances that will be held at 31 March 2023.

To report sought approval of the revised capital programme 2022/23, other budget adjustments and proposed sums treated as outside of the cash limit in year and provided an update on progress towards achieving MTFP(12) savings in 2022/23 (for copy of report see file of minutes).

Councillor R Bell, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader of the Council thanked the Corporate Director of Resources and his staff for the comprehensive report and continued focus which had been recognised by internal auditors. Councillor R Bell spoke of the significant demands on Council finance and unavoidable cost pressures which were unprecedented at the current time and impacted on everything the Council purchased. There were significant cost pressures in terms of social care and home to school transport. All other services were predicted to overspend this year. Councillor R Bell placed on record his thanks to all managers involved in managing their budgets which was difficult at the best of times.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

6 Annual Review of the Constitution

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer which presented the proposed changes to the Council's Constitution as part of the annual review, for adoption by Council on 24 May 2023. The Deputy Monitoring Officer informed Cabinet that they were required to approve the delegation of executive powers and the recommendation for this had been updated since the initial report had been published (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Leader of the Council informed Cabinet that the Constitution set out how the Council operated with functions set out in law or other functions introduced through local choice. Councillor Hopgood highlighted the importance of regularly reviewing the Constitution and the report summarised work carried out throughout the year. The revised structure, format and appearance of the Constitution meant that the document would be more accessible and user friendly. The cross-party Constitution Working Group had been consulted on the proposed changes particularly in relation to the Council Procedure Rules and Code of Practice for Planning matters.

Councillors R Bell and A Shield echoed the comments made by the Leader of the Council and welcomed the proposed reformatting of the document and updated Officer Scheme of Delegations.

Resolved:

Cabinet approved the delegation of executive powers as set out in report along with the proposed amendments to the officer scheme of delegation as set out at paragraphs 40 to 56 of the report and recommend that Council agree the proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution at its meeting on 24 May 2023.

7 County Durham Partnership Update

The Cabinet noted a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change that provided an update on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP). The report also included updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Leader of the Council commented on the good news and hard work being undertaken across the County. Some of the recent highlights included 175 premises registered as warm spaces, the continuing work carried out by Area Action Partnerships and partnership work carried out at a local level on issues such as Cybercrime, tackling isolation and loneliness in older people.

Councillor Hopgood applauded the work of the partnership with vital humanitarian support work and the inspiring projects, both large and small and excellent work taking place across the County.

Councillor E Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships echoed the comments expressed by the Leader of the Council in a report which highlighted the impressive extent of partnership working taking place across the County with everyone working together with common goals. Councillor E Scott informed Cabinet that the review of Community Engagement had made excellent progress since the last stage. Proposals were now being consulted upon with both partners and residents.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

This page is intentionally left blank

Cabinet

19 April 2023

Health Protection Assurance Annual Report

Ordinary Decision



Report of Corporate Management Team

Jane Robinson, Corporate Director of Adult & Health Services

Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health, Durham County Council

Cllr Hood Portfolio Holder for Adult & Health Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of Cabinet with an update on the health protection assurance arrangements in County Durham and health protection activities over the course of the year.

Executive summary

- 2 The Health Protection Assurance and Development Partnership (HPADP) meets bimonthly and seeks assurance on five main strands of health protection activity, in addition to data and communications which are threaded throughout:
 - (a) Screening programmes;
 - (b) Immunisation programmes;
 - (c) Outbreaks and communicable diseases;
 - (d) Strategic regulation interventions;
 - (e) Preparedness and response to incidents and emergencies.
- 3 Key issues identified in last year's report include:
 - (a) The restoration of screening and immunisation programmes following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Significant work has been undertaken this year to secure the restoration and sustained recovery of the delivery of these programmes. This

report highlights areas where low uptake rates remain and outlines current work to address this;

- (b) Addressing unwarranted variation in vaccination delivery and uptake. The leaving no-one behind approach, developed during the pandemic, using local data, community engagement and use of community assets to provide pop-ups clinics has been expanded to enhance the delivery of this autumn winter Covid-19 and flu vaccination campaign, including a 2–3-year flu pilot programme delivering the vaccinations within the nursery to raise uptake rates;
- (c) Assurance of emergency preparedness during a period of significant organisational change. Multi-agency delivery of several well received 'Table Top' exercises to 'operationalise' plans and protocols with partners from across the Local Resilience Forum (LRF), with further exercises planned for the future;
- (d) The development of Sexual Health Strategy for County Durham. This strategy is underway and will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board later this year.

4 Additional achievements overseen by HPADP in the last year include:

- (a) Collaborative work with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to address emerging health protection concerns including the mpox outbreak and subsequent vaccination programme delivery (with significant involvement from the Local Authority and commissioned services), polio detection in waste water, diphtheria cases amongst asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the UK, and an increase in invasive Group A Strep cases;
- (b) Flu vaccination rates in County Durham have continued to be favourable and in every major target group, exceed the rates for England;
- (c) Completion of the Cervical Screening Health Equity Audit and forward programme of forward work led by NHSE working with local partners;
- (d) Effective implementation of the local avian flu and seasonal flu (care home settings) anti-viral prescribing pathways facilitating the provision of medication to those identified as contacts to prevent transmission of these communicable diseases;
- (e) Development of Surge Response Plan and Surge Escalation Plan providing robust arrangements for response and workforce provision in the event of an outbreak or sustained emergency event;
- (f) Continued efforts to sustain established working relationships with UKHSA and NHS England (NHSE), and build effective partnerships within the new infrastructure of the Integrated Care

- System/Board (ICS/B) to provide ongoing assurance of health protection governance and public health related emergency preparedness during organisational change and enabling effective response to several non-covid outbreaks and incidents;
- (g) Implementation of Community Protection Service (CPS) Workforce Development and Staff Retention Plan 2021-2026 has been developed and implemented from April 2022;
- (h) Joint delivery (DCC and UKHSA) of the Health Protection Training Course accessed by all the DCC Public Health team and five other Local Authorities and very positively evaluated.

5 Areas for improvement and further assurance include:

- (a) Continuing to progress the collaborative work with Harrogate and District Foundation Trust, NHSE and schools, including addressing issues of equity of access, to ensure that at least the efficiency standard (80% coverage) required to control disease and ensure patient safety is achieved across all programmes, and ambition to achieve the optimal performance standard (90% coverage);
- (b) Working collaboratively with NHSE as commissioners, providers and community partners to expedite improvements, harnessing the local authorities' ability to assess their own communities and address specific, local issues and inequalities and amplify local communications to increase uptake rates for breast cancer screening, diabetic eye screening, abdominal aortic aneurysm screening, chlamydia detection rates and HIV testing coverage within County Durham;
- (c) Working collaboratively with NHSE and primary care to continue to improve the uptake of certain vaccinations including shingles and pneumococcal;
- (d) Utilising the skills and expertise developed in the COVID-19 granular data analysis and the development of the Leaving No-one Behind approach to further understand and address variation in access to services by sociodemographic characteristics;
- (e) Continuing ongoing work with County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT) and key stakeholders to support high quality infection prevention and control measures.

Recommendation(s)

6 Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) note the content of the report;

- (b) note that the report provides broad assurance that effective processes are in place for each of the key strands of health protection activity;
- (c) note and the areas for improvement and further assurance;
- (d) note the revised health protection governance arrangements aligning the robust Covid assurance arrangements with wider health protection governance.

Background

- 7 The protection of the health of the population is one of the five mandated responsibilities given to local authorities as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The Director of Public Health (DPH) for County Durham is responsible under legislation for the discharge of the local authority's public health functions.
- 8 The health protection element of these statutory responsibilities and the mandatory responsibilities of the DPH are as outlined below:
 - (a) the Secretary of State's public health protection functions;
 - (b) exercising the local authority's functions in planning for, and responding to, emergencies that present a risk to public health;
 - (c) such other public health functions as the Secretary of State specifies in regulations;
 - (d) responsibility for the local authority's public health response as a responsible authority under the Licensing Act 2003, such as making representations about licensing applications;
 - (e) a duty to ensure plans are in place to protect their population including through screening and immunisation.
- 9 Within Durham County Council, the remit for health protection is delivered by Public Health in conjunction with the Community Protection Service (CPS) and the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU). The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has responsibilities for elements of health protection including, for example, the quality and uptake of immunisations. The ICB also employs an Infection Prevention and Control Team (IPCT) through an agreement with Public Health.
- 10 UKHSA's core functions include protecting the public from infectious diseases, chemicals, radiation, and environmental hazards and supporting emergency preparedness, resilience, and response. Teams responsible for delivering these functions in the North East sit within the UKHSA Centre and also provide access to national experts in these fields.
- 11 In October 2022, a new Centre for Climate and Health Security was launched within UKHSA to lead efforts to protect health in the context of a changing climate and provide a focus for partnerships and collaborations with academia, local authorities and other public sector organisations.
- 12 NHSE is responsible for commissioning and quality assuring population screening and immunisation programmes. This includes a team covering the Cumbria and the North East.
- 13 Regular liaison between Directors of Public Health (DsPH) and the Centre Director of UKHSA in the North East occurs via biweekly North East

DsPH meeting (as well as via the Public Health Oversight Group). There is a lead DPH for Health Protection. The Head of Public Health for NHSEI in Cumbria and the North East also attends as required.

- 14 On 1st July, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) became a new statutory NHS organisation, taking on the responsibilities of the eight clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in the region. Local integration is via Central Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) covering County Durham, Sunderland and South Tyneside. The ICB has a new role as a Category One responder for Emergency Planning, Preparedness and Response. Work is ongoing to ensure protocols and procedures are in place providing consistency of approach across the NENC footprint.
- 15 Working with UKHSA, NHSE and the newly constituted ICB has taken place over the course of 2022/23.
- 16 UKHSA attends the ADPH NE network and provides a regular update on any key issues. These have included the transition arrangements from covid-19, monkeypox (now referred to as mpox), avian influenza and influenza outbreaks.
- 17 The Local Health Resilience Partnership has been stood back up chaired by and Executive Director of the ICB and the County Durham DPH is vice-chair. The partnership carried out some learning from covid-19 and completed the annual NHS assurance process with NHSE with some key recommendations for 2023/4 to build into plans including evacuation. UKHSA are a key member of the LHRP which is helping join up across organisations in the system. Mpox was also raised via the LHRP in terms of plans to ensure capacity within sexual health services and access to vaccination.
- 18 The DPH has become the Policy Advisory Group Lead for ADPH for Health Protection and took an active role in raising concerns in relation to capacity and funding for mpox. This work is also contributing to whole system design for health protection, vaccination strategy and an updated policy position statement for ADPH.

Health protection governance arrangements in County Durham

- 19 The review of the health protection governance arrangements as part of the Covid-19 Transition Plan is now complete. The Health Protection Assurance and Development Group (HPADG) has become a partnership group to reflect deepened relationships and collaborative working arrangements resulting from the Covid-19 response. The terms of reference, objectives and membership have been reviewed to align the robust Covid-19 assurance arrangements with wider health protection

governance, capturing the learning and the successful approaches and interdependencies established during the Covid-19 response.

- 20 The Immunisation Board has become a steering group and is co-chaired by the Director of Public Health (DPH) and an ICB Place Clinical Lead. The Vaccine Engagement Group, a sub-group of the Immunisation Steering Group has responsibility to address issues of vaccine inequalities across all vaccination programmes. Harnessing the learning from the Covid-19, developing innovative interventions, including pop-up clinics and piloting new models of vaccination delivery, working directly with communities, assets such as community settings and VCSE partners, Community Champions and comprehensive and targeted communications plans to increase engagement and access in areas of low uptake.
- 21 The HPADP's work is outlined in a detailed action plan built on five pillars of health protection, in addition to data and communications, which are threaded throughout:
 - (a) Screening programmes;
 - (b) Immunisation programmes;
 - (c) Outbreaks and communicable diseases;
 - (d) Strategic regulation interventions;
 - (e) Preparedness and response to incidents and emergencies.
- 22 The action plan is supported by a scorecard that includes a range of appropriate health protection indicators and outcomes (see the health protection scorecard attached in Appendix 2). The HDADP also receives a regular data update to monitor in-year trends and inform the action plan. These data updates can contain sensitive data and usually consist of quarterly updates to key indicators, provider Key Performance Indicators and where available, within county variation.
- 23 This report is informed by updates from the implementation of the health protection action plan, which is overseen by the HPADP.

Health protection assurance arrangements in County Durham

- 24 Maintaining a focus on high quality in health protection services is more important than ever in order to protect and improve the public's health. Local public health organisations and leaders operate in an increasingly complex national policy and commissioning environment and are required to maintain their effectiveness to protect and improve health in the face of multiple interrelated challenges.
- 25 The move to an integrated system approach through ICB/ICPs and the learning from place-based delivery of the Covid-19 vaccination

programme afforded the opportunity to enhance the way the NHSE Public Health Programme Team work jointly across the system, strengthening partnerships to support delivery, develop initiatives and reduce inequalities across s.7A vaccination and immunisation programmes and screening programmes.

- 26 Following a consultation with key partners including the Directors of Public Health (DsPH), the NHSE Public Health Programme Team has been restructured to facilitate work at place. These revised partnership and assurance arrangements via the locality links attendance at the HPADP also removed the need for the Screening and Immunisation Oversight Groups (SIOGs) which have been stood down. In addition, the management of incidents and the quality assurance for screening programmes are reported separately to the DPH. Programme boards have been established for each of the screening and immunisation programmes.
- 27 NHSE work and communicate with the DPH at a number of levels to enable the DPH to be assured across the wide range of screening and immunisation programmes. These include: programme-specific programme boards covering North East and North Cumbria; notification of serious incidents to the DPH; publication of NHSE Screening Quality Assurance Reports; annual learning and sharing events for screening and immunisations; regularly sharing data on screening and immunisations; attendance at local health protection and other screening or immunisation groups; and providing assurance on specific topics as necessary.
- 28 UKHSA continues to lead the Tees, County Durham and Darlington Area Health Protection Group, and this brings together organisations involved in protecting the health of the population. Prior to the pandemic, the group met quarterly, attended by a Consultant in Public Health. The purpose of the group is to provide a forum to discuss strategic and operational health protection issues; review outbreaks and incidents (local, regional, and national) and learn from lessons identified; provide a forum where cross-boundary and cross-organisational issues can be discussed, and solutions identified; identify local priorities alongside implementing national policy and guidance and identify any joint training and development needs.
- 29 Recognising the significant role of Local Government in protecting the health of the population and the deepened collaborative working relationship between UKHSA and LAs, UKHSA have convened a multiagency North East Health Protection Network to provide regional oversight of health protection multi-agency response in the North East as well as consider Sector Led Improvement activities (led by Local Authorities) as part of its role in system-wide working to strengthen health protection. The network is a formally constituted subgroup of the North

East Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH). By concentrating primarily on issues of relevance to all parts of the region, the network supplements, rather than replaces, existing locality structures such as Area Health Protection Groups.

- 30 UKHSA North East's bespoke surveillance system for communicable diseases produces daily and weekly alerts for exceedances and identification of linked cases. The DPH is informed of outbreaks, incidents, and exceedances via email alerts. The DPH is represented at all local outbreak control meetings and outbreak reports are also shared. In addition, the DPH has direct access to national surveillance systems set up for the collection and analysis of COVID-19 related data including vaccinations.
- 31 The DsPH for County Durham and Darlington established the County Durham and Darlington Healthcare Acquired Infections (HCAI) Assurance Group in 2004. This group is chaired by a DPH and has wide membership from all provider organisations, enabling the DsPH to have a clear line of sight to all providers in County Durham and Darlington. HCAI information is also reported directly to the ICBs at Place level where action plans are put in place to address identified issues. These are reported to the ICBs' Governing Bodies as part of the regular quality reports.
- 32 County Durham ICB Place has retained an in-house team of Infection Prevention and Control nurses. The Infection Prevention and Control Team (IPCT) provide a service to both County Durham and Darlington to support both Primary Care and Social Care within residential settings, and, since September 2020, the service has been extended to schools providing for children with Special Educational Needs and Children's Residential Homes in outbreak to bolster their Infection Prevention and Control Support in County Durham.
- 33 In 2021, NHS England announced new gram-negative blood stream infection (GNBSI) targets for all acute trusts. Working with partners, the IPCT has undertaken a significant amount of work and detailed action plan to address this target. The team are members of the Hydration Improvement Network, a key prevention activity.
- 34 The IPCT is notified of all alert organisms reported to UKHSA affecting residents in care homes and offers the appropriate advice to the staff to help manage the resident safely.
- 35 The IPCT support and work with colleagues in the local authorities' adult social care commissioning team, escalating concerns observed during visits to care homes, delivering both planned and opportunistic training to this sector.

- 36 All work undertaken by the IPCT is reported back through the County Durham and Darlington Health Care Associated Infections Assurance group chaired by the DsPH. The IPCT annual report details the range of support and interventions initiated to reduce HCAI and reports in year activity details. This report also includes the work plan for the IPCT for the upcoming year.
- 37 NHSE and ICBs have a duty to cooperate with local authorities on health and well-being under the NHS Act 2006. This includes cooperating on health protection, including the sharing of plans. The 2012 Health and Social Care Act makes clear that it is a duty of both NHS England and the ICBs to obtain appropriate advice in the protection of the public's health. NHS bodies are also under a statutory duty to cooperate with other organisations on civil contingency planning matters under the Civil Contingency's Act 2004.
- 38 The Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) is the local authority's point of contact for emergency planning and business continuity both internally and externally in response to incidents and emergencies. The CCU is also a conduit for information for multiple agencies through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and have a duty officer on call at all times.
- 39 CCU holds a community risk register which provides assurance to the DPH about key risks to the community including: pandemic influenza; flooding; adverse weather; emerging infectious disease; fuel shortage; widespread long duration electricity network failure; animal disease and building collapse.
- 40 The CCU produce extensive emergency preparedness plans which are shared on 'Resilience Direct' and work with the LRF to co-ordinate training and exercising of these plans. The unit also provides training and exercising to local organisations including schools, housing providers, the university and community groups.
- 41 All internal plans are reviewed on a regular basis. The DPH is involved in the initial development of relevant plans and is sent updates once plans are reviewed. Access to LRF plans is through 'Resilience Direct' from the LRF or the CCU. The DPH is a member of the LRF strategic board.
- 42 The DCC Community Protection Service (CPS) provides assurance to national regulators including Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) through the implementation and regular reporting on their air quality strategy; contaminated land strategy; food safety plan; food hygiene plan; annual enforcement programme; various licensing and enforcement policies and disease contingency plans. Services provided by

CPS are regulated nationally by the FSA, HSE and DEFRA to provide further assurance on the quality of service provision.

- 43 An Annual Status Report (ASR) is produced to determine whether specific areas of the county meet National Air Quality Standards for various air pollutants including nitrogen dioxide and particulates.
- 44 In addition to above, a Local Air Quality Management Area currently exists within Durham City. Air Quality action and implementation plans are in place to reduce Nitrogen Dioxide emissions and improve air quality standards within that area.
- 45 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Safety Strategic Group (HSWSG) is in place in DCC to ensure that suitable priority is given to the management of Health, Safety and Wellbeing across the Council. This includes representation from Public Health.

Updates on key areas

- 46 Data provided below are collated from numerous sources. The health protection scorecard is attached at Appendix 2 and compiles the latest publicly available data. It is presented by financial year or calendar year, depending on the reporting arrangements for each programme which is determined nationally. There is a known lag in data being quality assured, benchmarked and published for all local authorities however, the pandemic has had an impact on the production and timeliness of some indicators which is improving.

Screening and immunisations

Screening

- 47 In 2022, coverage rates in County Durham for cervical and bowel cancer, have continued to exceed efficiency standards and national averages. In 2022:
 - (a) Cervical screening coverage in County Durham (25-49 years) was 75.8% compared to a national average of 67.6%;
 - (b) Bowel cancer coverage in County Durham was 72.5% compared to a national average of 70.3%.
- 48 Breast cancer screening was negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and nationally, regionally and locally, coverage and uptake remains below pre-pandemic levels. In County Durham coverage has increased compared to the previous year and has returned to above efficiency standards (70%). Coverage for 2022 is statistically significantly

higher than the England and North East averages, coverage in County Durham was 70.1% compared to a national average of 64.9%.

“Coverage” in breast screening is a combined function of improved timeliness of screening within the three yearly round length and uptake of offers. Both of these have improved in the service providers.

- 49 Performance in County Durham against key indicators for the non-cancer screening programme. Newborn Hearing, shows sustained achievement above national efficiency standards with a coverage for 2021/22 of 98.9%. The provision of Local Authority level data for the Newborn and Infant Physical Examination (within 72 hours of birth) shows that although the efficiency standard (95%) was met for this screening at 95.3% for 2021/22, this is statistically significantly below the England coverage of 96.6%. County Durham, along with Darlington are outliers in the region with coverage significantly lower than the North East average of 96.1%.
- 50 Screening coverage for infectious diseases in pregnancy, sickle cell and thalassaemia and Newborn blood spot screening show sustained achievement across the North East in 2021/22. Quarterly Screening KPI reports are published on provider performance and as at Q4 2021/22 CDDFT and County Durham CCG met the standard for the aforementioned indicators.
- 51 Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm screening coverage has improved compared to the previous year. Levels have however not recovered to pre-pandemic levels or above the efficiency standard of 75% nationally, regionally or locally. Between 2020/21 and 2021/22 in County Durham there was an increase of over twenty percentage points and 71.2% of eligible men were screened. Across the North East coverage for 2021/22 was 71.7% and for England, 70.3%.
- 52 Diabetic Eye Screening coverage has increased regionally and nationally in 21/22. For the North East, coverage of 76.8% is above the efficiency standard of 75% however screening remains significantly below the national average and below pre-pandemic levels of 81.6% or more. To note, the quarterly KPI provider performance reports for the County Durham and Darlington Diabetic Eye Screening Programme shows coverage at 78.7% for quarter 4 2021/22 (annual rolling figure). These data partly reflect the fact that, at that time, the diabetic eye screening programmes were still recovering their screening round length and that patients will have been attending, but not within the 12-month cut-off period for the KPI.
- 53 COVID-19 has impacted on delivery of most adult screening programmes, this is due both to service pressures, challenges in securing venues, and the health conditions of those who would be presenting for screening

increasing reluctance to attend. The recovery status of the programmes is as follows following services currently recovering:

- (a) Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm - the current forecast is to complete by July 2023;
- (b) Diabetic Eye Retinopathy - the target to have invited the backlog was achieved by March 2022. The programme now has an additional "Health Inequalities" module on their IT systems which will allow health equity audit and further improved targeting and to help improve uptake further;
- (c) Bowel cancer screening - the services have done well to recover and further to significantly expand capacity to deliver the "Age Extension", which will be implemented in year-bands 21/22 until 2024/5. This means an increase of c.85% on top of the previous 60-74 yrs target age range;
- (d) Breast cancer screening - clinic throughput was necessarily paused for a protracted period and so there has been a long restoration time, which NHSE have been working with providers to reduce. NHSE has invested heavily in staff and equipment to improve uptake and screening round length.

54 Cervical cancer screening services have been restored and the completion of the Health Equity Audit by NHSE outlines actions to tackle issues that pose a challenge in their local areas, Antenatal and Newborn Screening services have been largely unaffected by the pandemic and continued as business as usual with the exception of Newborn Hearing which slowed for a short time in the Spring of 2020 and then rapidly recovered.

Immunisations

55 Overall, the universal 0-5 years childhood immunisation programmes demonstrate very high uptake rates across County Durham, with rates above the national averages and the optimal performance standard (95%) and (see Appendix 2) for 2021/22. This includes the following coverage:

- (a) 97.5% of the combined diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Dtap / IPV / Hib) vaccine at 1 year
- (b) 98.2% of the Dtap / IPV / Hib vaccine at 2 years;
- (c) 96.8% of the PCV booster at 2 years;
- (d) 96.5% for one dose of MMR at 2 years;
- (e) 96.8% for the Hib / Men C booster at 2 years;
- (f) 97.7% for one dose of MMR at 5 years;
- (g) 95.6% for two doses of MMR at 5 years.

56 The school age immunisation programme delivers three routine immunisations to adolescents. In 2020/21 and 2021/22 the delivery of the programmes continued to be disrupted by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic due school closures, phased secondary school reopening and lower attendance rates.

57 The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination coverage for females and males continues to decline and remains below the optimal performance target (90%) and efficiency standard (80%) for the period 2021/22. In 2021/22 the coverage for females was:

- (a) 57.8% for one dose at 12-13 years;
- (b) 44.7% for two doses at 13-14 years.

58 For 2021/22 the coverage for males was:

- (a) 45.3% for one dose at 12-13 years;
- (b) 38.1% for two doses at 13-14 years.

Please note these figures do not appear in Appendix 2. The data had been published by UKHSA on the GOV.UK website. At the time of writing, they have not been updated on OHID's Fingertips platform which is the data source for the scorecard.

59 The latest available data for the Meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y (MenACWY) vaccine is for 2020/21 where the programme was disrupted due to school closures in response to the pandemic. The coverage figure provided is for the eligible cohort who in 2020/21 were 14-15 years, this means they have been eligible for the routine and catch-up programmes. County Durham achieved coverage of 83.9%. This is the highest coverage achieved to date for the County and is above the England average of 80.9% (Appendix A). However, unpublished data shows that coverage for the latest year has fallen and it has been challenging to meet the programme efficiency standard for the first year of eligibility, which is 80% at 13-14 years.

60 The latest data for the Tetanus, diphtheria and polio (Td/IPV) adolescent vaccine (also known as the 3-in-1 teenage booster) is again 2020/21 where the programme was disrupted due to school closures in response to the pandemic. The coverage figure provided is for the eligible cohort who in 2020/21 were 14-15 years, this means they have been eligible for the routine and catch-up programmes. County Durham achieved coverage of 84.9%. This is the highest coverage achieved to date for the County and is above the England average of 80.3%. However, unpublished data shows that coverage for the latest year has fallen. Please note these figures do not appear in Appendix 2 as the data has

been published by UKHSA on the GOV.UK website rather than OHID's Fingertips platform, which is the data source for the scorecard

- 61 Public health are working with NHSE, Harrogate and District Foundation Trust and schools to identify and address the concerns about low rates of vaccine coverage in the teenage, school aged vaccination programmes. To date, the agreed interventions include increased frequency of meetings with data collection and analysis with commissioners and with local partners, web-based and paper based consent processes, increased the number of accessible, community catch-up clinics and enhanced communications with school via the Headteacher briefings.
- 62 Unpublished data show that coverage for these cohorts has been improved and this data will be available in due course.
- 63 Flu vaccination rates for the 2022/23 season in County Durham have continued to be favourable and in every major target group, exceed the rates for England as follows:
 - (a) Over 65s 83.4 % > 79.4%;
 - (b) Under 65s in clinical risk groups 53.8% > 48.6%;
 - (c) Pregnant women 36.4% > 34.7%;
 - (d) 2-year-olds 46.7% > 41.7%;
 - (e) 3-year-olds 51% > 44.5%;
 - (f) Primary school (age 4 to 11 yrs) 56.4% > 55.9%;
 - (g) Secondary school (age 11 to 14 yrs) 45% > 40.2%.
- 64 In 2021/22 the DCC staff vaccination programme once again included all staff (including schools, but not academies). The uptake was slightly below levels in previous years. Insight work and vaccine engagement training is planned for the forthcoming year to reverse this trend.
- 65 NHSE has already led a review of the 2022/23 Covid-19 and flu vaccination programme, and this will inform the autumn/winter vaccination programme for 2023/24. County Durham has also been allocated £55,000 from the NENC Health Inequalities Fund to address Vaccine Inequality. Plans are in place to use this funding to support the delivery of vaccine pop-up clinics, 2–3-year nurse pilot pop-up, learning disabilities insight work and vaccination engagement training for Adult Social Care staff.
- 66 Sustained collaborative efforts have supported the delivery of an effective COVID-19 vaccination programme with high levels of uptake across all eligible groups. The leaving no-one behind approach analysed Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) data showing spatial variation in vaccine uptake; variation below county level by deprivation, gender and age. This data, triangulated with context specific information and in-depth local knowledge from multi-agency collaborators, informed the identification

and selection of trusted and accessible community venues for mobile pop-up vaccination clinics and the design of a locally appropriate vaccination offer.

- 67 An evaluation of the mobile pop-up vaccination clinics showed 10, 253 vaccinations were delivered between May and November 2021. This shows increases ranging between 257% -1,194% compared to the 7-day average in those LSOAs.
- 68 The leaving no-one behind approach also informed the 2–3-year flu vaccination pilots. This initiative seeking to learn from Covid with more flexible delivery models delivered flu vaccination to 2–3-year-olds in six walk in clinics 15 nurseries identified in areas of low uptake or areas of deprivation. 308 vaccinations were given at these clinics, increasing uptake for this age group compared to the previous year.
- 69 There has been no 2021/22 data published on the Pneumococcal polysaccharide (PPV) vaccination coverage for those aged 65 years and over. In the first half of 21/22 there was a continued shortage of pneumococcal vaccine covering twenty-three strains of the bacteria that may have impacted on uptake.
- 70 In 20/21 the delivery of the shingles vaccination programme was disrupted due to the response COVID-19 pandemic and in particular the specific guidance for elderly groups to shield. In line with England, the shingles vaccine coverage amongst 71-year-olds in 20/21 declined from the previous year and in County Durham was 42.3% (England average was 42.1%). In the latest year coverage has improved, signalling a recovery of the programme however remaining below the efficiency standard of 50%. Coverage for 71-year-old cohort in 21/22 was:
 - (a) 48.9% for County Durham;
 - (b) 48.4% for the NHS Local Team North East and Yorkshire (Cumbria and North East);
 - (c) 44% for England.
- 71 NHSE had paused work on shingles due to capacity issues. However, national communications to invite those eligible to attend has been disseminated and amplified at place with primary care colleagues and County Durham residents.
- 72 Please note these figures do not appear in Appendix X. The figures have been published by UKHSA on the GOV.UK website. At the time of writing, they have not been updated on OHID's Fingertips platform which is the data source for the scorecard.

Communicable disease control and outbreaks

- 73 Throughout the past year the Local Authority has worked closely with colleagues at UKHSA, in their lead role, to address a number and range of non-Covid infections including mpox, diphtheria, flu, Group A strep and syphilis. There has been a resurgence of gastrointestinal infections since Covid-19 restrictions have eased resulting in a number of norovirus outbreaks and Outbreak Control Teams have been held to oversee campylobacter and cryptosporidium outbreaks in venues across County Durham.
- 74 The mpox outbreak, following in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, placed considerable pressure on the partners across the health protection system. UKHSA led the national and local response to the mpox outbreak response overseeing both case management and contact tracing. The commissioned sexual health services undertook extensive work to engage with the members of the communities particularly at risk from this outbreak and provided assessment and care to patients.
- 75 The public health team also made a significant contribution to the prevention, management and control of this outbreak, including:
- (a) working closely with the commissioned sexual health services to cascade briefings and support the services to align their triage, assessment and care of those affected accordingly;
 - (b) developing and amplifying communications to reach vulnerable population groups;
 - (c) working across boundaries with colleagues in other Local Authorities and implicated venues;
 - (d) working with CDDFT to develop a Standard Operating Procedure for the delivery of the pre-exposure vaccination to priority groups and staff;
 - (e) involvement in the negotiations with NHSE regarding the prioritisation of vaccines when stocks became scarce and managing expectations within the affected communities as stock availability issues impacted delivery.
- 76 Collaborative work across with system partners has also facilitated the development of the season flu (care homes) anti-viral prescribing pathway, avian flu framework and anti-viral prescribing pathway and a number of lessons learned exercises to improve practice.
- 77 The TB Contact Tracing service within County Durham and Darlington is experiencing increased demand due to an increased number of new entrants to the UK post pandemic, resulting from international staff recruitment exercises and arrivals from the Ukraine, asylum seekers and

refugees. Work is currently underway to review this contract to ensure optimal levels are achieved in future service provision.

- 78 In May and June 2022 DCC and UKHSA jointly delivered the Health Protection Training Course. The course's aims were to equip the public health workforce with the underpinning theory, evidence and skills for the competencies and experience gained, particularly by Local Authority Public Health teams, as they supported the Covid-19 pandemic response. The training also broadened knowledge and understanding of a wide range of health protection issues and the management arrangements with key partners including UKHSA, Environmental Health, Civil Contingency Unit and Infection, Prevention and Control Teams. Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive, with a strong desire expressed for similar events in the future.
- 79 The presence of several prison establishments in Durham presents challenges in the management of infectious diseases, particularly respiratory viruses (including flu and COVID-19), blood borne viruses and tuberculosis. The Public Health team continues to work collaboratively with UKHSA to support both proactive and responsive work in these settings, including attendance at Outbreak Control Team meetings of which there have been several managing COVID-19 outbreak this year.
- 80 The Public Health team have worked together with partners across DCC, UKHSA and the ICB to meet the health and wellbeing needs of Ukrainian arrivals, asylum seekers and refugees, including documents supporting GP registration, pathways to vaccination and screening programmes and mental health and trauma support and services, now included in the 'arrivals pack'.
- 81 Several meetings have been held with stakeholders including CDDFT, UKHSA, IPC and Public Health to support and strengthen the delivery of the IPC action plan to address the clusters of health care acquired infection reported over the last 12 months.
- 82 High levels of gonorrhoea and syphilis infections are considered a marker of risky sexual behaviour. In County Durham, diagnosis rates of these infections are significantly lower than England and the North East in 2021:
 - (a) Gonorrhoea diagnostic rate of 39.8 per 100,000 in County Durham compared to 90.3 per 100,000 across England as a whole;
 - (b) Syphilis diagnostic rate of 3.9 per 100,000 in County Durham compared to 13.3 per 100,000 across England as a whole.
- 83 Chlamydia is the most commonly diagnosed bacterial STI in England and the rates are substantially highest amongst young adults. As part of the

National Chlamydia Screening Programme (NCSP) Local authorities are set a detection rate benchmark for young people aged 15-24 years. The detection rate of the infection in County Durham has consistently been below the benchmarks set. These benchmarks have been adjusted as in June 2021 it was announced that the focus of the NCSP was changing to reducing reproductive harm of untreated infection in young women. Many local authorities in the North East and wider, including County Durham need to work to increase the detection rate of chlamydia amongst young women to a new benchmark of 3,250 per 100,000 for 2022 onwards. In 2021 the County Durham detection rates were:

- (a) For all aged 15-24 years, 1,182 per 100,000, significantly worse than the England average of 1,334 per 100,000;
- (b) For females aged 15-24 years, 1,588 per 100,000, significantly worse than the England average of 1,762 per 100,000.

- 84 In County Durham both the prevalence rate of people diagnosed with HIV and the rate of new HIV diagnoses each year is low compared to England.
- 85 Reducing late diagnosis is key to improving in the morbidity and mortality of those with HIV infection and can indicate that HIV testing access needs to be improved. The rate of late diagnoses for the time period 2019-2021 in County Durham was 33.3% which is statistically similar to that across the North East (40.1%) and England (43.4%) as a whole. There is a national ambition to reduce this to a benchmark of 25% however 95% of local authorities did not meet this ambition in the latest time period.
- 86 The number of new diagnoses is related to testing rates. The testing of those accessing SHSs and therefore increased knowledge of HIV status is vital to improve survival rates and reduce the risk of onward transmission. This in an area that requires improvement in County Durham. HIV testing coverage across England, including the North East was impacted by the reconfiguration of sexual health services during the Covid-19 pandemic. Coverage fell by around twenty percentage points in England from 65% in 2019 to 46% in 2020, the comparative figures were similar for County Durham with a drop from 67% to 42%. In most local authorities in the North East, the testing coverage recovered to some degree in 2021. However locally coverage fell by a further 10 percentage points and is 32% for 2021 and significantly worse than the North East (44.1%) and England averages (45.8%) and below the efficiency standard of 50%.
- 87 Actions to date to address the low testing uptake for both chlamydia and HIV include focused communications campaign to raise awareness and reduce stigma, the mapping of the availability of testing offers wider than

the sexual health service and the recovery of walk-in clinics, post-pandemic, to increase access to testing.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

- 88 Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) continues to be a growing threat to public health. County Durham CCG is the highest prescribing area in the country for antibiotics. Antibiotic prescribing is increasing but this is in line with the national picture. Strep A and the increase in respiratory illness over the winter months has increased the volume of antibiotic prescribing nationally.
- 89 In response to this, ICB County Durham have included Antimicrobial Resistance within the risk register and have a robust plan, involving a whole system approach which started in 21/22 but will continue into 22/23. To implement this a 'Plan on a Page' is being developed with the local authority public health team to support systemwide AMS.
- 90 Work that has been carried out including audits, peer reviews with Gopal practices and patient reviews in primary care. In addition, audits and discussions have taken place with Urgent Care, extended care providers and secondary care. Five out of the eight highest prescribing antibiotic practices have been visited by the ICB Medicines Optimization team to provide additional education and support. DAP reports (Decreasing Antimicrobial prescribing) which are bespoke practice level reports to enable behavioural change with prescribing have been developed and are being shared with all practices and this will continue into 2023/34.
- 91 The ICB MO team have submitted a bid for funding for the wider rollout of CRP machines and to consider the availability of additional point of care testing to support clinical consultations for infections.
- 92 Funding has been agreed by the ICB and a working group has been established to roll out across the North East and North Cumbria the public awareness 'Seriously' resistant campaign across the region from April 2023. This campaign aims for wider education and messages to patients and the public through a social media campaign. There is also ongoing work through schools to encourage a cultural change in the public belief of antibiotic being required for viruses and how we need to protect antibiotics for serious illness.

Strategic regulation intervention

- 93 The Community Protection Service (CPS) delivers key frontline services which are mainly regulatory in nature and encompass environmental health, trading standards and licensing functions. The service is adopting

a more strategic and risk-based approach to regulation and works closely with a range of key partners to achieve better regulatory outcomes which protect and promote the health and wellbeing of local communities. The Service is now responsible for community safety, including Anti-Social behaviour and the Horden Together Partnership which supports the delivery of placed based, multi-agency locality services. Working with a range of partners including the community and voluntary sector to strengthen partnerships for people and places and help build thriving communities as well as enable individuals to better access a variety of support services including addictions, mental health, alcohol and drug misuse and crisis services.

- 94 This work supports are centred around the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) framework the principles of the County Durham Together initiative which will provide a new way of working with our communities towards achieving the County Durham Vision 2035.
- 95 Community Navigators have already had an overwhelming response within the first 12 months of operation and are working with the community and individuals in the area to promote conversation and positive engagement as well as deliver the co-production of future services.
- 96 Initial investment in the Horden project has been identified until 2024 and further funding opportunities are currently being explored to extend the project and potentially increase the establishment of more place-based teams in other areas of high multiple deprivation across the County.
- 97 In relation to service priorities, as well as maintaining the Council's statutory functions around food safety and wellbeing, occupational safety and health, pollution prevention and control, private sector housing standards and other health protection interventions, the CPS has been an integral part of the Council's COVID-19 Pandemic response in relation to outbreak management and regulation of relevant health protection legislation and implementation of local COVID-19 restrictions.
- 98 The CPS team has had long term capacity issues which has been further compounded by the COVID-19 response and Brexit transition. This coincides with national shortages of suitably qualified Environmental Health and Trading Standards professionals which has presented difficulties with ongoing recruitment as well as staff retention and succession planning.
- 99 A Workforce Development and Staff Retention Plan 2021-2026 has been developed and implemented as from April 2022. In addressing the growing skills and expertise gap and the plan focusses on three key areas for actions namely RETAIN, RECRUIT and TRAIN and will provide an

essential framework to support the development of all CPS employees. The plan will assist in ensuring the council is equipped to provide the best, most cost-effective CP service through a flexible and skilled workforce and will be implemented over the next 5 years to ensure business.

100 In addition, the CPS has a number of specialist teams which provided an enhanced COVID-19 response in relation to local COVID-19 outbreaks, workplace health and safety, nuisance, and anti-social behaviour. As part of our graduated approach to compliance and enforcement, some enforcement actions will need to be escalated to the specialist CP teams as and when necessary. The Community Protection Service Teams have a range of enforcement powers and civil sanctions to deal with non-compliance issues associated with current restrictions and other matters which may be related to local restrictions including:

- Fixed Penalty Notices;
- Prohibition Notices;
- Improvement notices;
- Abatement Notices;
- Community Protection Notices;
- Directions to close premises, events, or public places;
- Initiation of formal criminal proceedings leading to formal caution, fine and/or imprisonment.

101 The CPS continues to provide advice and guidance to businesses to promote better compliance with current legislation. The Better Business For All Team provides enhanced business advice services to support start-ups and diversification as well as premises audits and training. The team works closely with public health practitioners in the design and delivery of targeted campaigns including Allergens and the Healthy Options Takeaway.

Preparedness and response to incidents and emergencies

102 Partner organisations involved in public health have continued to play a major role in preparing for and responding to public health incidents this year.

103 Partners have continued to respond to COVID-19 in line with the local outbreak management plan and in response to the planned lifting of national controls and the withdrawal of testing infrastructure. A key priority has been delivering and supporting local vaccination programmes including pop-up and mobile vaccination clinics to increase take-up amongst hard-to-reach groups.

- 104 Outbreak management and business continuity plans were reviewed as part of the council's COVID-19 transition plan which sets out how we will maintain key aspects of local outbreak management and control as 'business as usual' activities within the context of the winding down of national emergency response and controls in relation to Covid-19.
- 105 The civil contingencies unit liaised with UKHSA to decommission Covid-19 testing sites, which have all now returned to their previous use.
- 106 Partners have also been involved in responding to other major incidents which have impacted on public health. Following the winter storms which affected the county during November/December 2021 and January and February 2022, partners contributed to the review of the county's response and the development of corporate and multi-agency improvement plans to improve preparedness and response to these types of incidents. This has been extended to include planning for vulnerable people affected by the current cost of living crisis and also planning for rolling power outages in the event of national power shortages and or national power outages.
- 107 The council's corporate emergency plan was reviewed and updated, in the light of lessons learnt following Storm Arwen and a revised excess deaths framework prepared, within the context of new regional arrangements.
- 108 Public health partners took part in an exercise on severe weather and power outages (Exercise Ferris) and have contributed to multi-agency planning on wider winter pressures and industrial action affecting regional and local health services.
- 109 The council and its partners responded to the extreme heat incidents which affected the county in July 2022, coordinating efforts through the Local Resilience Forum. More recently, the council and partners have responded to a number of cold weather alerts in line with the council's Cold Weather Plan.
- 110 Plans are in place for the SABIC ethylene pipeline which runs through the county and for the two Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites in Durham. An exercise for one of the sites was undertaken (Exercise Toucan) this year, with the plan for the other site having been exercised the year before (Exercise Mussel).
- 111 The Director of Public Health, along with other DsPH across the North East continue to be part of a Scientific and Technical Advice Cell (STAC) rota in a major incident when a STAC is called by the Strategic Co-ordinating Group the DPH will chair the STAC. The DPH is trained and competent to operate at Strategic Command Group (SCG) level and understands the working arrangements of STAC and the SCG.

112 Agencies have also monitored the spread of avian flu across the country and provided advice to the farming and poultry industries on human health risks in commercial farming, restriction zones and to the public in relation to coming into contact with dead wildfowl. Outbreak management meetings have been held between the Director of Public Health, UKHSA, Community Protection and CCU and a communications strategy developed including the production of a range of communications materials to display at affected sites and locations.

Communications

113 In addition to the work detailed in this report, the importance of effective communications should also be emphasised. The sustained joint approach to communications across regional and system partners continues to enhance the health protection programme's proactive and reactive response.

114 A coordinated and consistent approach to communications allows planned UKHSA/NHS campaigns, such as warm and well, flu, COVID-19, and reactive information to the public including MMR, mpox, HIV, meningitis and avian flu to be distributed more widely, reach a greater audience and influence behaviours.

115 These campaigns have been shaped by behavioural insights work that inform the design, message, and mode of delivery of messages ensuring relevance to the target audience and facilitating community-based asset approaches to be strengthened.

116 To address the concurrent concerns of the rising cost-of-living, increases in energy prices and routine winter pressures across the health and social care system a winter planning group was convened. One outcome of this collaboration was the development of simple comms (animation and postcard) which was shared with 'on the ground' teams including community health and social care workers, clean and green, Fire and Rescue to encourage conversations with those most at risk in the community to ensure they are warm and well and can access help and support if needed.

Main implications

117 It is critical that the DPH receives assurance in relation to the health protection functions of screening; immunisation; outbreaks and communicable disease management; strategic regulation interventions and preparedness and response to incidents and emergencies.

118 The key areas for development outlined in this report inform the HPADP action plan and the forward plan for the meetings held bimonthly and reports to the HWB. The action plan is actively updated by key partners

providing assurance and detailing progress on current priorities and actions.

119 County Durham benefits from the strong collaborative working relationships in place with key stakeholders. It is critical that these are established within the emerging governance structures of the ICS, ICP and ICB to ensure continued health protection assurance and maximising opportunities for improved population health outcomes.

120 Health protection is a dynamic discipline, with new and emerging threats affecting the population of County Durham. Ongoing work across system partners seeks to ensure arrangements are in place to prevent, assess and mitigate risks and threats to human health arising from communicable diseases and exposure to environmental hazards. Investment in staff and their training is key to ensure a competent workforce with capacity to respond.

121 This report demonstrates areas of innovation, data-led interventions, local research activity and sharing of best-practice contributing to improving the quality of evidence underpinning the delivery of health protection services and interventions.

Conclusion

122 The health protection functions delivered by a range of organisations in County Durham continue to demonstrate good overall performance.

123 Good communication exists between the commissioners of the various programmes and the DPH; remedial and corrective interventions are instigated when necessary. Escalation procedures are in place in the event the DPH needs to raise concerns.

124 There has been significant change to health protection structures and processes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The governance review undertaken provides assurance following the transition to living with COVID-19, integrating the lessons learnt whilst remaining flexible and agile to respond and retaining the skills and competencies gained during this time.

125 The dynamic situation presented by the pandemic and other climate related emergencies have brought about beneficial reviews and changes to emergency response arrangements, including significant local developments including the Surge Response and Surge Escalation Plans.

126 There remain areas for improvement and increased assurance including:

- (a) continue to progress the collaborative work with Harrogate and District Foundation Trust, NHSE and schools to ensure equity of access and improved rates of vaccination amongst adolescents;
- (b) work collaboratively with NHSE as commissioners, providers and community partners to expedite improvements and amplify local communications to increase uptake rates for breast cancer screening, diabetic eye screening, abdominal aortic aneurysm screening, chlamydia detection rates and HIV testing coverage within County Durham;
- (c) work collaboratively with NHSE and primary care to continue to improve the uptake of certain vaccinations including shingles and pneumococcal;
- (d) utilise the skills and expertise developed in the COVID-19 granular data analysis and the development of the Leaving No-one Behind approach to further understand and address variation in access to services by sociodemographic characteristics;
- (e) continue ongoing work with County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT) and key stakeholders to support high quality infection prevention and control measures.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None

Contact: Joy Evans

Tel: 07902 831608

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Section 2B NHS Act 2006 places a duty on each local authority to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area.

The steps that may be taken include:

providing information and advice; providing services or facilities designed to promote healthy living; providing services or facilities for the prevention, diagnosis or treatment of illness; providing financial incentives to encourage individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles; providing assistance (including financial assistance) to help individuals to minimise any risks to health arising from their accommodation or environment; providing or participating in the provision of training for persons working or seeking to work in the field of health improvement; making available the services of any person or any facilities; providing grants or loans (on such terms as the local authority considers appropriate

Finance

This report has no implications for finance.

Consultation

There is no requirement for consultation in relation to this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no implications in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty in relation to this report.

Climate Change

Exposure to potential harms arising from the effects of climate change would fall within the umbrella of health protection, for example severe weather patterns.

Human Rights

This report has no implications for human rights.

Crime and Disorder

This report has no implications for crime and disorder.

Staffing

This report has no implications for staffing.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

No risks are identified for the Council.

Procurement

Not applicable.

Appendix 2: Health Protection Scorecard

Attached as separate document

This page is intentionally left blank

Health Protection Assurance & Development Partnership Scorecard

The scorecard provides the partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board with an overview of the key indicators relevant to health protection and specifically the domains of:

- screening;
- vaccination and immunisation;
- sexual health;
- infectious disease; and
- health care associated infection.

For each domain, the latest data is available on Fingertips* is shown. The County Durham values are benchmarked against targets where appropriate or in terms of a comparison to England and the North East. The England and North East region figures are provided for context. A trend over time, based on the most recent five time points, is also displayed.

All data is publicly available and can be shared.

*Fingertips is a large public health data collection developed by the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities.

'Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [09/03/2023] <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown copyright [2023]'



To view this scorecard in a browser please visit: [Health Protection Assurance and Development Partnership Scorecard](#)



Indicator Name	Time period	County Durham	North East region	England
C24n - Newborn and Infant Physical Examination Screening Coverage	2021/22	95.3	96.1	96.6
C24m - Newborn Hearing Screening: Coverage	2021/22	98.9	99.1	98.7
C24e - Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Coverage	2021/22	71.2	71.7	70.3
C24d - Cancer screening coverage: bowel cancer	2022	72.5	72.5	70.3
C24c - Cancer screening coverage: cervical cancer (aged 50 to 64 years old)	2022	76.6	75.7	74.6
C24b - Cancer screening coverage: cervical cancer (aged 25 to 49 years old)	2022	75.8	72.7	67.6
C24a - Cancer screening coverage: breast cancer	2022	70.1	67.1	64.9
C23 - Percentage of cancers diagnosed at stages 1 and 2	2020	51.3	50.8	52.3

Key - significance

Compared to England

- Worse
- Similar
- Better
- Not compared

Key - trend over time

Recent Trend

- Cannot be calculated
- Decreasing and getting worse
- Increasing and getting better
- No significant change



Babies and children aged 0-5 years

Indicator Name	Time period	Sex	County Durham	North East region	England
D03b - Population vaccination coverage: Hepatitis B (1 year old)	2021/22	Persons	100.00		
D03c - Population vaccination coverage: Dtap IPV Hib (1 year old)	2021/22	Persons	97.49	95.55	91.84
D03d - Population vaccination coverage: MenB (1 year)	2021/22	Persons	97.38	95.40	91.53
D03e - Population vaccination coverage: Rotavirus (Rota) (1 year)	2021/22	Persons	96.51	94.35	89.92
D03h - Population vaccination coverage: Dtap IPV Hib (2 years old)	2021/22	Persons	98.24	96.03	93.04
D03i - Population vaccination coverage: MenB booster (2 years)	2021/22	Persons	96.61	93.73	87.95
D03j - Population vaccination coverage: MMR for one dose (2 years old)	2021/22	Persons	96.51	94.46	89.18
D03k - Population vaccination coverage: PCV booster	2021/22	Persons	96.80	94.28	89.34
D03m - Population vaccination coverage: Hib and MenC booster (2 years old)	2021/22	Persons	96.76	94.40	89.03
D04a - Population vaccination coverage: DTaP and IPV booster (5 years)	2021/22	Persons	95.28	90.57	84.24
D04b - Population vaccination coverage: MMR for one dose (5 years old)	2021/22	Persons	97.70	96.35	93.41
D04c - Population vaccination coverage: MMR for two doses (5 years old)	2021/22	Persons	95.55	91.71	85.69

Teenage children

Indicator Name	Time period	Sex	County Durham	North East region	England
D04g - Population vaccination coverage: Meningococcal ACWY conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) (14 to 15 years)	2020/21	Persons	83.90	83.20	80.92
D04f - Population vaccination coverage: HPV vaccination coverage for two doses (13 to 14 years old)	2020/21	Female	69.30	72.92	60.62
D04e - Population vaccination coverage: HPV vaccination coverage for one dose (12 to 13 year old)	2020/21	Female	66.10	69.08	76.66
		Male	56.70	62.91	71.02

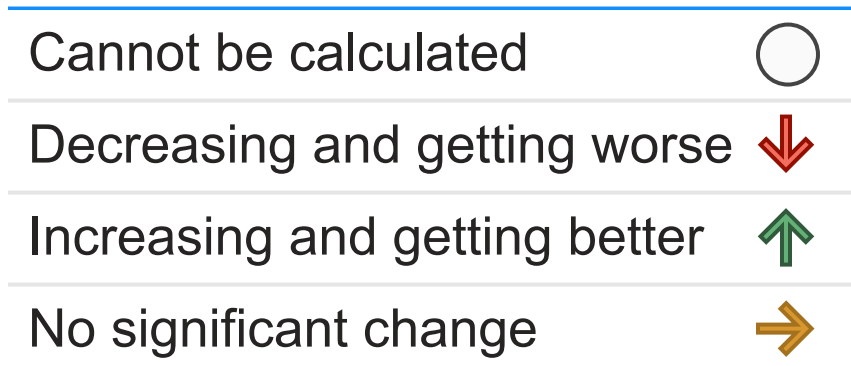
Key - benchmark against goal

Compared to goal



Key - trend over time

Recent Trend





Adults

Indicator Name	Time period	County Durham	North East region	England
▲				
D06b - Population vaccination coverage: PPV	2020/21	72.80 ↑	73.70	70.60
D06c - Population vaccination coverage: Shingles vaccination coverage (71 years)	2019/20	49.98 ○	50.84	48.19

Flu

Indicator Name	Time period	County Durham	North East region	England
▼				
D03l - Population vaccination coverage: Flu (2 to 3 years old)	2021/22	59.90 ↑	54.19	50.09
D04d - Population vaccination coverage: Flu (primary school aged children)	2021	52.42 ○	59.14	57.40
D05 - Population vaccination coverage: Flu (at risk individuals)	2021/22	59.90 ↑	57.09	52.94
D06a - Population vaccination coverage: Flu (aged 65 and over)	2021/22	86.00 ↑	85.32	82.35

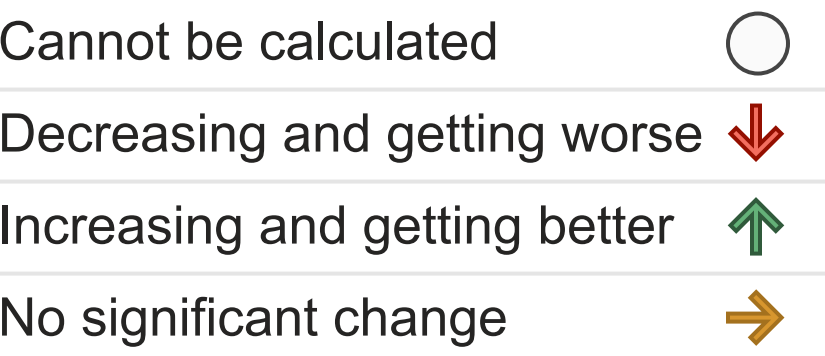
Key - benchmark against goal

Compared to goal



Key - trend over time

Recent Trend





Indicator Name	Time period	County Durham	North East region	England
Chlamydia detection rate per 100,000 aged 15 to 24	2021	1182.0	1413.4	1334.2
Gonorrhoea diagnostic rate per 100,000	2021	39.8	45.9	90.3
HIV testing coverage, total	2021	31.6	44.1	45.8
New STI diagnoses (excluding chlamydia aged under 25) per 100,000	2020	250.8	274.7	382.4
Syphilis diagnostic rate per 100,000	2021	3.9	9.4	13.3

Indicators with a target				
Indicator Name	Time period	County Durham	North East region	England
HIV late diagnosis in people first diagnosed with HIV in the UK	2019 - 21	33.3	40.1	43.4

Key - significance

Compared to England

Not compared

Better

Similar

Worse

Key - benchmark against goal

Compared to goal

Not compared

Green

Amber

Red

Key - trend over time

Recent Trend

Cannot be calculated

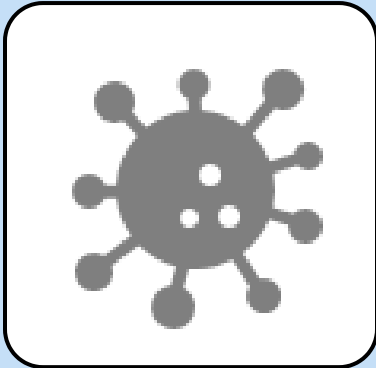
Decreasing and getting better

Decreasing and getting worse

Increasing and getting better

Increasing and getting worse

No significant change



Vaccine preventable diseases

Indicator Name	Time period	County Durham	North East region	England
Pertussis incidence rate/100,000	2021	0.0	0.1	0.1
Mumps incidence rate/100,000	2018	1.3	1.6	1.9
Measles incidence rate/100,000	2021	0.0	0.0	0.0
Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD) confirmed cases rate/100,000	Jul 2020 - Jun 2021	0.0	0.1	0.1

Respiratory infection

Indicator Name	Time period	County Durham	North East region	England
Legionnaires' disease confirmed incidence rate/100,000	2016	0.6	0.5	0.6
Proportion of drug sensitive TB cases who had completed a full course of treatment by 12 months	2019	75.0	81.4	82.0
Proportion of pulmonary TB cases starting treatment within four months of symptom onset	2020		80.0	67.6
Proportion of TB cases offered an HIV test	2020	85.7		97.4
TB incidence (three year average)	2018 - 20	1.9	3.5	8.0

Other

Indicator Name	Time period	County Durham	North East region	England
Acute Lyme disease laboratory confirmed incidence rate/100,000	2022	0.6	0.9	1.5

Key - significance

Compared to England

Not compared

Better

Similar

Worse

Key - trend over time

Recent Trend

Cannot be calculated

Decreasing and getting better

Increasing and getting worse

No significant change



Indicator Name	Area Name		NHS County Durham CCG		Cumbria and North East	England
	Year	Month	Value		Value	Value
C. difficile infection counts and 12-month rolling rates all cases, by CCG and month	2022	November	125	23.4 ➡	30.4	27.0
E. coli bacteraemia counts and 12-month rolling rates, by CCG and month	2022	November	369	69.2 ➡	85.8	68.2
Klebsiella spp. bacteraemia counts and 12-month rolling rates, by CCG and month	2022	November	103	19.3 ➡	27.1	20.5
MRSA bacteraemia cases all counts and 12-month rolling rates, by CCG and month	2022	November	5	0.9 ➡	1.0	1.3
MSSA bacteraemia cases counts and 12-month rolling rates, by CCG and month	2022	November	136	25.5 ➡	30.4	22.6
P. aeruginosa bacteraemia counts and 12-month rolling rates, by CCG and month	2022	November	33	6.2 ➡	7.4	7.7

Key - trend over time

Recent Trend

Cannot be calculated ○

No significant change ➡

- 1) [Fingertips](#) home page
- 2) [Public Health Outcomes Framework profile](#)
- 3) [Health Protection profile](#)
- 4) [AMR local indicators profile](#)

Cabinet

19 April 2023

**Quarter Three, 2022/23
Performance Management Report**

Ordinary Decision



Report of Corporate Management Team

John Hewitt, Chief Executive Officer

Councillor Amanda Hopgood, Leader of the Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present an overview of progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework and highlight key messages to inform strategic priorities and work programmes.
- 2 The report covers performance in and to the end of quarter three, 2022/23, October to December 2022.

Executive Summary

- 3 This report is structured around a performance framework which reflects our current [Council Plan](#) (2022-2026), and its format has been developed to provide greater focus on how the council is contributing to achieving the people's vision.
- 4 The performance report is structured around two main components.
 - (a) State of the County indicators to highlight areas of strategic importance and reflected in both the [County Durham Vision 2035](#) and the [Council Plan](#).
 - (b) Performance of council services and progress against major initiatives as set out in the [Council Plan](#).
- 5 Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages against the five thematic areas within the Council Plan 2022-2026: our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council. It is broken down into national, regional and local picture, things that are going well, areas which require attention and other areas to note.

- 6 The [Council Plan](#) has undergone its annual refresh and the plan for 2023-2027 was approved by Council on 22 February. The performance framework is now being adjusted accordingly and will form the structure of this performance report from quarter one, 2023/24.

Context

- 7 The legacy of COVID-19 can still be seen in both our performance reporting and within our services. Performance data relating to the last two financial years are not representative for many areas so, wherever possible, we have compared current performance against pre-pandemic data.
- 8 However, the greatest challenge for our residents, local businesses and the council is the current cost-of-living crisis which has steadily worsened over the last 12 months. High inflation, currently at 10.5%¹, has largely been driven by the rise in the cost of fuel and energy bills, which is being impacted significantly by world events, including the war in Ukraine.
- 9 The cost-of-living crisis is having a triple impact.
- (a) Impact on our residents. High inflation is outstripping wage and benefit increases, so income is falling in real terms. This is driving demand for services which support people facing financial hardship or who are in crisis, as well as services provided to vulnerable people such as social care for children and adults.

We are receiving more contact from households seeking financial assistance, and we are continuing to see high volume of applications for Welfare Assistance and Discretionary Housing Payments. We are continuing to support residents through the crisis with various initiatives and funds.

- (b) Increased costs for the council. Premises and transport costs have increased in line with higher energy costs and fuel prices, most noticeably across service areas such as waste and Home to School Transport. Contract prices are also being affected, and more contracts are reflecting changes in demand.

We have created a £10 million Budget Support Reserve to assist with inflationary pressures within 2022/23.

- (c) Reduced income for the council. Users of council services may seek to save money resulting in a fall in income from discretionary services

¹ UK Consumer Price Index for 12 months to December 2022. Indicative [modelled consumer price inflation estimates](#) suggest that the CPI rate would have last been higher in October 1981, where the estimate for the annual inflation rate was 11.2%.

such as leisure centres and theatres. We estimate that during 2022/23 our income will be under budget by £1.47 million.

- 10 £78.9 million of budget pressures are expected during 2023/24, mainly driven by inflationary and service demand pressures. Partly financed by the additional £56.5 million received from the final Local Government Settlement and from council tax and tax base increases. Savings of £12.4 million will be found from savings with the residual £10 million being funded from the MTFP Support Reserve.
- 11 However, our £778 million capital programme is the most ambitious the council has ever agreed and supports the council's ambition to use its resources to improve education, transport, housing and economic growth.

Recommendation

- 12 That Cabinet notes the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter three performance, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic recovery and the external international factors driving inflation and cost-of-living on the council's performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of underperformance including the significant economic and well-being challenges because of the pandemic.

Analysis of the Performance Report

- 13 The areas identified in this section are contributory indicators linked to the priorities of the Council Plan. Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages against the five thematic areas within the Council Plan 2022-2026.

Our Economy

- 14 The aim of this priority is to create an inclusive economy with more and better jobs, major employment sites which cement our position as a premier place in the region to do business, a good tourism base and cultural offer, and employability support programmes which help people back into jobs or to start their own business. Our children and young people will receive the education and training required to access opportunities.
- 15 The government changed its approach to Levelling Up funding which meant none of our recent bids were successful. However, we are continuing to explore alternative funding options and delivery mechanisms - whilst awaiting details for the next round of funding.
- 16 Having adopted a new Inclusive Economic Strategy in December 2022, we are now developing delivery plans.

Going Well

- 17 Business Durham's property rental portfolio continues to operate successfully with occupancy at 95%, equivalent to last year.

- 18 During quarter three, regeneration projects supported 40 businesses and created 30 FTEs, 1,162m² of business space was brought back into use and 40 new retail businesses were engaged with.
- 19 More core tourism businesses are trading in 2022 (c850) compared to 2021 (591) as more businesses reopened following COVID closures.
- 20 Three of our cultural events were evaluated during quarter three. They showed a combined economic impact of almost £850,000 and significant returns on our investment: Durham Book Festival (108%), Seaham Food Festival (598%) and BRASS festival (268%).
- 21 Quarter three ticket sales for our theatres and cinemas were up 14% compared to last year. This was mainly due to successful panto seasons at the Gala and Empire. An average of 100 tickets were sold for each screening / performance held during the quarter which is on par with pre-COVID sales of 103 (at December 2019). 92% of survey respondents rated their 'whole experience' at the theatre or cinema as 'good' or 'very good'
- 22 324 clients registered on our employability programmes², an increase of 54% (+114) due to a spike in referrals last quarter from Ukrainian settlement scheme. 53 more clients progressed into employment and education or training (+54%) due to increased capacity on the Durham Advance Programme and more engagement with the LINKCD programme
- 23 76 organisations have now signed up to the Better Health at Work Award, the main conduit for supporting workplace health across County Durham. The county compares favourably with other North East authorities, with the highest number of businesses signed up as Award participants (approximately 20% of all business signatories in the North East).

Areas which require attention

- 24 Key Stage 2 data for 2022 is now available - the first data set since the pandemic. 73% of children across the county reached the expected standard in reading - lower than comparators but similar to 2019 levels. 71% reached the expected standard in maths – lower than 2019 performance of 80%. However, the decrease in maths performance reflects the national and regional trend, nationally performance has fallen from 79% in 2019 to 71% in 2022, and from 81% to 72% regionally.
- 25 In 2021/22, 45% of Key Stage 4 pupils achieved a 9-5 pass in English and maths, which is slightly lower than our statistical neighbours (48%), England (47%) and the North East (46%).
- 26 The levelling up white paper 2022 has identified 55 education investment areas (EIAs) which includes County Durham. These EIAs are the third of local authorities in England where educational outcomes were the weakest

² July-September 2022

based on sustained low performance across Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in 2017 to 2019.

- 27 The Department for Education (DfE) is prioritising a package of activity in EIAs to support improving attainment in Durham, set out in the Schools White Paper, for EIAs to achieve the fastest progress until 2030 by helping 90% of pupils meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined at Key Stage 2, with an increase of over a third in the lowest performing areas.
- 28 Schools within County Durham have accessed a range of support to improve individual pupil outcomes including:
- (a) The Enhanced Trust and School Improvement Offer which is enabling a placed based approach to increase the proportion of pupils in good and outstanding schools.
 - (b) For schools within the geographical areas of North Durham, Durham City, and Sedgefield area they have accessed up to six days of system leader time complimented by a further funded trust partnership which has provided access of up to £10,000 to individual schools to address underperformance.
 - (c) In addition, schools within these identified locations have accessed the DfE's curriculum reading review. Recommendations from the reviews have identified areas where individual schools can benefit from one of two available funded offers provided by the DfE. These offers were aimed at supporting the effective implementation of phonics or improving Key Stage 2 reading outcomes. The DfE provided funding to Durham County Council to support this process. Schools were allocated up to £6k per school for training, resources and supply cover as required for either the phonics or the Key Stage 2 reading offers.
 - (d) A further £7k was identified per school to help re-stock school and class library provision.
- 29 Almost 38,000 people attended our cultural venues during the quarter, 25% fewer (-12,495) than quarter two. However, visitor numbers fluctuate quarter on quarter due to seasonality and events held in the period.

Our environment

- 30 The aim of this priority is to protect our natural environment, including biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. In 2019, the council declared a climate emergency with a commitment to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 and contribute towards a carbon neutral county by 2045. In April 2022, the council declared an ecological emergency and committed to address ecological decline wherever possible. Our county is of significant

landscape value and supports unique combinations of plant and animal species.

- 31 We collected and disposed of 16,000 fewer tonnes of municipal waste during the latest 12 months compared to the previous year (-6%). We believe this is due to people spending more time in their workplace rather than home working so less waste is entering the domestic waste stream managed by the council, and more is going into private trade waste streams through the workplace. The amount of municipal waste collected is now within 3% (7,500 tonnes) of pre-pandemic levels.

Going Well

- 32 Renewable electricity capacity across the county increased by 2.8MW in 2021, compared to 2020. It is currently just over 231MW, with wind power as the largest contributor (135.4MW, 59%). This includes renewable energy capacity generated through delivery of our own schemes as well as through countywide schemes we are involved in.
- 33 245 fewer properties benefited from an energy efficiency measure this quarter (-31%) which reflects the Local Authority Delivery Scheme Phase 2 coming to an end in September 2022. However, we expect measures funded by the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to help almost 1,200 social housing properties increase their EPC ratings and reduce energy costs by September 2023.

Our people

- 34 The aim of this priority is to help our residents live long and independent lives and remain in good health for as long as possible. We will protect and improve health by tackling the leading causes of illness and early death, inequalities and the challenges around mental health. We will ensure a sustainable high-quality care market and will invest in a multi-million pound programme to transform our leisure centre venues.

Going Well

- 35 In the nine months ending 31 December 2022, 1,134 families were turned around via the Stronger Families programme. 1,039 attained significant and sustained outcomes and 95 maintained continuous employment. We have exceeded the annual 2022/23 target.
- 36 Referral levels to children's social care are in line with the last two years and below benchmarks. Our continued low re-referral rate positively impacts upon this, with fewer children requiring children's social care support for a second or subsequent time. We have not experienced a post-pandemic increase like some of our neighbouring authorities so are undertaking an audit to ensure we are receiving the right referrals at the right time from our partner organisations.

- 37 The rate of adults aged 65+ per 100,000 population admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care continues to reduce. The latest rate of 450 is a reduction on the same period last year (489) and is below target (474). This supports commissioning policy to continue every effort to support people to stay at home for as long as possible.
- 38 The reablement service supports people to maintain their independence for longer periods. In the latest quarter, almost 93% of older people were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services, an increase from 88.3% for the same period last year and the highest proportion since 2015/16.
- 39 The latest smoking prevalence data demonstrates a reduction of 0.8 percentage points compared to pre-pandemic. Data for the latest quarter also shows an increase in people accessing the local Stop Smoking Service, whilst those accessing the service from our most deprived wards has increased to 60% of all clients. The latest overall quit rate has increased to 53%.
- 40 During quarter three we launched a new 'Healthy Weight Pathway' to improve the referral route into adult weight management pathways. It aims to increase activity and healthy eating, as well as provide information on specialist services. We also provided funding to increase the capacity of the Drug and Alcohol recovery service, to deliver initiatives which help support recovery within the criminal justice and domestic abuse systems, and to increase outreach support into local communities.

Areas which require attention

- 41 We continue to see an increasing trend in children in care (1,042). Although high for County Durham, the rate of 102 per 10,000 0-17 population remains lower than in our regional and statistical neighbours. We continue to experience placement pressures and are focusing on increasing capacity within our in-house children's homes, recruiting more foster carers, and working with children and their families to prevent them entering care.
- 42 Some of our children's social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers have higher caseloads than we would like. This is due to more children being supported in statutory safeguarding services³. Increasing complexity and improved practice over the last few years has improved performance in key areas such as our re-referral rate, which has reduced from 28% (one of the top 20 highest in the country in 2019-20) to 16% in the year to date, consistently below our national (22%), regional (21%) and statistical neighbours (20%). Recruitment and retention of social workers is a key area of focus for us.
- 43 Requests for assessments for education, health and care plans (EHCP) have increased by 43% over the last year (966 from 676) and by 63% since

³ children in need, child protection, children in care and care leavers

2019 (594). This has impacted upon our ability to complete EHCPs within the 20 week statutory timescale. We are currently working on our statutory SEN2 data return and national comparative performance data will be published later this year.

- 44 Significantly more requests for EHCP assessments across special education needs and disability services (SEND) are being received, which reflects the national picture. Pressure is compounded by high levels of demand in partner organisations, such as health who are a key part of the assessment process. We have invested in and restructured our SEND Casework Teams and Educational Psychologists, however, there are national shortages for this specialist role.
- 45 Referrals to adult social care have largely been stable between July 2021 and September 2022 (averaging 2,323 per month). However, during quarter three, 5,152 referrals were received, 27% fewer than the same quarter last year (7,059). Further analysis is being undertaken to understand the reasons why and an update will be provided in the next report.
- 46 The proportion of adult social care service users receiving an annual review continues to reduce, with latest data showing that 60.8% of service users receive a timely review of their needs - a reduction from 70.1% for the same period last year. To address this, a new central Review Team has been created to provide additional resource.
- 47 During quarter three, 92% of individuals achieved their desired outcomes from the adult safeguarding process. This is lower than 12 months ago (93%) and is also lower than the England average for 2021/22 (95%). As performance varies across safeguarding teams, further analysis is being undertaken to examine this decline and an update will be provided in the next report.
- 48 Of the 922 Care Act assessments completed within quarter three, 61% were recorded on Azeus as completed within the 28-day timeframe. There may be legitimate reasons for an assessment not being recorded as complete within the recommended timescale, however, timeliness of completion continues to be a key focus. For the same period last year, 64.6% of initial assessments were recorded as completed within 28 days. Ongoing practice guidance, system review and issue of new IT equipment are supporting staff to ensure that completed assessments are updated on the care management system in a timely manner.
- 49 Admissions under the Mental Health Act for assessment (Section 2) or treatment (Section 3) continue to be higher than pre-pandemic (179 detentions in quarter three 2019/20 compared to 198 detentions in the latest quarter). Work continues to support people with low-level mental health issues associated with bereavement, social isolation and the challenges to financial resilience.

- 50 Visitor numbers to our leisure centres were 27% lower than target (-232,153) due to closures over the Christmas period, the temporary closure of Abbey Leisure Centre and restricted activity at Spennymoor, both due to transformation works and potentially the current economic crisis.
- 51 Gym memberships were 12% below target (-2,349), impacted by the financial climate, seasonal trends, the closure of Abbey Leisure Centre and increased competition from budget gyms. Cancellation feedback for gym memberships is now in place, currently there are no clear reasons why members have cancelled, which mirrors the position prior to COVID.

Our communities

- 52 The aim of this priority is to ensure our communities are well connected and supportive of each other, with vibrant and accessible towns and villages which are well-used, clean, attractive and safe. We will support our most vulnerable residents, particularly those isolated or financially vulnerable. We will maintain a strong focus on tackling poverty throughout the cost-of-living crisis.

Going Well

- 53 Although there have been fewer net housing completions due to volatility within the housing market, we remain on track to achieve 1,308 net completions per annum. The decline in completions is partly due to higher interest rates impacting mortgage availability and the size of deposits, and rising inflation impacting construction costs. During quarter three, 54 empty properties brought back into use.
- 54 We are continuing to help residents and communities through the cost-of-living crisis with various initiatives and funds. During quarter three, we provided £200,000 of grant funding to establish a network of 175 warm spaces. The household support fund enabled us to distribute food vouchers worth £110 to more than 28,500 households eligible for free school meals. And despite the challenging financial environment, our 2023/24 budget continues to support low-income households through our Council Tax Reduction Scheme and maximises health and social care funds for the benefit of our vulnerable clients.
- 55 24% of properties covered by our selective licensing scheme (launched 1 April 2022) are fully licenced, and a further 6% have submitted applications. Since approval of the scheme was approved, the rate of anti-social behaviour within designated areas has increased by 14% (compared to 16% countywide).

Our council

- 56 The aim of this priority is to make us an excellent council - with effective governance arrangements, a good grip on our performance and finances,

and a workforce fit for the future making best use of the latest technology to provide an effective service. As an organisation, we will listen to the views of our residents and service users and take them into account in our decision-making.

- 57 However, the council's low tax raising capacity continues to place pressure on our budgets. If core spending power 'per dwelling' across the county was raised to the England average of £2,360 (+£167), the council would receive an additional £42 million each year.
- 58 We are continuing with our data analytics project which will provide interactive dashboards and combine data at a person level to give new insights about our residents and service users. This data driven approach will result in better services for customers, better value for money, and more joined up service delivery. Social care has been prioritised and we expect new reports to go live in these areas in the new year.

Going Well

- 59 More than 100 new apprentices have been recruited since August, and our apprentice retention rate remains at 71%. Our new Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Policy, which will be launched in April 2023, aims to increase apprenticeship uptake across local businesses.
- 60 2.7% of our workforce is currently enrolled on our apprenticeship programme (484 employees) - 270 are new to the organisation, 214 are existing staff upskilling.

Areas which require attention

- 61 Our latest sickness absence rate is 12.05 days per full-time equivalent. This is higher than both the rate last year (10.85 days) and the pre-pandemic rate (10.87 days) – mainly driven by increases in 'mental health and fatigue' and COVID-related illness. However, 76% of staff had less than five sick days in the last 12 months and 57% had none.
- 62 Compared to pre-pandemic, almost 7,000 additional days were lost due to 'mental health and fatigue' (+27%) – in the main this was non-work related across the areas of stress, anxiety disorders, depression, fatigue and exhaustion.
- 63 COVID-related sickness made up 11% of reported sickness over the last 12 months (10,479 additional days) and added 1.5 days to the overall rate. This is higher than the same period last year, when COVID-related sickness added one day to the overall rate. If we adjust the rate by removing COVID-related sickness, the rate is 10.52 days, broadly in line with the pre-pandemic rate.
- 64 Performance Development Reviews (PDRs) continue to be an integral part of manager-employee engagement alongside one-to-ones, supervisions,

and team meetings. 93 leaders (83%) completed the new cycle in line with the deadline of 31 December 2022.

- 65 Customer contacts through our reported channels⁴ continue to be skewed by the transfer of telephone lines to our automated call distribution system. However, we estimate customer contact has increased by around 5% (an additional 62,000 calls). Services which experienced increased levels of contact compared to the pre-pandemic year include council tax and benefits, the Emergency Duty Team, and welfare assistance.
- 66 Although most contact is non-digital (75% is by telephone, 3% face to face), the proportion of contact that is digital has increased over the last two years. Most of this change was driven by the pandemic with more service requests available through do-it-online, and the launch and increasing popularity of webchat. Digital contact now makes up 22% of all contact, compared to 15% pre-pandemic. 42,000 additional customers have registered for do-it-online (up 32%), an additional 46,000 for the open portal system (up 137%) and a further 35,000 to receive council tax bills via e-mail (up 98%).
- 67 Conversely, contact through our Customer Access Points (CAPs) is around two-thirds of the pre-pandemic volume. We are currently consulting on our [proposal to reduce the hours in four of our least used CAPs](#).
- 68 We are continuing to receive high volume of applications for Welfare Assistance and Discretionary Housing Payments. Additional funding provided under a new Council Tax Support Fund has enabled us to reduce council tax bills by up to £50 in 2023/24, for residents who receive Local Council Tax Reduction but still have council tax to pay. This level of support is double the £25 recommended by the government.

Performance Indicators – Summary

- 69 A summary table of the performance indicators in the report is included here:

⁴ contacts received through the ACD, face to face through our CAPs, do-it-online, webchat, social media and email.

		Direction of Travel (12 months previous)				Direction of Travel (pre-COVID)			
		Not available	Improving	Static	Deteriorating	Not available	Improving	Static	Deteriorating
Performance to Target	No target set – tracker	35	37	16	28	50	29	11	26
	Meeting or exceeding target	4	22	3	4	6	19	3	5
	Within 2% of target								
	More than 2% behind target	2	6	1	7	1	3	2	10

Risk Management

- 70 Effective risk management is a vital component of the council's agenda. The council's risk management process sits alongside our change programme and is incorporated into all significant change and improvement projects. The latest report can be found [here](#).

Background papers

- County Durham Vision (County Council, 23 October 2019)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s115064/Draft%20Durham%20Vision%20v10.0.pdf>

Other useful documents

- Council Plan 2022 to 2026 (current plan)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=56529>
- Quarter Two, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s166398/Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20Q2%202022-23%20v2.1.pdf>
- Quarter One, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s161902/Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20Q1%202022-23%20Revised.pdf>
- Quarter Four, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s157533/Year%20End%20performance%20report%202021-22.pdf>
- Quarter Three, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s152742/Performance%20Report%202021-22%20003.pdf>

Author

Steve Evans

Contact: steve.evans@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

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

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Climate Change

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

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

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

Staffing

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

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

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

Procurement

Not applicable.



Durham County Council

Performance Management

Report

Quarter Three, 2022/23



1.0 Our Economy: National, Regional & Local Picture

- 1 Latest data (Sept 2022) shows an increase in the employment rate to 74.3% (+1.9pp) but it is not statistically significant. Bringing it 3.1 percentage points above the North East rate (an increase in the gap on last quarter (+1.3pp)) and further narrowing the gap with the national rate of 75.7% which remained static.
- 2 The employment rate across County Durham for those with a disability is almost 48%, much lower than the employment rate for those without a disability (81%), and below the England average of 57%. The gap with England has widened over the last two years. We continue to support people with disabilities back into work through our Employability Programmes, specifically Durham Enable; and as an employer through our corporate working group 'Supporting People with Disabilities'.
- 3 The unemployment rate remained static against the previous quarter at 4.2% following a period of decline from December 2020 and remains below the regional rate (4.9%) but above the national rate (3.8%). Economic inactivity has also decrease over the past six months, suggesting people are moving back into the labour market. However, these changes have not been statistically significant as they remain within the confidence intervals for the data.
- 4 Latest data relating to 2021 stands the County Durham rate of private sector employments per 10,000 population at 2,877 against the national rate of 4,044. Both rates have increased after falling between 2019-2020 but as the County Durham rate has increased to a greater extent, the gap between the County Durham and national rate has contracted. This trend is in line with the increase in the rate of private sector businesses seen between 2020 and 2021 which grew to a greater extent in the county than at the national level. The increase in private sector businesses and employments in the county are reflective of the growth in the demand for premises and delivery of new employment sites in 2020/21, e.g., Jade Business Park and Integra 61.
- 5 The outcome of round two of the government's £2.1 billion levelling up fund was announced in January 2022. Analysis of funding by region shows the North East received the second lowest level (£108 million) with only Northern Ireland receiving less (£71 million). None of County Durham's bids were successful (although we did get a successful bid in round one) – the government changed their approach after bids were submitted so any council which received funding in round one was excluded from round two. However, we are continuing to explore alternative funding options and delivery mechanisms - whilst awaiting details for the next round of funding.
- 6 The first set of post covid Key Stage 2 data were published in December allowing comparative analysis against national and regional and nearest neighbour

benchmarks. In 2022, 73% of County Durham Key Stage 2 children reached the expected standard in reading lower than comparators and lower but similar to 2019 levels. In maths, the proportion reaching the expected standard reduced considerably to 71% from 80% in 2019. This decrease is also evidenced in our comparators (71% from 79% nationally and 72% from 81% regionally).

- 7 The 2021/22 academic year saw the return of the summer exam series, after they had been cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, where alternative processes were set up to award grades (centre assessment grades, known as CAGs, and teacher assessed grades, known as TAGs). As part of the transition back to the summer exam series adaptations were made to the exams (including advance information) and the approach to grading for 2022 exams broadly reflected a midpoint between results in 2019 and 2021. Given the unprecedented change in the way GCSE results were awarded in the summers of 2020 and 2021, as well as the changes to grade boundaries and methods of assessment for 2021/22, caution should be used when considering comparisons over time, as they may not reflect changes in pupil performance alone. In 2021/22, 45% of Key Stage 4 pupils in County Durham achieved a 9-5 pass in English and maths slightly lower than statistical neighbours (48%), England (47%) and the North East region (46%).
- 8 The levelling up white paper 2022 has identified 55 education investment areas which includes County Durham. These EIAs are the third of local authorities in England where educational outcomes were the weakest based on sustained low performance across Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in 2017 to 2019.
- 9 The DfE is prioritising a package of activity in EIAs to support improving attainment in Durham, set out in the Schools White Paper, for EIAs to achieve the fastest progress until 2030 by helping 90% of pupils meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined at Key Stage 2, with an increase of over a third in the lowest performing areas.
- 10 Schools within County Durham have accessed a range of support to improve individual pupil outcomes including:
 - The Enhanced Trust and School Improvement Offer which has enabling a placed based approach to increase the proportion of pupils in good and outstanding schools.
 - For schools within the geographical areas of North Durham, Durham City, and Sedgefield area they have accessed up to six days of system leader time complimented by a further funded trust partnership which has provided access of up to £10,000 to individual schools to address underperformance.
 - In addition, schools within these identified locations have accessed the DfE's curriculum reading review. Recommendations from the reviews have identified areas where individual schools can benefit from one of two available funded offers provided by the DfE. These offers were aimed at supporting the effective

implementation of phonics or improving Key Stage 2 reading outcomes. The DfE provided funding to Durham County Council to support this process. Schools were allocated up to £6k per school for training, resources and supply cover as required for either the Phonics or the Key Stage 2 reading offers.

- A further £7k was identified per school to help re-stock school and class library provision.

1.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Business Durham Floor Space

- 11 95% of floor space is occupied: quarter four target rent and surplus is on course for the end of year.

Businesses supported and jobs created through regeneration projects

- 12 During quarter three, 40 businesses were supported, and 30 FTEs created. Three businesses were supported by Targeted Business Improvement funding, 31 by Towns & Villages Programme and two each from Seaham Townscape Heritage Programme, Property Refuse Scheme (PRS) and Conservation Area Grant Scheme (CAGs).
- 13 1,162 square metres of business space was also brought back into use as a result of businesses supported via PRS.
- 14 Over the same period, we engaged with 40 new retail businesses.

Business Durham: activity during quarter three

- 15 170 businesses were engaged and 44 assisted. Engagement events included North East Satellite Applications Centre who engaged with 21 businesses during quarter three.
- 16 81 jobs were created / safeguarded during quarter three (18 created and 63 safeguarded). Although significantly lower than the quarterly profiled target of 375, the cumulative figure for 2022/23 is 1,339 which is higher than the target for this period. Business Durham remains on track to achieve its annual target of 1,500.

Employability programmes

- 17 324 people were registered onto our employability programmes during July-September 2022; increases of 54% (114) compared to the previous reporting period, 70% (133) compared to the same period last year and 27% (68) above pre-COVID levels. The increase is due to delivery partners engaging more with their clients onto the LINKCD programme as well as more registrations on the Durham Advance Programme, including registrations from people on the Ukrainian settlement scheme

looking for work. Despite this we are still struggling for referrals from JCP as people continue to find jobs themselves before they register onto our programmes due to a healthy labour market and the majority of clients mandated to the Government's Restart Programme.

- 18 122 people progressed into employment; increases of 34% (31) compared to the last reporting period, 24% (29) compared to the same period last year and 64% (59) above pre-COVID levels. This is due to an increase in capacity of the Durham Advance programme that has allowed us to work with more clients and support them into employment. 29 people progressed into education or training, an increase of 314% (22), mainly through our delivery partners on the L!NKCD programme.

Better Health at Work Award

- 19 The main conduit for supporting workplace health across the county is the Better Health at Work Award. The council is both a signatory to the award and a facilitator of the award to external workplaces.
- 20 There are currently 76 organisations (with over 39,000 employees collectively) signed up to and active in the Award within County Durham. 151 new Health Advocates within those organisations have also received training. County Durham compares very favourably to other Northeast councils in terms of participation in and reach of the Award. The county has achieved both the highest number of businesses signed up as Award participants and the greatest number of health advocates trained per Local Authority area. Latest data showed that almost a fifth of regional businesses signed up were located within County Durham.

Tourism businesses actively engaged with Visit County Durham

- 21 The promote of our cultural and tourism offer for both visitors and our community and raising the profile of our County as a key UK visitor destination are an important part of our economic growth plans within the Inclusive Economic Strategy.
- 22 At the end of quarter three, there were c850 core tourism businesses across the county compared to the 2021 baseline of 591. The increase being due to businesses reopening following COVID closures.
- 23 27% (230) of tourism businesses were actively engaged with Visit County Durham via our paid for partnership scheme. However, broader active engagement extends to over 90% of businesses through local business support programmes and national initiatives targeted at the visitor economy.
- 24 The impact of COVID during this time and the subsequent cost of living crisis has impacted on the profitability of businesses and therefore the willingness to participate in the paid membership scheme.

Festivals

- 25 Durham Book Festival (13-15 October) involved 30 live events at the Gala Theatre and Clayport Library. Most events were also live streamed so people could watch from home. 2,843 people attended the live events, generating an economic impact of £81,346, a 108% return on our £75,000 investment.
- 26 BRASS festival (10-17 July), a free and ticketed event, attracted 35,645 visitors. The festival generated an economic impact of £321,474, a 268% return on our £120,000 investment.
- 27 Seaham Food Festival (4-7 August) involved 119 stall holders, a programme of food demonstrations by celebrity chefs and outdoor performances and music. The festival attracted 28,120 visitors and generated a total economic impact of £434,789, a 589% return on our £73,789 investment.

Theatres: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire⁵

- 28 Ticket sales are up 14% on last year, with an average of 100 tickets sold for each screening/performance held during the quarter, compared to 88 in quarter two. Ticket sales are on par with the same period pre covid (103, December 2019). Ticket sales were boosted due to a successful Panto Season at both the Gala and Empire, with the Empire seeing record breaking attendance figures. Cinema sales have increased slightly with an average of 29 tickets sold compared to 24 last quarter. We are looking at options to address cinema attendance by taking a different approach to programming and are scheduled to roll out an Events Cinema pilot during the coming months that will offer customers not only new releases but film genres, for example romantic films to coincide with Valentines.
- 29 Across the three venues, respondents rated the following as 'good' or 'very good':

	Overall	Gala	Bishop Auckland	Empire
Ticket booking experience	96%	95%	95%	97%
Staff welcome	93%	91%	96%	95%
Food and drink facilities	72%	69%	77%	76%
Quality of event	90%	85%	84%	98%
Value for money	92%	88%	91%	98%
Whole Experience	92%	89%	90%	98%

- 30 Specific customer feedback was received through the satisfaction survey. Recurring issues were poor toilet facilities, long queues for food and drink, and the auditorium temperature (too cold).

- 31 Also, some customers felt we were under-selling the shows and suggested that events could be better advertised with more information about the event provided.

1.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Visits to council owned cultural venues during quarter three

- 32 There were 37,834 visits during the quarter, 25% (12,495) less than quarter two. However, visitor numbers fluctuate quarter on quarter due to seasonality and events held in the period
- Killhope: 1,280 visitors (October only) – the 2022 season (April-October) was its best performance for many years with attendance figures reaching 12,995, compared to 10,640 in 2021. An increase in visitors of 2,355 (22%).
 - DLI Collection at Sevenhills: 7,640 visitors – a decrease of 31% (3,423) on quarter two which had higher education figures. Also, Palace Green library exhibition was quieter during quarter three due to Christmas closures and no temporary exhibitions taking place.
 - Durham Town Hall: 6,348 visitors – although 4% (241), less than the previous quarter, quarter two figures included visitors to the Durham Fringe Festival and graduation parties from the University.
 - Bishop Auckland Town Hall: 22,566 visitors – 12% (3,218) lower than quarter two due to the opening of the Spanish Gallery restaurant and new café which is close to the Town Hall and Auckland Castle Café stopping ticketing entry. Poor weather and heating issues in the Town Hall also impacted visitor numbers.

1.3 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

Inclusive Economic Strategy

- 33 The new Inclusive Economic Strategy was formally adopted in December 2022.
- 34 Delivery plans will now be developed in partnership, based on the strategy's five thematic areas of People, Productivity, Places, Promotion, and Planet.

Investments

- 35 During quarter three, County Durham Growth Fund awarded three businesses grants totalling £330k, forecasting an additional 28 jobs to be created with a further nine small and medium enterprises (SME) receiving a combined grant of £578,509 from the Fund. The Finance Durham Fund invested £900k as part of a £2.1m investment

in Castle View Training based at Drum Industrial Estate in Chester-le-Street, and £7,500 in Lexi Menswear and through the Digital Drive Programme 14 businesses received at least 12 hours support and 22 companies received grant offers totalling over £70,000.

Funding

- 36 All five bids for round two of the Levelling Up Fund were unsuccessful. We are taking some time to review our ambitious Levelling Up Programme and to consider carefully alternative potential suitable future funding opportunities and delivery mechanisms.
- 37 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan was approved by Government in December. Work continues to identify spend for year 1 (2022/23) and develop an investment framework for the remaining programme.
- 38 The Rural England Prosperity Fund addendum was submitted to Government in November. The fund provides £3.5 million of capital funding to support micro and small businesses, tourism infrastructure projects, and community facilities within rural areas.
- 39 We were awarded £1.6 million from the Arts Council England and chosen as National Portfolio Organisation 2023-2026 and a core supporter of the body's Lets Create strategy to develop creativity for all. The grant will be used to expand cultural opportunities across the county.

2.0 Our Environment: National, Regional & Local Picture

- 40 Renewable electricity capacity increased across the County in 2021 to just over 231 MW, with wind power as the largest contributor (135.4MW, 58.6%). Since 2014 when this data was first released, capacity in the County has increased by 18% (35.2MW). This includes renewable energy capacity generated through delivery of our own schemes as well as through countywide schemes we are involved in.

2.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Carbon Reduction

- 41 The Business Energy Efficiency Programme, which provides advice and grants to local businesses, has reduced carbon emissions by more than 1,000 tonnes since 2019. Demand for the service remains high due to the current energy crisis.

Carbon Emissions

- 42 The solar farm with battery storage at Morrison Busty Depot is due to be completed in February 2023.

- 43 Bids to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Phase 3b have been submitted and we are awaiting the announcement of the outcome. A previous scheme delivered under the PSDS at Woodland primary school where air source heat pumps and a solar PV system were installed in December 2021 has reduced energy costs to the school by 30% (£3,500) and carbon emissions by almost 17 tonnes.

Energy efficiency advice and support

- 44 129 households were helped to save an average of £179 during quarter three (through Managing Money Better). More people contacted the scheme about fuel debt issues, and almost £5,600 of savings linked to fuel debt write-offs and vouchers were claimed within the quarter.
- 45 546 properties benefited from an energy efficiency measure this quarter, 31% (245) less than quarter two due to the Local Authority Delivery Scheme Phase 2 (LAD2) coming to an end in September 2022. Measures are currently funded via the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund that is expected to help 1,164 social housing properties increase EPC ratings to reduce energy costs by September 2023.

Accreditations and Awards

- 46 The council was awarded Overall Outstanding Achiever (Large Organisation) at the 2022 Investors in the Environment award ceremony – in recognition of a wide array of environmental projects and initiatives to improve the council's sustainability and protect and enhance County Durham's environment.

2.2 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

Waste

- 47 6% (16,000 tonnes) less municipal waste tonnage was collected and disposed of during the latest 12 months compared to the previous year and is within 3% (7,500 tonnes) of pre-pandemic levels. This decrease is believed to be due to people now spending more time in the workplace rather than home working - less waste entering the domestic waste stream managed by the council, and more going into private trade waste streams through the workplace.
- 48 Capacity issues continue at the energy from waste plant, impacting the proportion of waste diverted from landfill. This is a regional issue due to a higher level of local authority waste, as County Durham has the highest population in the area it also has the highest input into the plant. When tonnages collected across the region reduce and capacity improves it is hoped that the diversion rate will also improve.

- 49 Although the contamination rate is below the same period last year, it has increased slightly on last quarter (by one percentage point) and continues to be above the pre-covid rate of 29.95%. Bin stickers showing which items should be placed in each bin have been distributed to all households as part of the countywide contamination campaign. Phase two is now underway, this involves rejecting and removing contaminated bins, supported by recycling assistants' door knocking and advising residents.

Air Quality

- 50 The deterioration in air quality, from 96% in 2020 to 65% in 2021, within the Durham City air quality management area was mainly due to the city returning to normal routines and working patterns post-covid, and changes to traffic flows whilst works to Elvet Bridge were being completed. Air quality results show an improvement on the pre-covid (2019) position of 54%.

Street cleansing surveys (July-October)

- 51 The latest survey showed an increase in dog fouling, and we have responded with targeted patrols in the known problem areas. We are consulting on expanding [The Public Space Protection Order for dog ownership](#) until 13 March.

National recycling award

- 52 Our Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) recycling project won 'Campaign of the Year' at the National Recycling Awards (it was also shortlisted for a 2022 LARAC6 Award). 130 collection points are available across the county.

3.0 Our People: National, Regional & Local Picture

- 53 In the year to date we have received almost 20,000 contacts for early help and children's social care at First Contact, the children's services front door. This is similar to the last two years. In addition, we launched an electronic children's partner portal in October, where our partner organisations can manage and request early help assessments. There have been almost 500 recorded so far.
- 54 Almost 3,700 statutory children's social care referrals have been received in the last 9 months. This is similar to the last two years. The rolling annual rate per 10,000 children (488, n=4,980) is lower than in our benchmarks (England: 538, SN: 608 and NE: 644).

- 55 The rates of children in need, children on a child protection plan and children in care (per 10,000 children) remain higher than national averages but below our regional and statistical neighbours.

	Q3 22/23	2021/22		
	County Durham	England	Statistical Neighbours	North East
Children in need	386	334	445	471
Children on a child protection plan	52	42	62	63
Children in care	102	70	107	110

- 56 The latest data from the National Child Measurement Programme has been released which demonstrates that the percentage of children in Reception who are of a healthy weight has increased from two years ago (last available data) by 0.9 percentage points. Children in Year 6, of a healthy weight has, however, decreased by 2.3 percentage points over the same period. A decrease was expected due to reduced physical activity over the pandemic period, however, neither the changes in Reception nor Year 6 children are significant.

3.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Adult Social Care

- 57 We continue to perform highly against the indicator for the rate of adults aged 65+ per 100,000 population admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care. The latest rate of 449.9 per 100,000 is a reduction on the same period last year and is also lower than the target (lower is better) of 474.5 per 100,000. While we have seen a reduction in the number of people admitted to permanent residential care since the onset of the pandemic, the continuing low numbers suggest that we are maintaining peoples' independence for longer. It also supports our commissioning policy to continue every effort to support people to stay at home for as long as possible.
- 58 The percentage of older people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services (92.9% in the latest quarter) is the highest since 2015/16. The number of people discharged into reablement is, however, the lowest over the same period. This is due to a variety of factors including issues with staff turnover and recruitment and the consequent reduced capacity of the commissioned service provider. A review of reablement services is due to take place from quarter two, 2023/24, which will consider these issues.

Smoking

- 59 The latest smoking prevalence data demonstrates a reduction of 0.8 percentage points from before the pandemic, however the smoking rate continues to be higher than both the regional and national averages. Data for the latest quarter demonstrates an increase in people accessing the local Stop Smoking Service, whilst those accessing the service from our most deprived wards has increased to 60% of all clients. The latest quit rate has increased to 53%.
- 60 During quarter three, the Stop Smoking Service worked with Business Durham to communicate campaigns such as Don't Wait and Stoptober in routine and manual workplaces. This aims to tackle higher smoking rates across this section of the workforce.
- 61 The new contract for FRESH is to be procured across local authorities in the Northeast to increase the impact of local campaigns on smoking prevalence.

Breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks

- 62 The breastfeeding rate has increased slightly compared to the previous year (30.2% to 30.5%). However, the gap with both the regional and national averages has increased due to greater increases elsewhere.
- 63 Local insight is being gathered to better understand barriers to breastfeeding initiation and continuation. This detailed work will focus on decisions relating to infant feeding and what influences these decisions. Increasing breastfeeding rates continues to be a key priority for the family hubs, with partners working together to address breastfeeding at a system level to influence change.

Improving Healthy Life Expectancy

- 64 Healthy life expectancy at birth (2018-20) in County Durham for men (58.8 years) and women (59.9 years) is statistically significantly worse than England (63.1 years and 63.9 years respectively) and has shown no significant change over time.
- 65 Healthy life expectancy at 65 (2018-20) in County Durham for men (10.2 years) is statistically significantly worse than England (10.5 years). There has been no significant change over time in male healthy life expectancy at 65, locally or nationally. However, healthy life expectancy at 65 in County Durham for women (10.2 years) is not statistically significantly different to England (11.3 years).
- 66 To support life expectancy, more than 1,000 people per month are participating in their local [NHS Health Check](#) programme, available within GP practices for those aged 40-74. Although above pre-pandemic levels, much of the increase is clearing the backlog.

Children's Social Care

- 67 In children's social care, referral rates per 10,000 0-17 year olds remain similar to the last two years and below benchmarks. Improved practice over the last few years has led to better performance in key areas such as our re-referral rate, which has reduced from 28% and in the top 20 highest in the country in 2019-20 to 16% in the year to date and this is now consistently below our national (22%), regional (21%) and statistical neighbours (20%). This means fewer children and their families require further support from safeguarding services following support. As we haven't seen an increase following COVID like some of our neighbouring local authorities a multi-agency audit is ongoing, led by the Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership, to assure ourselves that we are receiving the right referrals at the right time from our partner organisations.

Stronger Families Programme

- 68 Between April and December 2022, 1,134 families were turned around via the Stronger Families programme 1,039 attained significant and sustained outcomes and 95 maintained continuous employment. We have already surpassed our annual national target of 760 families turned around.

3.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Adult Social Care

- 69 Overall referrals to the Adult Social Care service (including to Mental Health services) have decreased since June 2021 due to a change in recording practices. Whilst the number of referrals per month have largely been stable between July 2021 and September 2022 (average of 2,323 per month) we have experienced a significant reduction in the latest quarter. In quarter three, 2021/22, we received 7,059 referrals; however, the current quarter three period has seen 5,152 referrals to the service, a reduction of 27%. Work is being undertaken to analyse the latest data to enable greater insight into this issue. Provisionally, it appears that the reduction in demand can be attributed to Mental Health services.
- 70 Care Act assessments are expected to be completed for adult social care service users within a 28-day period to understand their appropriate needs. In quarter three, 922 Care Act assessments were completed by the service, of which 60.5% were recorded as completed within the timeframe. Whilst this continues the increase over the last three quarters, it is lower than the same period last year (64.6%). Ongoing practice guidance, system review and issue of new IT equipment are supporting staff to ensure that completed assessments are updated on the care management system in a timely manner.

- 71 Adult social care service users are expected to receive a review of their care needs every 12 months. Latest data outlines that the proportion of adult social care service users receiving an annual review continues to remain low at 60.8%. This has reduced from 70.1% in the same period last year, itself a reduction from the previous 12 months (quarter three, 2020/21: 92.7%). Whilst the pandemic is likely to have inflated the 2020/21 figure, the average over the last five years is 81.5%. To address this, a new central Review Team has been created to provide additional resource.
- 72 As part of the adult safeguarding process, individuals are asked about their completion. The percentage of individuals achieving their desired outcomes from the adult safeguarding process has continued to decrease, with results at 91.7% for quarter three. This is lower than 12 months ago (92.6%) and is also lower than the England average for 2021/22 (95.4). As performance varies across safeguarding teams, further analysis of the data and data quality is being undertaken to examine this decline.
- 73 Results for this indicator are based on where the outcomes of the individual have been fully or partially met. In some situations, the expectations of the individual may be unachievable given the nature / level of abuse, or outside the remit of the local authority or partner agencies.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

- 74 Admissions under the Mental Health Act for assessment (Section 2) or treatment (Section 3) continue to be higher than pre-pandemic (179 detentions in quarter 3 2019/20 compared to 198 detentions in the latest quarter); however, there has been an overall reduction for the last six months.
- 75 The Mental Health Alliance has continued to support people with low-level mental health issues associated with bereavement, social isolation and the challenges to financial resilience. The [‘Now You’re Talking’](#) campaign has been used to encourage people to talk about their own mental health and wellbeing, helping them to increase their personal resilience during times of need.
- 76 The Mental Health Strategic Partnership has instigated new governance arrangements for the mental health of children and young people, suicide prevention, urgent care, dementia and resilient communities in the county. Public Health has also supported the development of the first Durham University Suicide Prevention Strategy which was approved by the University Council in January 2023.

Children’s Social Care

- 77 Some of our children’s social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers have higher caseloads than we would like due to higher numbers of children being supported in statutory safeguarding services throughout children in need, child protection, children in care and care leavers. There were 48 social work vacancies at

the end of December 2022; recruitment and retention of Social Workers is a key area of focus for us.

- 78 Despite increasing caseload pressures, we are assured our social workers continue to see children in line with statutory timescales through regular performance monitoring and our managers have oversight of children's cases.
- 79 We continue to see an increasing trend in children in care (n=1042), and whilst this is high for County Durham the rate of 102 per 10,000 0-17 population remains lower than in our regional and statistical neighbours. We continue to experience placement pressures and are focusing on increasing capacity within our in-house children's homes, recruiting more foster carers, and working with children and their families to prevent them entering care.
- 80 The national transfer scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) continues with 29 of our children in care having a UASC status; this will further increase over the rest of the year, as we take UASC into the care of the council in line with national Home Office targets.
- 81 More children in care continues to impact upon placement and financial pressures (which are also reflected both regionally and nationally). We continue to implement our transformation plans with the aim of increasing capacity within our in-house children's homes, recruiting more foster carers, and early work with children and their families to prevent them entering care.

SEND

- 82 In Special Education Needs and Disability Services (SEND), we continue to see sustained growth in requests for EHCP assessments with significant increases over the last few years which are also evidenced nationally. Pressure is compounded by high levels of demand in partner organisations, such as health who are a key part of the assessment process. We have invested in and restructured our SEND Casework Teams and Educational Psychologists, however there are national shortages for this specialist role.
- 83 This year we have seen an 43% increase in requests for assessments for Education, Health and Care Plans in the last year alone (966 from 676) and an 63% increase since 2019 (594). This significant increase in demand has impacted upon our ability to complete EHCPs within the 20-week statutory timescale. We are currently working on our statutory SEN2 data return and national comparative performance data will be available when this is published later this year.

Housing Solutions

- 84 3,311 households accessed the Housing Solutions service this quarter which is 437 fewer (-12%) than quarter two. Almost half related to housing advice and

homelessness. Other contact related to general tenancy advice, empty homes and regeneration and home improvement.

- 85 The number of households that have been helped to stay in their home decreased by 47% (9) on last quarter due to limited options being available for negotiation/mediation with landlords/friends or family to help the clients remain in their home.
- 86 The number of households that were helped to move into alternative accommodation decreased by 5% (12) due to the time taken to achieve a positive outcome resulting in some cases that would ordinarily be prevented from homeless within 56 days moving to relief stage (becoming homeless).
- 87 We are currently reviewing our prevention offer with the aim of identifying increased options to address the main reasons for client being threatened with homelessness which will hopefully then see a reduction in cases actually becoming homeless.

Rough Sleepers

- 88 Eight individuals were identified as rough sleepers on a single night during quarter three⁷. This is three fewer than last year.

Leisure Centres

- 89 Visitor numbers in quarter three (672,487) were 27% (232,153) lower than target due to transformation works at Abbey and Spennymoor Leisure Centres, contamination incidents leading to pool closure at Chester-le-Street and the Christmas closures. The current economic crisis is also potentially impacting on visitor numbers.
- 90 In quarter three, gym memberships (17,566) were 12% (2,349) lower than target. Targets were set for continued growth in line with our recovery plan, however, it has proven difficult to hit this target given the financial climate, the time of year (seasonal trends affecting the leisure industry), and increased competition from budget gyms across the county. The continued closure of Abbey Leisure Centre for transformation works is also impacting figures.

3.3 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

Drugs and Alcohol

- 91 The number of people accessing inpatient detoxification and residential rehabilitation has increased significantly. Successful completions for those leaving treatment remain above England averages for those who use opiates, alcohol and non-opiates.

⁷ National Rough Sleeper Count

- 92 A Health Needs Assessment to inform a new operational delivery plan for addressing drug and alcohol harms across County Durham and Darlington has been completed.
- 93 Funding will increase the capacity of the Drug and Alcohol recovery service, deliver initiatives which help support recovery within the criminal justice and domestic abuse systems, and increase outreach support into local communities.

Healthy Weight and Physical Activity

- 94 A new [‘Healthy Weight Pathway in County Durham’](#) has been developed to help healthcare professionals refer and signpost residents of all ages. This has been produced following feedback from health professionals which outlined the need to improve the referral route into adult weight management pathways. It aims to increase activity and healthy eating, as well as provide information on specialist services.
- 95 County Durham has been selected as the first Northeast local authority to pilot a sector led improvement framework. The pilot, commencing in February 2023, will support a ‘whole systems approach’ to improving physical activity levels.
- 96 The Healthy Options Takeaway (HOT) pilot, a programme aiming to provide healthy food options within takeaways in County Durham, has been evaluated with the recommendation that it becomes an award across County Durham.
- 97 82 schools are now part of the ‘Active 30’ programme. Focus is now on engaging the 11 and over age group. To date, two secondary schools are involved.

Community Wealth Building Work

- 98 We are working in partnership with both of the local NHS trusts to provide meaningful employment opportunities for those who are economically inactive (including those with health issues). The latest work focuses on recruitment practices.

4.0 Our Communities: National, Regional & Local Picture

- 99 Although there have been fewer net housing completions due to volatility within the housing market, we remain on track to achieve 1,308 net completions per annum. The decline in completions is partly due to higher interest rates impacting mortgage availability and the size of deposits, and rising inflation impacting construction costs.

4.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Warm Spaces

- 100 We have provided £200,000 of grant funding to community groups to establish a network of 175 Warm Spaces. These spaces, which include our 39 libraries, will help people throughout the winter by providing places where they can get warm, stay warm and enjoy a little company.

Empty properties

- 101 Of the 54 empty properties brought back into use, 41 involved advice and negotiation and 13 by other means including RDGS⁸ inspections, CDLA⁹ interventions, loans and working with registered providers.

Selective Licensing (in effect from 1 April 2022)

- 102 6,712 properties are now fully licenced, equating to an estimated 24% of all properties covered by the scheme. A further 1,600 applications are in the system, which equates to a further 6% of properties.
- 103 Since the scheme was approved in December 2021, the rate of anti-social behaviour incidents within selective licensing designated areas¹⁰ has increased by 14%. This compares to a 16% increase across the county.

4.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- 104 ASB continues to be defined through three strands: environmental¹¹ ASB which makes up 66% of the total, nuisance¹² which makes up 28% and personal¹³ which makes up 6%.
- 105 Reports across all strands remain higher than pre-pandemic. Environmental ASB is 69% higher, nuisance ASB is 9% higher and personal ASB is 56% higher. This reflects the national picture.

⁸ Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme

⁹ County Durham Lettings Agency

¹⁰ This is a specific sub-set of ASB. It differs in that it does not contain stray dogs, stray horses, abandoned shopping trolleys, graffiti, criminal damage or pollution. It is also limited to council, fire and police data whereas the overall reports of ASB contains some housing association data.

¹¹ Criminal damage/vandalism/graffiti, environmental cleanliness (e.g., litter, dog-fouling, fly-tipping (both public and private land), abandoned shopping trolleys, discarded drug paraphernalia), abandoned cars, pollution (smoke, light, smells)

¹² Noise, rowdy behaviour, nuisance behaviour, drug/substance misuse/dealing, stray animals, deliberate fires, vehicle nuisance

¹³ Intimidation, harassment, abuse

- 106 Reports of ASB reduced by 4% during the 12 months ending 31 December 2022, compared to the same period last year, with all strands showing overall decreases. However, deeper analysis has highlighted increases in certain ASB types which are being masked by larger falls elsewhere. These types are criminal damage, noise and deliberate fires.
- 107 The ASB Strategic Group has highlighted these three areas as priorities, alongside fly-tipping which, although decreasing, remains the most frequently reported ASB type, and personal ASB which remains a concern due to its potential to cause harm and the fact that it is showing an increase in the east of the county.

Public confidence that the Police and Local Authorities are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter to them

- 108 The annual survey which assesses public confidence will go live on Monday 9 January for a period of 3 to 4 weeks. The results will be analysed in February and an update provided in the next performance report.

5.0 Our Council: National, Regional and Local Picture

- 109 Budget pressures of around £81 million are expected during 2023/24. This is due to factors such as the 9.7% uplift in the National Living Wage, energy costs almost twice budgeted levels, and higher demand across social care services.
- 110 Pressures will be partly financed by the additional £56 million received from the provisional Local Government Settlement and from council tax and tax base increases, with the remainder split 50/50 from savings and using the MTFP Support Reserve.
- 111 Our low tax raising capacity continues to place pressure on our budgets. If core spending power 'per dwelling' across the county was raised by £167 to the England average of £2,360, the council would receive an additional £42 million each year.
- 112 Despite this challenging financial environment, the 2023/24 budget includes:
- support for low-income households through our Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
 - maximisation of health and social care funds for the benefit of our vulnerable clients
 - significant investment in capital expenditure with a £778 million capital programme, the most ambitious the council has ever agreed.
- 113 Attracting employees remains difficult with local and national skills shortages continuing to drive competition for skilled workers amongst organisations.

5.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Audit Score (statement of accounts)

- 114 The council's [statement of accounts](#) for 2021/22 was approved at November's Audit Committee in line with statutory deadlines.

Council Tax and the Energy Rebate Scheme

- 115 The £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme has now closed and all outstanding payments, where no refund has been requested or issued, have been transferred to individual Council Tax accounts.
- 116 Throughout January 2023, the council will start administering £400 payments to people who do not have a direct relationship with an energy provider and so were ineligible for the Energy Bills Support Scheme discount. For example, care home residents or those living in park homes. Applications will be made through a centralised form on the gov.uk website with local authorities verifying the identity and eligibility of applicants and paying the £400.
- 117 We continue to offer extended payment arrangements to anybody struggling to pay their council tax.

Apprenticeships (programme / levy started May 2017).

- 118 Our £10.1 million investment has allowed more than 1,400 employees to enrol in an apprenticeship - half of participants were new to the council and half were existing staff upskilling. 484 employees are currently enrolled (2.7% of our workforce).
- 119 During quarter three, 11 apprentices started new roles and an additional 18 were appointed – taking the number employed in 2022 to just over 100. The retention rate for apprentices remains at 71%.
- 120 Our new Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Policy which aims to increase the uptake of apprenticeships across local businesses, will be launched in April 2023.

5.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Recruitment and Retention (identified as a strategic risk)

- 121 Our project plan, which sets out how we will strengthen and modernise our strategic approach to recruitment, is on track with key actions grouped under the following themes: candidate attraction; process improvements; onboarding and induction; learning and development for managers; engagement and retention; and equality, diversity and inclusion.

- 122 To maximise talent reach and attraction, recruitment advertising has been extended through social media and partner agencies such as Indeed. Managers have received briefings and guidance on recruitment and advertising options, and additional support on recruitment campaigns is available to lead officers.
- 123 We have increased representation at job fairs and career events, and strengthened links with schools, colleges, and universities.
- 124 Our review of overall employee benefits is continuing with soft market testing underway. A new car salary sacrifice scheme will be launched in January.

Attendance Management

- 125 The latest sickness absence rate is 12.05 days per full-time equivalent (FTE). 11% (10,479 days) of reported sickness was COVID-related.
- 126 The most frequently reported sickness reasons remain mental health and fatigue (33%), musculo-skeletal injury (20%) and infections (16%). Around two-thirds of infections were COVID-19.
- 127 Sickness increased across all categories except for the liver, kidney, stomach and digestion which reduced by 9% (-688 days) and musculo-skeletal (excluding back/neck) which seen an 8% reduction (-1,032 days). Days lost to 'mental health and fatigue' was 27% higher (+6,955 days) than pre-pandemic, driven by increases in non-work-related stress, anxiety disorders, depression, fatigue and exhaustion.
- 128 During quarter two, two service teams (Business Services and Care Connect) participated in a pilot which automated the Attendance Management Interview (AMI) process. Initial reports suggest the pilot has worked well but we will be surveying managers who engaged in the process to obtain formal feedback. All being well, the automated process will then be rolled out across the organisation, and we will focus on developing a similar approach in relation to the Return-to-Work interview form.

Staff Well-being

- 129 Our staff survey, conducted to collect the views of our staff on workplace well-being issues including mental health, engagement, and communications, is now complete. A detailed analysis of the responses is underway, and any findings will be reported, alongside any improvement actions, in the year-end report.
- 130 We recently signed the menopause pledge committing our support to those going through the menopause, maintained our level three rating as a Disability Confident Employer, and gained white ribbon accreditation for our commitment to promoting gender equality and supporting staff affected by abuse.

Staff Development

- 131 Performance Development Reviews (PDRs) are an integral part of manager-employee engagement, alongside one-to-ones, supervisions, and team meetings. 93 leaders (83%) completed the new cycle in line with the deadline of 31 December 2022.
- 132 During quarter three, in response to our survey which assessed the digital skills and confidence levels of our staff, we started strengthening our digital skills offer. More detail will be provided in the next report. We will consult members on their digital skills and confidence during quarter four.

Customer Contact Channels

- 133 Although most contact is non-digital (75% is by telephone, 3% face to face), the proportion of contact that is digital has increased over the last two years. Most of this change was driven by the pandemic with more service requests available through do-it-online, and the launch and increasing popularity of webchat. Digital contact now makes up 22% of all contact, compared to 15% pre-pandemic. 42,000 additional customers have registered for do-it-online (up 32%), an additional 46,000 for the open portal system (up 137%) and a further 35,000 to receive council tax bills via e-mail (up 98%).
- 134 Conversely, contact through our Customer Access Points (CAPs) is around two-thirds of the pre-pandemic volume. We are currently consulting on our [proposal to reduce the hours in four of our least used CAPs](#).

Performance Standards

- 135 At the end of quarter three, a performance standard had been applied to 78 service requests. 60% of all CRM service requests received during quarter three can be assessed against a performance standard. Of these, 80% met the performance standard.

Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations

- 136 241 requests were received during quarter three, 4% more (+10) than the same period last year. Although we responded to 80% of requests within 20 working days, we did not meet the target of 95%. This was due to a combination of volume, bottlenecks within certain services and staff shortages.

5.3 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

Customer contact

- 137 Contact through our reported channels over the last 12 months is more than 260,000 higher than the pre-pandemic year (+17%). The main reason for this increase, accounting for around half of the additional contact, is transferring telephone lines to our automated call distribution (ACD) system¹⁴. As we can't migrate past data, transfers create artificial increases in call volumes.
- 138 If we adjust call volume by removing those telephone lines for which we do not have a pre-pandemic comparison, then contact through our reported channels over the last 12 months is around 62,000 higher than pre-pandemic year (+5%).
- 139 Services experiencing increased levels of contact compared to the pre-pandemic year include council tax and benefits, the Emergency Duty Team, and welfare assistance.
- 140 We are continuing to see high volume of applications for Welfare Assistance and Discretionary Housing Payments. Additional funding provided under a new Council Tax Support Fund has enabled us to reduce council tax bills by up to £50 in 2023/24, for residents who receive Local Council Tax Reduction but still have council tax to pay. This level of support is double the £25 recommended by the government.

Customer Satisfaction¹⁵

- 141 Overall, 82% of respondents were satisfied with overall service delivery which is in line with previous reports. In addition:
- 97% felt their request was handled knowledgeably and effectively handled
 - 92% found it easy to contact the right service
 - 86% were satisfied with our handling of the initial contact
 - 82% were satisfied with the time to complete the task
 - 81% felt they were treated with dignity and respect
 - 87% were provided with clear information
 - 78% were informed of how long it would take to complete the task
 - 73% were kept informed of progress.

¹⁴ Telephone calls are received either through our Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system, which routes calls to groups of agents based on a first-in-first-answered criteria, or directly to a telephone extension (non-ACD). Only calls received via our ACD system are included in our telephone statistics. When we transfer non-ACD lines into the ACD system, there is no past data. Consequently, it appears that call volume has increased. All lines included within the scope of the integrated customer services project are now fully migrated to the ACD system.

¹⁵ We have linked a satisfaction survey to 127 service request types and our CRM automatically e-mails a survey to the customer when a service request is closed.

- 142 Service requests attaining an overall satisfaction rating of at least 90% include requests relating to: birth, death or marriage certification (98%); bulky waste (96%), white goods collection (96%); domestic pest control (96%); waste permits (97%); join the garden waste scheme (95%); apply for free school travel (95%); assisted bin collections (95%).
- 143 Service requests attaining an overall satisfaction rating of less than 70% include requests relating to: complaints (47%); tree/hedge pruning and removal (61%); generic enquiries (65%)
- 144 The main driver for dissatisfaction during quarter three was timeliness (of both acknowledgment and response), insufficient progress updates and service requests being closed without being actioned.

Data and Insight / Business Intelligence Project

- 145 This major project to implement a corporate data analytics solution will allow us to combine data from our separate IT systems into a single platform. It will provide managers with interactive data dashboards and allow us to combine data at a person level to give us new insights into our residents and service users.
- 146 Social care (adult and children's) has been prioritised and we expect new reports to go live in these areas in the new year. We are reviewing our staffing structures and are developing proposals for a suitable operating model based on the roles, responsibilities and skills needed to meet the demands of a data driven local authority.

Key to Symbols

Performance against target and previous performance		Performance against comparable groups		Direction of Travel	
✓	meeting or exceeding	✓	Performance is better than national or north east	↑	higher than comparable period
■	within 2%	×	Performance is worse than national or north east	→	static against comparable period
×	more than 2% behind			↓	lower than comparable period

NB: oldest data in left column

Types of indicators

There are two types of performance indicators throughout the report:

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

National Benchmarking (N)

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

North East Benchmarking (NE)

The North East comparator is the average performance from the authorities within the North East region - County Durham, Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees, South Tyneside, Sunderland.

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

Our Economy

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Increase the level of GVA per filled job in line with national levels by 2035	£46,245	Tracker	£46,036	£46,245	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	No
	(2020)	-	✓	■							
Increase the employment rate for 16-64-year-olds in line with national levels by 2035	74.3% (Oct 21-Sep 22)	Tracker	71.4%	71.1%	x	✓	↓	↓	↑	↑	Yes
	(Oct 21-Sep 22)	-	✓	✓							
Increase the overall disability employment rate / close the gap	48.1%	Tracker	47.0%	47.4%	x	✓	↑	↓	↓	↑	Yes
	(Oct 21-Sep 22)	-	✓	✓							
No. of business supported through regeneration projects	40	19	new PI	new PI	-	-	n/a	n/a	↑	↑	Yes
	(Oct-Dec 22)	✓									
FTE jobs created through regeneration schemes	30	25	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
	(Oct-Dec 22)	✓									
No. of registrations to employability programmes	324	Tracker	191	256	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
	(Jul-Sep 22)	-	✓	✓							
No. of participants on employability programmes progressed into employment / education or training	151	Tracker	122	92	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↑	Yes
	(Jul-Sep 22)	-	✓	✓							
Increase the proportion of residents with higher level skills in line with national levels by 2035	32.4%	Tracker	31.6%	31.6%			→	↓	↑	→	No
	(2021)	-	✓	✓							
Narrow the gap between no. of private sector employments per 10,000 pop'n within County Durham and England	2,877	Tracker	2,651	2,651	x	x	↓	↑	↓	↑	Yes
	(2021)	-	✓	✓							
Narrow the gap between no. of private sector business per 10,000 pop'n within County Durham and England	274	Tracker	271	263			→	↑	↑	↑	No
	(2022)	-	✓	✓							

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Gross jobs created / as a result of Business Durham activity	81	375	507	1,001	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
	(Oct-Dec-22)	x	x	x	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	
No. of businesses supported by Business Durham (engagements)	170	250	62	204	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↓	Yes
	(Oct-Dec 22)	x	✓	x	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↓	
% of Business Durham floor space that is occupied	95%	85%	95%	86.4%	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
	(Oct-Dec 22)	✓	✓	✓	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	
No. of new businesses supported by CED Team	40	30	37	41	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
	(Oct-Dec 22)	✓	✓	✓	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	
No. of inward investments secured	3	2	1	4	-	-	↑	↓	→	↑	Yes
	(Oct-Dec 22)	✓	✓	x	-	-	↑	↓	→	↑	
Amount of investments secured for companies	£1,562,654	£1.25m	£1,559,456	-	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↑	Yes
	(Oct-Dec 22)	✓	x		-	-	↑	↓	↓	↑	
Increase employment land approved and delivered by 300 hectares (Ha) by 2035	5.51Ha	15.8Ha	36.69Ha	17.29Ha	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	No
	(2021/22)	x	x	x	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	
Increase the number of organisations involved in the Better Health at Work Award	76	Tracker	81	75	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↑	Yes
	(Dec 2022)	-	x	✓	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↑	
Attract 11.96 million visitors to the county in 2021 (5% increase on 2020)	15.77m	11.96m	11.39m	11.39m	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↑	No
	(2021)	✓	✓	✓	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↑	
Amount (£ million) generated by the visitor economy	£826.6m	£608.4m	£506.7m	£506.7m	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↑	No
	(2021)	✓	✓	✓	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↑	
No. jobs supported by the visitor economy	10,063	8,153	6,794	6,794	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↑	No
	(2021)	✓	✓	✓	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↑	

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Increase the proportion of visitor attractions which are served by public transport (against 2021 baseline)	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
No of tourism businesses actively engaged with Visit County Durham	230 (2022)	Tracker -	236 x	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	Yes
No. of people attending cultural events / programme events	185,312 (2021)	Tracker -	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
No. of people attending council owned cultural venues (Killhope, DLI & town halls)	37,834 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	-	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	↓	↓	Yes
Average number of tickets sold per cinema and theatre screening/performance during the quarter	100 (Oct-Dec 22)	TBC	88 ✓	74 ✓	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
No. of library members	215,398 (Apr-Jun 22)	Tracker -	229,793 x	233,904 x	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	No
% uptake of free early education entitlement for 3-4-year-olds	93.7% (2022)	Tracker -	92.8% ✓	96.1% x			→	↑	↓	↑	No
Improve the proportion of children achieving expected standards in maths and reading at KS2 in line with 2030 ambitions ¹⁶	65% (2018/19)	Tracker -	67% x	65%			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No
Improve the average grade of achievement of all our pupils within GCSE English and Maths to a Grade 5 (in line with 2030 ambitions)	new PI	5 by 2030	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
Improve the educational attainment of our most disadvantaged cohorts to meet basic threshold measures in English and Maths	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No

¹⁶ Not reported for 2019/20 or 2020/21 academic years as no Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) or Key Stage 2 (KS2) assessments took place

Page 68

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Increase proportion of young people in education, employment and training to be consistently higher than regional and national levels	87.4% (Jun 2022)	above N / NE ✓	85.3% ✓	85.6% ✓			↑	↓	↑	n/a	No
Increase the % of 16-17-year-olds in an apprenticeship	5.6% (Jun 2022)	Tracker -	5.5% ✓	6.8% ✗			↑	↓	↓	n/a	No
Number of council owned/managed heritage assets classed as 'at risk'	3 (2022)	Tracker -	3 ■	2 ✗	-	-	→	→	↓	→	Yes
Reduce the number of heritage assets 'at risk' that are categorised as 'Priority A' and/or in 'very bad condition'	6 (2022)	Tracker -	7 ✓	8 ✓	-	-	→	→	↑	↑	Yes
No. of households receiving energy advice from Managing Money Better (MMB) Initiative	129 (Oct-Dec 2022)	Tracker -	160 ✗	209 ✗	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes

Our Environment

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
County Durham to become net zero by 2045	57 (2020)	Tracker -	54 ✓	54 ✓	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↑	No
Reduce the council's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 (reduction from 1990 baseline)	57% (2021/22)	Tracker -	58% ■	51% ✓	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↓	No
Work towards Durham City Air Quality Management Area NO2 levels being below the govt threshold of 40µg/m3	65% (2021)	100% ✗	96% ✗	54% (2019) ✓	-	-	↓	↓	↑	↓	Yes

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Plant a minimum of 140,000 trees by 2024	40,414 (2021/22)	Tracker -	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
% of household waste that is re-used, recycled or composted	37.7% (Oct 21-Sep 22)	Tracker -	38.2% ■	41.1% ✗			↓	↑	→	↓	Yes
Increase the proportion of waste diverted from landfill to at least 95%	93.2% (Oct 21–Sep 22)	95% ✗	90% ✓	97.8% ✗			→	→	↑	↑	Yes
Contamination rate (%)	34.5% (Oct 21-Sep 22)	Tracker -	34.69% ✓	29.95% ✗	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↑	Yes
Raise cycling and walking levels in County Durham in line with national levels by 2035	67.7%	Tracker	68%	68%			↑	↓	↑	↓	No
	(2020/21)	-	■	■							
% overall satisfaction with cycle routes & facilities (confidence intervals +/-4pp)	52%	Tracker	54%	-			-	-	-	→	Yes
	(2022)	-	■								

Our People

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieving a good level of development (reported as academic year)	64.5% (2021/22)	Tracker -	N/A	-			↓	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
% of pupils attending an Ofsted judged 'good or better' school – all	86.5% (at 16 Jan 23)	Tracker -	n/a	-	✗	✓	↑	↑	↑	n/a	Yes
% of pupils attending an Ofsted judged 'good or better' school – primary	94.3% (at 16 Jan 23)	Tracker -	n/a	-	✓	✓					Yes

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
% of pupils attending an Ofsted judged 'good or better' school – secondary	75.3% (at 16 Jan 23)	Tracker -	n/a	-	x	✓					Yes
No. of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan	4,234	Tracker	3,978	3,496	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
	(Dec 2022)	-	-	-							
No. of Children Looked After per 10,000 population	102.2 [1,042] (at 31 Dec 22)	Tracker -	93 [2020/21]	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
No. of Children in Need per 10,000 Population	386 [3,939] (at 31 Dec 22)	Tracker -	361 [2020/21]		-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
% of Children Looked After placed within 20 miles of their home address	85% (at 31 Mar 22)	Tracker -	87% [2020/21] ■	89% x	✓	✓	↓	↓	→	↑	No
No. of families on our Stronger Families Programme attaining significant and sustained outcomes	1,134 (Apr-Dec 22)	760 [2022/23] ✓	693 ✓	311 ✓	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Increase the % of children aged 4-5 who are of a healthy weight ¹⁷ <i>Confidence intervals +/-1.2pp</i>	75.5% (2021/22)	90% x	Not reported	74.6% ■	■	■	-	-	-	→	Yes
Increase the % of children aged 10-11 who are of a healthy weight <i>Confidence intervals +/-1.2pp</i>	59.2% (2021/22)	79% x	Not reported	61.5% ■	■	■	-	-	-	→	Yes
Reduce % point gap in breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks between County Durham and national average	18.8pp (2021/22)	Tracker -	17.4pp x	20.2pp ✓	-	x	↑	↑	↓	↑	Yes
% of mothers smoking at time of delivery	13.7% (Jul -Sep 22)	0% x	13.9% ✓	15.2% ✓	x	x	↑	↑	↑	↓	Yes

¹⁷ National Child Measurement Programme ceased March 2020 when schools closed due to the pandemic, therefore, north east and nearest neighbour comparators should be treated with caution due to missing data from some LAs. Whilst the data for the academic year 2020/21 has been published, local authority data is not available as only a 10% sample of data was recorded.

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
% of smoking prevalence in adults (aged 18+) ¹⁸	16.2% (2021)	5.0% ✗	16.5% ✓	17.0% ✓	✗	✗	↑	↑	↓	↓	Yes
Increase self-reported wellbeing (by reducing the proportion of people reporting a low happiness score) <i>Confidence intervals +/-2.4pp</i>	11.0% (2021/22)	Tracker -	8.8% ■	10.9% ■	✗	✗	→	→	→	→	Yes
Reduce the overall suicide rate (per 100,000 population)	15.8% (2019-21)	Tracker -	14.3% ✗	14.3% ✗	✗	✗	↑	↑	↑	↑	No
No. of admissions under the Mental Health Act	197 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	209	179	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↓	Yes
Healthy life expectancy at birth – female	59.9 years (2018-20)	Tracker -	58.3 years ✓	-	✗	✓	↓	↓	↓	↑	No
Healthy life expectancy at 65 – female	10.2 years (2018-20)	Tracker -	9.0 years ✓	-	✗	✓	↓	↑	↑	↑	No
Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at birth – female	4.0 years (2018-20)	Tracker -	5.2 years ✓	-	-	✓	↑	↑	↓	↓	No
Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at 65 – female	1.1 years (2018-20)	Tracker -	2.1 years ✓	-	-	✓	↑	↓	↓	↓	No
Healthy life expectancy at birth – male	58.8 years (2018-20)	Tracker --	59.6 years ■	-	✗	✗	↓	↑	↑	↓	No
Healthy life expectancy at 65 – male	7.7 years (2018-20)	Tracker -	8.3 years ✗	-	✗	✗	↓	↑	↓	↓	No

¹⁸ Smoking prevalence: prior to COVID-19 this was collected via face-to-face interviews. In 2020, this moved to telephone interviews resulting in a potential bias in the sample and meaning that results were not comparable with previous years. To allow comparability the ONS have updated the weighting methodology to remove the effect of the mode change.

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at birth – male	4.3 years (2018-20)	Tracker -	3.6 years x	-	-	x	↑	↓	↓	↑	No
Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at 65 – male	2.8 years (2018-20)	Tracker -	2.3 years x	-	-	x	↑	↓	↑	↑	No
No. of people attending Leisure Centres	672,487 (Oct-Dec 22)	904,640 x	589,336 ✓	814,219 x	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
No. of gym & swim members	19,229 (Oct-Dec 22)	21,327 x	17,444 ✓	18,013 ✓	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↓	Yes
10,000 more adults undertake 150 minute of at least moderate intensity physical activity per week	260,500 (Nov 20-Nov 21)	266,500 x	265,800 ■	261,400 ■	-	-	↓	↓	↑	↓	No
15,000 less adults are inactive (undertake less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week)	136,300 (Nov 20-Nov 21)	105,800 x	132,100 x	122,100 x	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↑	No
% of service users receiving an assessment or review within the last 12 months	60.8% (Apr-Dec 22)	Tracker -	70.1% x	86.8% x	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↑	Yes
% of individuals who achieved their desired outcomes from the adult safeguarding process	91.7% (Apr-Dec 22)	Tracker -	92.6% ■	94.9% x	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes
Increase the satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support <i>Confidence intervals +/-4.3pp</i>	64.5% (2021/22)	Tracker -	69.6% ■	69.6% ■	✓	x	→	→	→	→	No
Increase the satisfaction of carers with the support and services they receive <i>Confidence intervals +/-5.1pp</i>	40.8% (2021/22)	Tracker -	51.2% x	51.2% x	✓	x	n/a	↓	↑	↓	No
Increase % of hospital discharges receiving reablement	2.2% (2021/22)	Tracker -	2.7% x	3.8% x	x	x	↑	↓	↓	↓	No

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Increase % of older people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services	92.9% (Jan-Sep 22)	84.0% ✓	88.3% ✓	86.5% ✓	✓	✓	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Increase the average age whereby people are able to remain living independently in their own home	84.2 years (Jan 22-Dec 22)	Tracker -	84.2 years ✓	84.1 years ✓	-	-	↑	↓	↑	→	Yes
Adults aged 65+ per 100,000 population admitted on a permanent basis in the year to residential or nursing care	449.9 (Apr-Dec 22)	474.5 ✓	489.3 ✓	566.8 ✓	-	-	↓	↓	↑	↓	Yes
Increase the % of people aged 65+ with aids and assistive technologies in their homes	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
No. of Care Connect customers	11,059 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	11,440 ✓	12,015 x	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↓	Yes
Increase no. homes approved meeting accessible and adaptable standards by 5,613 by 2035	510 (2021/22)	400 ✓	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
Deliver at least 600 homes suitable for older persons by 2035	245 (2021/22)	43 ✓	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
No. of Chapter Homes houses built which are for Older Persons	2 (Oct-Dec)	TBC	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	↓	↑	Yes
No. of Chapter Homes houses built which meet M4(2) standard	2 (Oct-Dec)	TBC	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	↓	↓	Yes
No. of Council houses built which are for Older Persons	0 (Oct-Dec 22)	TBC	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	↓	→	Yes
No. of Council houses built which meet M4(2) standard	0 (Oct-Dec 22)	TBC	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	↓	→	Yes

Page 94

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
No. of households accessing the Housing Solutions Service	3,311 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	3,312 ■	3,361 x	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes
No. of households helped to stay in their home	979 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	↑	↑	Yes
No. of households helped to move to alternative accommodation	225 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	249 x	243 x	-	-	↓		↑	↓	Yes

Our Communities

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Respondents who agree that police and local authorities are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter to them <i>(confidence intervals +/-4pp)</i>	30.7% (2021/22)	30.4% ■	30.4% ■	-	-	-	↑	n/a	n/a	↑	No
Overall crime rate per 1,000 population	25.6 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	23.2 x	24.3 ■	-	-	→	↓	↑	↑	Yes
Rate of theft offences per 1,000 population	5.8 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	6.4 ✓	6.6 ✓	-	-	↓	↓	↑	↑	Yes
Proportion of all offenders who re-offend in a 12 month period (%)	30.6% (Apr-Jun 19)	Tracker -	n/a	n/a	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No
Proven re-offending by young people (who offend) in a 12 month period (%)	33.5% (2019/20)	Tracker -	n/a	n/a	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
First time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10 to 17 (per 100,000 population aged 10 to 17)	147 (Oct 20-Sep 21)	Tracker -	n/a	n/a	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No
% of violent crime incidents which were alcohol related	32.6% (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	34.2% ✓	31.7% ■	-	-	→	↑	→	→	Yes
No. of alcohol seizures	194 (Apr-Jun 2018)	Tracker -	n/a	n/a	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No
% of successful completions of those in alcohol treatment	31.9% (Nov 21-Oct 22)	Tracker -	35.9% x	27.3% ✓	-	✓	→	↑	→	→	Yes
% of successful completions of those in drug treatment – opiates	5.4% (Nov 21-Oct 22)	Tracker -	5.8% ■	5.9% ■	-	✓	→	→	→	→	Yes
% of successful completions of those in drug treatment – non-opiates	31.5% (Apr 21-Mar22)	Tracker -	38.1% x	29% ✓	-	✓	→	↑	↓	→	Yes
Reports of anti-social behaviour	52,466 (Jan 22-Dec 22)	Tracker -	54,462 ✓	36,127 x	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↓	Yes
Reports of environmental anti-social behaviour	34,883 (Jan 22-Dec 22)	Tracker -	36,456 ✓	20,606 x	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↓	Yes
Reports of nuisance anti-social behaviour	14,784 (Jan 22-Dec 22)	Tracker -	15,089 x	13,612 x	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
Reports of personal anti-social behaviour	2,979 (Jan 22-Dec 22)	Tracker -	2,917 ✓	1,909 x	-	-	↑	↓	↓	→	Yes
% anti-social behaviour incidents which were alcohol related	9.8% (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	11.5% ✓	13.7% ✓	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes

Page 96

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
No. of ASB enforcement action taken	4,992 (Jan-Dec 22)	Tracker -	4,365 ✓	2,636 ✓	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
% of Harbour ¹⁹ clients feeling more confident in themselves on case closure	87% (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	81% ✓	-	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	Yes
% of Harbour ¹⁹ clients feeling their quality of life has improved on case closure	83% (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	76% ✓	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
% of children and young people completing an intervention with Harbour ¹⁹ and reporting feeling safer	84% (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	84% ■	-	-	-	→	↑	↓	→	Yes
Children and young people reviewed as at risk to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	45 (Oct-Dec 2022)	Tracker -	n/a	n/a	-	-	↑	↓	n/a	n/a	Yes
Increase occupancy rate of all town centres to above national levels by 2035	46% (2022/23)	Tracker -	46% ■	62% x	-	-	↑	↓	↓	→	No
Public satisfaction with ease of access (confidence intervals +/-4pp)	73% (2022)	Tracker -	77% x	-	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Maintain levels of satisfaction with bus operators at a minimum of 92% (confidence intervals +/-4pp)	92% (2019)	92% ■	91% ■	92% ■	-	-					No
Increase the % of households (within a 5 mile or 15 mile radius) which can access key service locations using public transport	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No

¹⁹ Harbour - a specialist domestic abuse service that helps people living in County Durham. Harbour provides support to both victims of domestic abuse and perpetrators of abuse

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Increase the % of County Durham residents who can access employment sites by public transport	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
% of A roads where maintenance is recommended	3.1% (2020)	Tracker -	3.0% ■	3.0% ■			↓	→	↑	↑	No
% of B roads where maintenance is recommended	3.0% (2020)	Tracker -	3.3% ✓	3.3% ✓			↓	→	↓	↓	No
% of C roads where maintenance is recommended	2.6% (2020)	Tracker -	2.3% x	2.3% x			↓	→	↓	↑	No
% of unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended	22.5% (2020)	Tracker -	21.3% x	21.3% x			→	↑	↑	↑	No
Bridge Stock Condition – Principal Roads	82.0% (2020)	Tracker -	81.1% ✓	81.1% ✓	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	No
% of recorded Category 1 highway defects repaired within 24 hours	92% (Oct-Dec 22)	90% ✓	94% ✓	98% ■	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↓	Yes
Maintain a downward trend in the amount of Highways Maintenance Backlog	£171.2m (2020)	Tracker -	£172.6m ✓	£171.2m ■	-	-					No
Aim to increase levels of public satisfaction with highways maintenance above the national average. <i>(confidence intervals +/-4pp)</i>	47% (2022)	Tracker -	50% x	46% ■	-	-	↓	↑	↑	→	Yes
No. of people KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of fatalities	4 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	3 x	5 ✓	-	-	→	→	→	↓	Yes
No. of people KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of seriously injured	50 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	49 ■	41 x	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↓	Yes

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
No. of children KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of fatalities	0 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	0 ✓	0 ✓	-	-	→	→	→	↑	Yes
No. of children KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of seriously injured	2 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	8 ✓	4 ✓	-	-	→	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Increase net delivery of affordable homes to contribute to meeting identified need of 12,540 by 2035	536 (2021/22)	836 x	478 ✓	628 x	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↑	No
No. of Council houses built	0 (Oct-Dec 22)	TBC		new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	↓	→	Yes
No. of Chapter Homes properties sold	9 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	5 ✓	-	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↑	Yes
Increase net delivery of new housing by 19,620 units by 2035	322 (Oct-Dec 22)	327 x	442 x	431 x	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↓	Yes
Bring 200 empty homes back into use per year as a result of local authority intervention	54 (Oct-Dec 22)	50 ✓	40 ✓	48 ✓	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↓	Yes
Achieve 100% licensing of private rented sector properties covered by the Selective Licensing Scheme by 2027	24% (Sep 22)	Tracker -	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	n/a	Yes
No. of fully licensed private rented sector properties in the selective licensed areas	6,712 (Sep 22)	Tracker -	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	n/a	Yes
Reduce ASB rates (per 10,000 population) within the Selective Licensing Scheme areas by 10% (against the 2021 baseline)	283.9 (Jul-Sep 22)	224.27 x	229.06 x	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	↓	Yes

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Return the number of fly-tipping incidents to at least pre-COVID levels by 2035	5,184 (Jan-Dec 22)	6,548 ✓	6,895 ✓	6,548 ✓	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes
% of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness - detritus	7.8% (Jul-Oct 22)	12% ✓	9% ✓	13.4% ✓	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
% of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness - litter	4.4% (Jul-Oct 22)	6% ✓	5.2% ✓	6.6% ✓	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↑	Yes
% of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness - dog fouling	1.4% (Jul-Oct 22)	1% ✓	0.5% x	1.6% ✓	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↑	Yes

Our Council

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
MTFP targets achieved	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
Audit opinion (Q – qualified / UQ – unqualified)	UQ (draft) (31 Mar 22)	UQ ✓	UQ ■	UQ ■	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	→	Yes
% of council tax collected	82.4% (Oct-Dec 22)	82.2% ✓	82.2% ✓	84.4% x	-	-	-	-	-	↑	Yes
% of business rates collected	80.9% (Oct-Dec 22)	80.9% ✓	80.9% ✓	83.3% x	-	-	-	-	-	→	Yes

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
No. of new council tax reduction claims processed	3,524 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	2,937 -	3,664 -	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↓	Yes
% of new council tax reduction claims processed within 14 days of all information being received	96% (Oct-Dec 22)	85% ✓	65% ✓	94% ✓	-	-	↓	↓	↑	↑	Yes
Time to process new council tax reduction claims	14.2 days (Oct-Dec 22)	21 days ✓	35.1 days ✓	16.2 days x	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↓	Yes
Time to process change of circumstances for council tax reduction	4.8 days (Oct-Dec 22)	9 days ✓	12.1 days ✓	7.83 days ✓	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
No. of change of circumstances for council tax reduction claims processed	36,366 (Apr-Jun 22)	Tracker -	41,649	31,841	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
No. of new housing benefit claims processed	613 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	484	692	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↓	Yes
% of new housing benefit claims processed within 14 days of all information being received	94% (Oct-Dec 22)	85% ✓	45% ✓	88% ✓	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Time to process new housing benefit claims (days)	17.3 days (Oct-Dec 22)	21 days ✓	41 days ✓	15.2 days x	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↓	Yes
No. of change of circumstances for housing benefit claims	7,911 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	7,486 -	10,323 -	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
Time to process change of circumstances for housing benefit claims	6 days (Oct-Dec 22)	9 days ✓	17.8 days ✓	7 days ✓	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↓	Yes
Days / shifts lost to sickness absence per FTE Time Equivalent (excluding schools)	12.05 days (Jan-Dec 22)	Tracker -	10.85 days x	10.87 days x	-	-	↑	↑	↓	→	Yes

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Days / shifts lost to sickness absence per FTE - excluding COVID-19 related (excluding schools)	10.52 days (Jan-Dec 22)	Tracker -	9.84 days x	10.87 days ✓	-	-	↑	↑	↑	→	Yes
No. of employees enrolled on the apprenticeship programme - new posts	270 (31 Dec 22)	Tracker -	256 ✓	258 ✓	-	-	↓	↑	→	↑	Yes
No. of employees enrolled on the apprenticeship programme - existing staff upskilling	214 (31 Dec 22)	Tracker -	252 x	196 ✓	-	-	↓	↓	↑	↓	Yes
% of employees enrolled on the apprenticeship programme	2.7% (31 Dec 22)	Tracker -	3.6% x	1.4% ✓	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↑	Yes
% of employees aged over 50 years	42.7% (30 Sep 22)	Tracker -	42.7%	42.1%	-	-	↓	↓	↑	→	Yes
Employee turnover	9.6% (Jan-Dec 22)	Tracker -	8.0%	7.2%	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
% of CRM service requests received which were self-serve	72% (Jan 22-Dec 22)	Tracker -	68% ✓	49% ✓	-	-	↑	↑	→	↑	Yes
% of respondents satisfied with overall service delivery with services requested through the CRM	82% (Jan-Dec 22)	Tracker -	80% ✓	81% ✓	-	-	↑	↑	→	→	Yes
% FOI and EIR requests responded to within 20 working days	80% (Oct-Dec 22)	95% x	86% x	87% x	-	-	↓	↑	→	↑	Yes

Appendix 3: Direction of Travel Comparisons

		Direction of Travel (12 months previous)				Direction of Travel (pre-COVID)			
		Not available	Improving	Static	Deteriorating	Not available	Improving	Static	Deteriorating
Performance to Target	No target set – tracker	35	37	16	28	50	29	11	26
	Meeting or exceeding target	4	22	3	4	6	19	3	5
	Within 2% of target								
	More than 2% behind target	2	6	1	7	1	3	2	10

No target set – tracker (improving)	Compared to Pre-COVID
Narrow the gap between no. of private sector business per 10,000 pop'n within County Durham and England	Improving
Narrow the gap between no. of private sector employments per 10,000 pop'n within County Durham and England	Improving
Increase the level of GVA per filled job in line with national levels by 2035	Static
Increase the employment rate for 16-64-year-olds in line with national levels by 2035	Improving
Increase the proportion of residents with higher level skills in line with national levels by 2035	Improving
Increase the % of 16-17-year-olds in an apprenticeship	Deteriorating
Increase the overall disability employment rate / close the gap	Improving
% uptake of free early education entitlement for 3-4-year-olds	Deteriorating
Reduce the number of heritage assets 'at risk' that are categorised as 'Priority A' and/or in 'very bad condition'	Improving
Average number of tickets sold per cinema and theatre screening/performance during the quarter	Improving
No. of registrations to employability programmes	Improving
No. of participants on employability programmes progressed into employment / education or training	Improving
County Durham to become net zero by 2045	Improving
Contamination rate (%)	Deteriorating
Healthy life expectancy at birth – female	Not available

Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at birth – female	Not available
Healthy life expectancy at 65 – female	Not available
Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at 65 – female	Not available
Increase the average age whereby people are able to remain living independently in their own home	Improving
No. of Care Connect customers	Deteriorating
Maintain a downward trend in the amount of Highways Maintenance Backlog	Static
% of B roads where maintenance is recommended	Improving
Bridge Stock Condition – Principal Roads	Improving
No. of ASB enforcement action taken	Improving
No. of children KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of fatalities	Improving
No. of children KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of seriously injured	Improving
No. of Chapter Homes properties sold	Not available
Reports of anti-social behaviour	Deteriorating
Reports of environmental anti-social behaviour	Deteriorating
% of CRM service requests received which were self-serve	Improving
% of respondents satisfied with overall service delivery with services requested through the CRM	Improving
% of Harbour clients feeling their quality of life has improved on case closure	Not available
% of Harbour clients feeling more confident in themselves on case closure	Not available
No. of employees enrolled on the apprenticeship programme – new posts	Improving
Rate of theft per 1,000 population	Improving
% of anti-social behaviour incidents which were alcohol related	Improving
% of violent crime incidents which were alcohol related	Static

No target set – tracker (static)	Compared to Pre-COVID
Number of council owned/managed heritage assets classed as 'at risk'	Deteriorating
Raise cycling and walking levels in County Durham in line with national levels by 2035	Static
% of household waste that is re-used, recycled or composted	Deteriorating
% of Children Looked After placed within 20 miles of their home address	Deteriorating

No target set – tracker (static)	Compared to Pre-COVID
Healthy life expectancy at birth – male	Not available
Increase self-reported wellbeing (by reducing the proportion of people reporting a low happiness score)	Static
Increase the satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support	Static
% of individuals who achieved their desired outcomes from the adult safeguarding process	Deteriorating
No. of households accessing the Housing Solutions Service	Deteriorating
Increase occupancy rate of all town centres to above national levels by 2035	Deteriorating
% of A roads where maintenance is recommended	Static
No. of people KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of seriously injured	Deteriorating
Reduce the council's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030	Improving
Overall satisfaction with cycle routes and facilities (%)	Not available
% of children and young people completing an intervention with Harbour and reporting feeling safer	Not available
% of successful completions of those in drug treatment – opiates	Static

No target set – tracker (deteriorating)	Compared to Pre-COVID
Increase the number of organisations involved in the Better Health at Work Award	Deteriorating
Improve the proportion of children achieving expected standards in maths and reading at KS2 in line with 2030 ambitions*	Static
No. of tourism businesses actively engaged with Visit County Durham	Not available
No. of library members	Deteriorating
No. of households receiving energy advice from Managing Money Better (MMB) Initiative	Deteriorating
Reduce % point gap in breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks between County Durham and national average	Improving
Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at birth – male	Not available
Healthy life expectancy at 65 – male	Not available
Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at 65 – male	Not available
Reduce the overall suicide rate (per 100,000 population)	Deteriorating
Increase the satisfaction of carers with the support and services they receive	Deteriorating
Increase % of hospital discharges receiving reablement	Deteriorating
% of service users receiving an assessment or review within the last 12 months	Deteriorating

No target set – tracker (deteriorating)	Compared to Pre-COVID
No. of households helped to move to alternative accommodation	Deteriorating
Aim to increase levels of public satisfaction with highways maintenance above the national average.	Static
% of C roads where maintenance is recommended	Deteriorating
% of unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended	Deteriorating
No. of people KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of fatalities	Improving
Public satisfaction with ease of access	Not available
Reports of nuisance anti-social behaviour	Deteriorating
Reports of personal anti-social behaviour	Deteriorating
No. of employees enrolled on the apprenticeship programme – existing staff upskilling	Improving
% of employees enrolled on to apprenticeship programme	Improving
Days / shifts lost to sickness absence per FTE Time Equivalent (excluding schools)	Deteriorating
Days / shifts lost to sickness absence per FTE - excluding COVID-19 related (excluding schools)	Improving
Overall crime rate per 1,000 population	Static
% of successful completions of those in alcohol treatment	Improving
% of successful completions of those in drug treatment – non-opiates	Improving

Meeting target (not available)	Compared to Pre-COVID
FTE jobs created through regeneration schemes	Not available
Deliver at least 600 homes suitable for older persons by 2035	Not available
Increase no. homes approved meeting accessible and adaptable standards by 5,613 by 2035	Not available
No. of business supported through regeneration projects	Not available

Meeting target (improving)	Compared to Pre-COVID
Increase proportion of young people in education, employment and training to be consistently higher than regional and national levels	Improving
Attract 11.96 million visitors to the county in 2021 (5% increase on 2020)	Improving
% of Business Durham floor space that is occupied	Improving

Meeting target (improving)	Compared to Pre-COVID
No. of new businesses supported by CED Team	Improving
No. jobs supported by the visitor economy	Improving
Amount (£ million) generated by the visitor economy	Improving
No. of families on our Stronger Families Programme attaining significant and sustained outcomes	Improving
Increase % of older people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services	Improving
Adults aged 65+ per 100,000 population admitted on a permanent basis in the year to residential or nursing care	Improving
Bring 200 empty homes back into use per year as a result of local authority intervention	Improving
Return the number of fly-tipping incidents to at least pre-COVID levels by 2035	Improving
% of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness - detritus	Improving
% of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness – litter	Improving
% of recorded Category 1 highway defects repaired within 24 hours	Static
% of council tax collected	Deteriorating
% of business rates collected	Deteriorating
% of new housing benefit claims processed within 14 days of all information being received	Improving
Time to process new housing benefit claims (days)	Deteriorating
Time to process change of circumstances for housing benefit claims	Improving
% of new council tax reduction claims processed within 14 days of all information being received	Improving
Time to process new council tax reduction claims	Deteriorating
Time to process change of circumstances for council tax reduction	Improving

Meeting target (static)	Compared to Pre-COVID
Maintain levels of satisfaction with bus operators at a minimum of 92%	Static
Respondents who agree that police and local authorities are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter to them	Not available
Audit opinion (Q – qualified / UQ – unqualified)	Static

Meeting target (deteriorating)	Compared to Pre-COVID
No. of inward investments secured	Deteriorating
Amount of investments secured for companies	Not available
No. of businesses supported by Business Durham (engagements)	Improving
% of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness - dog fouling	Improving

More than 2% behind target (improving)	Compared to Pre-COVID
Increase the proportion of waste diverted from landfill to at least 95%	Deteriorating
% of mothers smoking at time of delivery	Improving
% of smoking prevalence in adults (aged 18+)	Improving
No. of gym & swim members	Improving
No. of people attending Leisure Centres	Deteriorating
Increase net delivery of affordable homes to contribute to meeting identified need of 12,540 by 2035	Deteriorating

More than 2% behind target (static)	Compared to Pre-COVID
10,000 more adults undertake 150 minute of at least moderate intensity physical activity per week	Static

More than 2% behind target (deteriorating)	Compared to Pre-COVID
Increase employment land approved and delivered by 300 hectares (Ha) by 2035	Deteriorating
Gross jobs created / safeguarded as a result of Business Durham activity	Deteriorating
Work towards Durham City Air Quality Management Area NO2 levels being below the govt threshold of 40µg/m3	Deteriorating
15,000 less adults are inactive (undertake less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week)	Deteriorating
Increase net delivery of new housing by 19,620 units by 2035	Deteriorating
Reduce ASB rates (per 10,000 population) within the Selective Licensing Scheme areas by 10%	Not available
% FOI and EIR requests responded to within 20 working days	Deteriorating

This page is intentionally left blank

Cabinet

19 April 2023

**Consultation on the Rights of Way
Improvement Plan 4 (ROWIP4)**



Report of Corporate Management Team

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

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

**Councillor John Shuttleworth, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Rural
Communities and Highways**

**Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic
Regeneration and Partnerships**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to begin a 12-week public consultation on the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan 4 (ROWIP4). The report also explains the development of the consultation version of ROWIP 4 and the intention of the 4 strategic objectives and 8 policies as drafted.

Executive summary

- 2 All local highway authorities have a statutory duty, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), to produce a ROWIP. Public Rights Of Way (PROW) include footpaths, bridleways, and byways. The distinction between the different types of PROWs is explained fully on the Council's [website](#).
- 3 The Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated that our residents, more than ever before, understand the value of using the local PROW routes for the benefit of their mental and physical health. Furthermore, working habits and recreational time has changed for many residents with people spending more time in their local green spaces. Therefore,

ROWIP4 comes at a time when people use, need and value their local PROW and other recreational routes.

- 4 The ROWIP outlines how the local authority will address the extent to which rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public, ensuring the PROW network is fit for the 21st century. It does not replace the Council's existing statutory duties in respect of public rights of way but seeks to develop wider aspirations for public rights of way in County Durham.
- 5 The previous ROWIP, [ROWIP 3](#) ran from 2015 – 2018 so is now five years out of date. ROWIP4 intends to be more strategic than the first three ROWIPs and the 4 strategic objectives and 8 policies are for the next 10 years, rather than 3-year lifespans. The Plan will put the authority in a strong position to draw in external funding and help set priorities for resources already allocated for PROW improvements.
- 6 As part of drafting ROWIP4, we carried out extensive co-production across the different Council departments and with external organisations to develop a draft plan (see para 18 for full list). Co-production has been fundamental to drafting 4 strategic objectives and 8 policies that will frame PROW investment for the next 10 years.
- 7 The Strategic Objectives of ROWIP 4 are as follows:
 - Managing and enhancing the PROW Network so it is fit for the 21st century;
 - Promoting a PROW network that contributes to the Green Economy by marketing the County's high-quality environment;
 - Empowering communities and individuals to 'Move More';
 - Ensuring the County's PROW are accessible to people of all abilities.
- 8 The strategic objectives in ROWIP4 deliberately reflect key council plans and strategies. For example, ROWIP4 sets out to support both the green economy and healthy workforces in alignment with the recently adopted Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES). ROWIP4 supports all 5 Ps of the IES (people, productivity, places, promotion, and planet) and will also align to other key council strategies such as the emerging Physical Activity Strategy 'Move Together', the Physical Activity Framework and the Poverty Strategy.
- 9 ROWIP4s objectives have also incorporated ideas from external organisations as diverse as the National Trust, County Durham Sport and the County Durham charity [Walk and Talk Trust](#). Most external stakeholders highlighted a lack of confidence residents and visitors have when using PROW due to the lack of reliable infrastructure, such

as the insufficient provision of signs, which creates fear around following routes that do not have clear directions.

- 10 The headings of the 8 policies to be consulted on are as follows:
- 1: Delivering a High-Quality Access Network
 - 2: Awareness of Public Rights of Way and other routes
 - 3: Making our Network Accessible '10 in 10'
 - 4: Empowering Communities to 'own' their Right of Way Network
 - 5: Promoting the Economy and Cultural Identity of County Durham through our Right of Way network
 - 6: Ensuring the Countryside Code is followed, and Landowners are respected
 - 7: Incorporating Public Rights of Way in New Development
 - 8: Monitoring the use of our Public Rights of Way
- 11 A summary of the intention of each policy is contained in the main body (paras 27-38 below) of the report. These policies are now open to public scrutiny through consultation.
- 12 In summary, ROWIP4 is a long-term strategy with an improvement plan for the County PROW network. We are creating policies as a mechanism for delivering objectives for the benefits of our residents over a 10-year timeframe. A shorter 3-year delivery plan will be produced following the consultation, but this consultation draft is to make sure that we have the correct strategic objectives and policies before finalising a detailed investment programme.

Recommendation

- 13 Cabinet is recommended to:
- (a) agree the content of this report and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 4 (2023-2033);
 - (b) agree to a 12-week public consultation on the draft ROWIP4 as set out in Appendix 2;
 - (c) agree that another report will be brought to Cabinet covering the consultation feedback and the adoption of the final ROWIP4.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 4 (ROWIP4) 2023-33

Vision

- 14 Durham County Council's ROWIP4 is a 10-year long-term plan, which considers Public Rights of Way (PROW) within the entire County and sets an ambitious but realistic strategic vision of how to improve our PROW network over the next 10 years, from 2023 to 2033.
- 15 ROWIP4 will differ to previous ROWIPs produced by the Council in terms of the plan being more community and partnership led (see summary of policies in para's 28-40). It will be driven in part by the quality of digital information which will enable the Council and its partners to implement higher standard monitoring methods and develop better physical and digital signposting so residents are aware of their local routes.
- 16 The plan promotes outdoor recreation as a major asset for County Durham and therefore supports the economic growth that can be fostered through the activities of Visit County Durham and in line with the ambitions to grow our green economy in accordance with the Inclusive Economic Strategy. The Plan is vital for the wellbeing of communities in County Durham and will help other partners, internal and external to the Council, to deliver their objectives which can ultimately benefit all of our residents.

Co-producing ROWIP4 2023-2033

- 17 The first stage in creating ROWIP4 was to understand the key issues affecting PROW and how people use them in County Durham. As part of this draft Plan, we have co-produced it with both internal and external stakeholders, including those set out on the table below:

Internal	External
Sustainable Travel	Area Action Partnerships
Countryside Team	National Trust
Public Health	Forestry England
Rights of Way Team	Local Access Forum
Highways	Sport England
Equality and Diversity	County Durham Sport
Legal Services	Special Access Consultant, Experience Community
Visit Country Durham	Cycling UK: North of England
North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Team	Wolsingham Wayfarers
Planning and Development Management	Walk and Talk Trust
Culture, Sport, and Tourism	British Horse Society

- 18 The ROWIP4 project team gathered qualitative and quantitative data attending 20 plus stakeholder meetings and completing the ‘spend a tenner’ exercise, which enabled us to collect primary data on the priorities stakeholders wanted to see reflected in ROWIP4. ROWIP4 is therefore a co-produced improvement plan, and the draft objectives and policies reflect stakeholder priorities.
- 19 Internal to the Council, we set up a cross departmental ROWIP4 steering group to ensure due consideration was given to various stakeholder interests. The steering group met several times to discuss ROWIP4s development and included representation from the Local Access Forum.

Strategic Objectives of ROWIP4 2023-33

- 20 ROWIP4 has been drafted to compliment a range of objectives found in the key plans and strategies of DCC and its partners. Some of the strategic objectives are intentionally different to those found in the previous ROWIP’s and they reflect a more modern, integrated and community-based approach to managing our local PROW.
- 21 The strategic objectives are as follows:
- Managing and enhancing the PROW Network so it is fit for the 21st century;
 - Promoting a PROW network that contributes to the Green Economy by marketing the County’s high-quality environment;

- Empowering communities and individuals to ‘Move More’;
 - Ensuring the County’s PROW are accessible to people of all abilities.
- 22 The ROWIP picks up on important themes set out in the Council vision 2019-2035 relating to long and independent lives and connected communities and also the environmental and physical objectives set out in the Council Plan 2022-26 around protecting our natural environment and creating a physical environment that contributes towards good health.
- 23 It complements the Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) 2022 and supports all 5 Ps (people, productivity, places, promotion, and planet) of the IES. ROWIP4 can support both the green economy and healthy workforces, as well as improving physical connectivity between places in the County. It also promotes enhancing digital infrastructure related to PROW.
- 24 ROWIP4 tackles the issues found within the Climate Emergency by encouraging active travel (walking, cycling, or riding) and using local assets to get people moving. It also complements our transport objectives, particularly the emerging Local and Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and the North East Transport Plan which both promote active travel.
- 25 It promotes an affordable recreational activity that will increase occurrences of physical activity in alignment with DCC’s emerging Physical Activity Strategy, ‘Moving Together’. It can encourage everyday exercise, accessible to all which can have positive impacts on reducing health inequality between different areas in the County. More use of public rights of way promotes mental and physical wellbeing for all.
- 26 ROWIP4s objectives have also incorporated ideas from external organisations as diverse as the National Trust, County Durham Sport and the County Durham charity Walk and Talk Trust. Most external stakeholders highlighted a lack of confidence residents have when using PROW due to the lack of reliable infrastructure, such as the insufficient provision of signs, which creates fear around following routes that do not have clear directions.
- 27 People may be apprehensive about using new routes because of the uncertainty about what they will find when they venture off-road. Having access to information about County Durham PROW on digital platforms thereby reassures people and provides confidence that PROW are available for the full range of users. By improving signage to gateway

sites and key entry points, residents and tourists will feel more confident, safe and welcome.

ROWIP4 2023-33 Policies for Public Consultation

- 28 The following section of the report gives an overview of the 8 policies of ROWIP4 that we will be consulting upon. In the consultation version of the documents, each proposed policy will be accompanied by a consultation question asking if the policy is fit for purpose and how the council should monitor the performance of the policy.
- 29 The 8 proposed policies of ROWIP4 are as follows:
- 30 *Policy 1: Managing and Delivering a High-Quality Access network* – The first policy in the Plan sets the tone for all the policies in the improvement plan by setting out tangible projects for the Rights of Way team. This policy is about the everyday duties and responsibilities of DCC's Rights of Way team as well as the priorities for investment that will be delivered by the team in the ROWIP4 period. It gives an overview of some of the key legal responsibilities including the need to ensure that PROW are adequately signposted, maintained, and free from obstruction.
- 31 In addition to the day to day legal duties of the team, this policy sets out some of the key projects that the Rights of Way team will be delivering in the 10 year ROWIP4 period, including prioritising investment and allocating resources for:
- (a) Signage;
 - (b) Bridleways;
 - (c) The Stockton and Darlington Heritage Walk and Cycle Route;
 - (d) PROW close to settlements;
 - (e) Engagement with communities; and
 - (f) Diverting footpaths out of farmyards.
- 32 *Policy 2: Awareness of Public Rights of Way and other routes* - This policy aims to increase the awareness of PROW and other routes network by raising the profile of the routes both physically and digitally. The policy seeks to create a high-quality digital platform which comprises all public, recreational, and utility routes onto one website page. This will be more than hosting the existing Definitive Map¹ of public rights of way because it will add railway paths and all the other public access opportunities. It will provide information on routes for families and residents and give them the confidence to use all types of the public network. Branded routes will be 'tiered' including routes such

¹ The Definitive Map is already in a digital format and can be found [here](#)

as the English Coastal Path, the Northern Saints trails, the Weardale Way or the more local H100 network.

- 33 As well as more physical signposting and waymarking, we should also develop a working partnership with an outdoors app. company who could host our branded walks so residents and visitors to County Durham can use GPS software for waymarking.
- 34 *Policy 3: Making our Network Accessible '10 in 10'* - The Council is committed to making PROW more accessible for all residents. This policy will achieve that ambition by setting out a programme of accessible routes and seeks to establish '10 in 10' circular accessible routes in the County; 10 accessible routes in 10 destinations in 10 years. The routes will be wheelchair accessible and be accompanied by high-quality information, such as information on toilets, parking, signage, surface etc. The areas which will receive greater focus in terms of the development of the 10 routes will be northern, central, and coastal areas.
- 35 *Policy 4: Empowering Communities to 'own' their Right of Way Network* - We want people to own their local PROWs in a way that they begin to care, maintain, and cherish their local paths. To achieve this, the Council will encourage communities to have local ambassadors who will serve as volunteer community representatives, providing knowledge about local routes and creating community-based walks. This policy includes allocated resource within the DCC Rights of Way team to work directly with community groups. This policy is inspired by the work of the Wolsingham Wayfarers and the charity Walk and Talk Trust.
- 36 *Policy 5: Promoting the Economy and Cultural Identity of County Durham through our Right of Way network* - The Council will promote routes to tourists and local communities through local news sites and social media. This is to encourage engagement with PROW across the County and showcase the cultural heritage of County Durham through walking, cycling, or riding.
- 37 *Policy 6: Ensuring the Countryside Code is followed, and Landowners are respected* - This policy aims to educate users of the PROW network about the Countryside Code and the work of private landowners to ensure the PROW network is used in a responsible way. This will involve the Council working with local communities and schools.
- 38 *Policy 7: Incorporating Public Rights of Way in New Development* - Under this policy, the Council will protect and integrate PROW in developments in accordance with Policy 26 of the County Durham Plan. We will provide clear guidelines on how S106 money is spent to prioritise and protect the PROW network.

- 39 *Policy 8: Monitoring the use of our Public Rights of Way* - Due to the increase of foot traffic on PROWs across the County following the covid-19 pandemic, we need to monitor the use of PROWs and the subsequent impact on ecology and climate change to help focus our investment in the right places, particularly on popular routes. Monitoring will be achieved by using GPS and Bluetooth technologies, as well as in-person counters. Technology is reliable and ensures maintenance issues can be captured on the PROW network in real time, such as reporting fallen down trees.

Monitoring Progress

- 40 The council will want to monitor the progress of ROWIP4 so in addition to policy 8 above, we also intend to implement an annual monitoring framework based upon the performance of the 8 proposed policies.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 41 Following the 12-week consultation, the next steps are to incorporate consultation feedback into ROWIP4. Once the public have had their say on key strategic objectives and policies in ROWIP4, the next stage of strategy development will be to create a 3-year Delivery Plan that will accompany the final adopted version of ROWIP4. This will be used by our Rights of Way team to allocate funding and resources to improving PROW in County Durham with assistance from our partners.
- 42 Once the delivery plan has been developed, we will seek to adopt ROWIP4 using delegated powers. ROWIP4 will complement other key Council strategies but also the ambitions of our partners who we have spoken to and who have helped co-produce this consultation version.
- 43 Having co-produced these policies with internal and external partners, the Council now want to open up these policies to consultation with the public and with a wider group of stakeholders including AAP's and Town and Parish Councils, to make sure the policies are fit for purpose.
- 44 If Cabinet members are minded to agree to the content of the report and the approval to begin public consultation on ROWIP 4, the consultation will begin for a statutory 12 week period starting May 2023.

Background Papers

- Draft ROWIP4

Author(s)

Peter Ollivere

peter.ollivere@durham.gov.uk

Mike Ogden

mike.ogden@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Different paths have different legal statuses and there are several different Public Rights of Way (PROW) including footpaths, bridleways and byways. Although railway paths are a key element of the ROWIP4, it is worth noting that they do not have the same legal status as PROW. The railway paths are classed as 'permissive paths' where permission to use could be withdrawn by the landowner.

All local highway authorities have a statutory duty, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). It is also a legal requirement to include diversions out of farmyards.

Local Highway Authorities have duties under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Highways Act 1980 to ensure that PROW are adequately signposted, maintained, and free from obstruction.

There are some issues around trespassing of private land that is covered in policy 5 and in Crime and Disorder later in Appendix 1.

Finance

There are no direct financial implications from the proposed consultation exercise, which is covered by existing revenue budgets. ROWIP4 will put the authority in a strong position to draw in external funding and help set priorities utilising funding already allocated in the current medium term financial plan.

The use of a 3-year Delivery Plan that sits under the ROWIP will be developed in 2023 and thereafter will be reviewed on a shorter time frame than the overarching 10 year strategic objectives and policies in this consultation document.

A delivery plan will enable regular reviews to respond to latest budgets, on the ground audits while allowing priorities to be reassessed by the Rights of Way and Countryside teams as the monitoring process referred to Policy 8 becomes established.

Consultation

The aim of this report is to agree to a 12-week public consultation starting May 2023. The drafting of the ROWIP to date has been stakeholder led and in co-production with internal departments and external partners. The draft document and policies was presented to the Local Access Forum in October 2022 and to members of the LAF also in January 2023.

A consultation plan is being drawn up in association with the Consultation Officers Group and promoted with all the usual communication channels with online events for members of the public and other stakeholders. As part of the consultation, it is anticipated that specific accessibility workshops will be held relating to the development of ROWIP4. It is also proposed that this consultation is aligned with the development of the Physical Activity (Moving Together) Strategy.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Policy 3 of ROWIP4 has a specific policy that seeks to create accessible routes in the County. As part of the consultation, it is planned that specific accessibility workshops will be held relating to the development of this and other policies within ROWIP4.

ROWIP4 is accompanied by an equalities impact assessment (EIA) which will be adopted following public consultation (see Appendix 3).

Climate Change

The Planet and the green economy are one of the key elements of the ROWIP and the policies are designed so that County Durham communities are more active and make more use of the County Durham landscape for mental and physical health. This will lead to a greater appreciation of local environments and reduce amount of car-based travel as residents can enjoy a more accessible local environment and use it for local journeys.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

Anti-social behaviour, particularly illegal motorbike use on PROW, is becoming an increasing issue in urban and urban-fringe areas. We are seeing the fear of motorbikes gaining access as a key barrier to some landowners agreeing to make footpaths more accessible. Ultimately, anti-social behaviour is a police matter, but a partnership approach is the preferred method of addressing it. Therefore, we will share information with the Police in terms of the locations of where anti-social behaviour is most prominent in order to tackle the issue at hand. This will minimise the disruption for lawful users on PROW across the County and provide extra security to farmers and/or private landowners.

Staffing

Resources will be allocated to deliver the policies within ROWIP4. Ongoing updating, monitoring and maintenance of digital information will be required in accordance with Policy 2 of the plan. It is essential for staff to provide relevant information on PROW for people to continuously access. This ensures that

Policy 2 of the Plan, which relates to keeping a digital sharing platform updated so is future proof and relevant to online viewers.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

Appendix 2: ROWIP 4

See separate attachment

Appendix 3: EIA

See separate attachment

This page is intentionally left blank

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 4 2023-2033

6. Contents

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2	INTRODUCTION	6
2.1	Review of previous ROWIPs	7
	Partnership working.....	8
	PROW and New Development	8
	PROW Infrastructure	8
3	VISION FOR ROWIP4	10
3.1	ROWIP4's Strategic Objectives.....	11
4	SCOPE OF ROWIP4 FROM 2023 TO 2033	12
4.1	Internal and External Stakeholders:.....	13
5	POLICIES	15
	Policy 1: Managing and Delivering a High-Quality Access network	15
5.1	CASE STUDY: The Stockton and Darlington Railway	16
	Policy 2: Awareness of Public Rights of Way and other routes.....	18
	Policy 3: Making our Network Accessible – ‘10 in 10’	21
5.2	CASE STUDY: Phototrails.....	23
	Policy 4: Empowering Communities to ‘own’ their Public Right of Way Network.....	24
5.3	CASE STUDY: Wolsingham Wayfarers	26
5.4	CASE STUDY: Heritage 100	27
	Policy 5: Promoting the Economy and Cultural Identity of County Durham through our Public Rights of Way Network.....	28
5.5	CASE STUDY: Northern Saints Trails	29
5.6	CASE STUDY: Hamsterley Forest.....	29
	Policy 6: Ensuring the Countryside Code is followed, and Landowners are respected	31
	Policy 7: Incorporating Public Rights of Way in New Development.....	33
5.7	CASE STUDY: Mount Oswald, Durham City	34
	Policy 8: Monitoring the use of our Public Rights of Way.....	35

6	CONCLUSION	37
7	APPENDIX A - ROWIP4 AND THE COUNCIL'S KEY CORPORATE PLANS AND OBJECTIVES	38
8	APPENDIX B - COUNTY DURHAM PLAN CONTEXT	41

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. All local highway authorities have a statutory duty, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), to produce a ROWIP. Public Rights of Way (PROW) include footpaths, bridleways, and byways. The distinction between the different types of PROW is explained fully on the Council's [website](#).
- 1.2. The Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated that our residents, more than ever before, understand the value of using their local PROW routes for the benefit of their mental and physical health. Furthermore, working habits and recreational time has changed for many residents with people spending more time in their local green spaces. Therefore, ROWIP4 comes at a time when people use, need and value their local PROW and other recreational routes.
- 1.3. The ROWIP outlines how the local authority will address the extent to which rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public, ensuring the PROW network is fit for the 21st century. It does not replace the Council's existing statutory duties in respect of PROW but seeks to develop wider aspirations for PROW in County Durham.
- 1.4. The previous ROWIP, [ROWIP 3](#), ran from 2015 to 2018, so it is now five years out of date. ROWIP4 intends to be more strategic than the first three ROWIPs, and the 4 strategic objectives and 8 policies are for the next 10 years, rather than 3-year lifespans. The Plan will put the authority in a strong position to draw in external funding and help set priorities for resources already allocated for PROW improvements.
- 1.5. As part of drafting ROWIP4, we carried out extensive co-production across the different Council departments and with external organisations to develop a draft plan (see paragraph 18 for the full list). Co-production has been fundamental to drafting 4 strategic objectives and 8 policies that will frame PROW investment for the next 10 years.
- 1.6. The Strategic Objectives of ROWIP 4 are as follows:
 - Managing and enhancing the PROW network so it is fit for the 21st century.
 - Promoting a PROW network that contributes to the Green Economy by marketing the County's high-quality environment.
 - Empowering communities and individuals to 'Move More'.
 - Ensuring the County's PROW are accessible to people of all abilities.
- 1.7. The strategic objectives in ROWIP4 deliberately reflect key Council plans and strategies. For example, ROWIP4 sets out to support both the green economy

and healthy workforces in alignment with the recently adopted Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES). ROWIP4 further supports all 5 Ps of the IES (people, productivity, places, promotion, and planet) and will additionally align with other key Council strategies, such as the emerging Public Health Physical Activity Strategy 'Move Together', the Physical Activity Framework and the Poverty Strategy.

- 1.8. ROWIP4's objectives have also incorporated ideas from external organisations, such as the National Trust, County Durham Sport, and the County Durham charity [Walk and Talk Trust](#). Most external stakeholders highlighted that residents and visitors have a lack of confidence when using PROW due to the lack of reliable infrastructure, such as the insufficient provision of signs, which creates fear around following routes that do not have clear directions.
- 1.9. The headings of the 8 policies to be consulted on are as follows:
 1. Delivering a High-Quality Access Network
 2. Awareness of Public Rights of Way and other routes
 3. Making our Network Accessible '10 in 10'
 4. Empowering Communities to 'own' their Right of Way Network
 5. Promoting the Economy and Cultural Identity of County Durham through our Right of Way network.
 6. Ensuring the Countryside Code is followed, and Landowners are respected
 7. Incorporating Public Rights of Way in New Development
 8. Monitoring the use of our Public Rights of Way.
- 1.10. A summary of the intention of each policy is contained in the main body (paragraphs 26-38 below) of the report. These policies are now open to public scrutiny through consultation.
- 1.11. In summary, ROWIP4 is a long-term strategy with an improvement plan for the County PROW network. We are creating policies as a mechanism for delivering objectives for the benefits of our residents over a 10-year timeframe. A shorter 3-year delivery plan will be produced following the consultation, but this consultation draft is to ensure that we have the correct strategic objectives and policies before finalising a detailed investment programme.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Durham County Council's ROWIP4 is a 10-year long-term plan, which considers Public Rights of Way (PROW) within the County and sets an ambitious but realistic strategic vision of how to improve our PROW network over the next 10 years, from 2023 to 2033.
- 2.2. All local highway authorities have a statutory duty, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The ROWIP outlines how the local authority will address important matters, such as the extent to which rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public¹, ensuring the PROW network is fit for the 21st century.
- 2.3. In addition, the ROWIP must address the following matters:
- The opportunities provided by local PROW (i.e., cycle tracks, footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways, and byways in the authority area) for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area; and
 - The accessibility of local PROW to blind or partially sighted people and others with mobility problems².
- 2.4. PROW include footpaths, bridleways, and byways. The distinction between the different types of PROW is explained fully on the [Council's website](#). A public footpath is a highway in which the public has a right of way on foot. A public bridleway is different to a footpath since the public has a right of way on foot, as well on horseback, leading a horse and on a pedal cycle. In addition, there are two types of byways – restricted byways and Byways Open to all Traffic (BOAT). On a restricted byway, the public have right of way on foot, on horseback or leading a horse, by cycling and driving vehicles other than mechanically propelled vehicles (e.g., horse and cart). Walkers, horse riders, cyclists, horse-drawn vehicles, and motorised vehicles have right of way on a BOAT.
- 2.5. In the life of this Plan, we are likely to see additional bridleways added to the PROW network, even if only a proportion of the alleged historic bridleways are proven to exist, which will have positive implications for all users, including horse-riders and mountain bikers. Policy 1 of this Plan will help inform people of these changes.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/60> - S1(a)

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/60> - S2(c)

- 2.6. ROWIP4 will focus on the network of recorded PROW, rather than all open greenspace in the County. It is important to note that commonly, PROW will intersect and connect with amenity open greenspace, such as parks, railway paths, forest areas and other open space available for public use. Nonetheless, this does not mean that all types of open greenspace forms part of the PROW network; it is simply a vital aspect of ROWIP4 that PROW link with amenity open greenspace across the County. Amenity greenspace is often situated within housing areas where residents may want or need to access PROW through using the land that is around them. The land must therefore be interconnected, and this notion of connectivity plays a significant part in supporting County Durham Partnership's objective of 'connecting communities' by 2035³ and supporting the Inclusive Economic Strategy. This does not mean that ROWIP4 will include specific actions relating to all other types of greenspaces, it is simply understanding the important connections between PROW and other publicly accessible routes, and ensuring these links are appropriate to meet the long-term needs of our communities that are set out within our 4 strategic goals.

6. Review of previous ROWIPs

- 2.7. In 2007, ROWIP1, Passionate About Paths, was based upon what people told us were the most important issues and priorities for the PROW network in the future. The objectives of ROWIP1 were designed to be aspirational and conveyed the optimism and ambitions of that time. It helped raise the profile of our PROW work, secure funding for improvements, encourage partnership-working and generate a greater appreciation of the network.
- 2.8. The second plan, Paths for People (ROWIP2), was published in July 2011. ROWIP2 built on the success of ROWIP1 but considered the financial challenges faced by local authorities and other providers of outdoor recreation. As a result, it set out a more focussed approach to reflect a reduction in resources and developed an action plan which targeted key access routes with greatest demand, such as important utility and recreational paths around communities.

³ This objective is from the County Durham Partnership, an organisation made up of key public, private and voluntary sector organisations that work together to drive a common purpose and ambition for the County, and to improve the quality of life for County Durham residents. More about the County Durham Partnership can be found here: <https://countydurhampartnership.co.uk/>

- 2.9. ROWIP3, Walk, Cycle, Ride (2015), continued to build on the foundations set by its predecessors and adopted the same pragmatic, creative approach to providing a network suitable for the 21st century. The plan looked at how different elements⁴ can work together to fulfil access needs for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, and some off-road vehicle users. The successes of ROWIP3 can be found below.

6. Partnership working

- 2.10. The last seven years have seen strong partnerships help deliver important projects and improvements to the PROW network across the County. Partnerships include Planning Developers, Durham County Council's Development Management Team, Landscape Designers, The Heritage Coast, North Pennines AONB etc. Projects which have been delivered as part of this excellent collaborative development include the Northern Saints Trails, The Pennine Way and English Coast Path, Brightwater, and The Heritage Way.

6. PROW and New Development

- 2.11. The Rights of Way Team have begun securing Section 106 funding for new and improved footpaths as part of new planning applications. The ROW Team are now fully integrated into the development management and design process and when new developments are being designed, they are much more likely to respect existing or new PROW routes in housing developments. In addition, policies in the County Durham Plan (CDP) and its supporting documents (including Policy 7 in this ROWIP) place requirements on developers to ensure PROW are prioritised in new developments. This has enabled the Team to take a more responsive approach to planning applications.

6. PROW Infrastructure

- 2.12. The Rights of Way Team have replaced hundreds of stiles with kissing gates in locations across Durham to improve access to the countryside. A good example of a project where this occurred was at Tantobie, where a network of stiles was replaced with more accessible gates. In Tantobie and elsewhere across the County, negotiating with landowners was a key part of the process which

⁴ Elements include the provision of important infrastructure, such as the highway network, sufficient transport facilities, cycling, walking, and riding routes, for example.

enabled a satisfactory outcome for all users. This has ensured the PROW network is accessible for a wider range of users. Policy 3 of this Plan seeks to continue to improve accessibility for a wider range of users by creating 10 accessible routes in 10 years.

- 2.13. ROWIP4 will reflect the successful elements of previous Council ROWIPs but will be brought up to date and have a long-term strategic vision by reflecting the current and future needs of stakeholders and local communities. While preparing the first draft, we have carried out extensive external stakeholder engagement to ensure that ROWIP4 is a plan for the County, not just for the County Council.

3. Vision for ROWIP4

- 3.1. County Durham has much to offer residents and visitors who want to discover its natural beauty. At 2,676 square kilometres, it is a large, geographically diverse area with a vast network of footpaths, converted wagonways and railway lines which connect the many towns and villages within the County. The network of trails and paths are extensive and provide County Durham with some significant advantages in terms of planning and creating routes; allied to this is the landscape itself which showcases the remnants of the County's industrial past.
- 3.2. County Durham has a varying landscape of dales, moors, coastline, and wooded river valleys, as well as beautiful nature reserves, parks and reclaimed land which surround towns and villages throughout the County. This diverse landscape distinguishes County Durham; the rich environmental and industrial heritage can be explored through using PROW. Whether a visitor stops to explore an Anglo-Saxon church in Escomb or to watch otters by the river at Shincliffe, the effect is the same - to paint the County in a positive light as a place of discovery.
- 3.3. The Council and its partners have strong aspirations to put County Durham on the map for its beautiful countryside and PROW to attract both residents and tourists to visit the outdoors and improve their health and wellbeing. Linear tourist routes, such as the Pennine Way, England Coast Path, Northern Saints Trails, Weardale Way and Teesdale Way, provide impressive walking, cycling, and riding opportunities. We will support our communities to create, maintain and publicise circular routes from settlements so residents can be more active every day. More routes will be available to communities because of an uplift in digital accessibility and we will have implemented a monitoring system to provide information on where popular routes exist. This will enable the Council and its partnership organisations to invest in the right routes across the County. We will therefore invest in facilities and greenspaces to maximise the potential of our environment.
- 3.4. ROWIP4 will help improve the health and wellbeing of our residents. An objective is to make PROW more attractive and accessible for all. The vision for County Durham in 2033 is to have details of routes which can be accessed online, where navigation is easy and exciting. The Council will help provide 10 accessible circular routes in 10 County Durham settlements in 10 years, promoting formal and informal physical activity close to home. Our PROW network will therefore be more accessible and inclusive, and this will help embed physical activity into the fabric of everyday lives for residents and tourists.

- 3.5. Through ROWIP4, we will deliver a range of planned green networks which incorporate and provide multiple benefits simultaneously to local communities. These benefits can include the protection of biodiversity and wildlife, improvement to mental and physical wellbeing, the development of recreational sport and the reduction of carbon emissions.
- 3.6. The Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised the importance of accessing PROW, the valuable role greenspace has in managing physical and mental wellbeing and has subsequently altered the behaviour of many County Durham residents, encouraging physical activity and engaging people with the outdoor environment.
- 3.7. We have analysed Google's Covid-19 Mobility Data, which suggests that the physical activity of County Durham residents increased by 89% in the summer months of 2022⁵. Physical activity was measured through residents accessing greenspace, such as visiting national parks, beaches, and public gardens. The data, which was collected through manipulating mobile location history settings, illustrates that more people are using greenspace, exhibiting the need to provide relevant infrastructure to provide for this growth in use. Therefore, the ROWIP4 project comes at a time when people in County Durham communities value their local greenspace more than ever.

6. ROWIP4's Strategic Objectives

- 3.8. Managing and enhancing the PROW network so it is fit for the 21st century.
 - Promoting a PROW network that contributes to the Green Economy by marketing the County's high-quality environment.
 - Empowering communities and individuals to 'Move More'.
 - Ensuring the County's PROW are accessible to people of all abilities.

Question 1:

- A. Are these the right strategic objectives?
 - B. Are there any we've missed?
-

⁵ Compared to December 2020 where it was only a 21% increase in physical activity, though take into consideration that the UK was in a tiered lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The data can be accessed here: https://www.gstatic.com/covid19/mobility/2022-09-01_GB_County_Durham_Mobility_Report_en-GB.pdf

4. Scope of ROWIP4 from 2023 to 2033

- 4.1. While economic pressures continue to shape how local authorities can function, there are also positive changes with more opportunities to build partnerships and seek new funding. In particular, the integration of public health functions within the local authority allows a new approach to contributing to quality of life and health and wellbeing by enabling and encouraging everyday physical activity.
- 4.2. ROWIP4 differs to previous ROWIPs published by the Council in terms of the project's duration – the plan is set out to be published and applicable to County Durham for the next 10 years (previous plans only covered 3 to 4 years). This 10-year plan gives the Council's Rights of Way Team the time to work with other departments and partners on shared goals, enabling investment on strategic objectives rather than always reacting to day-to-day issues. Whilst it is important to be able to respond to public concerns, there is a need for a plan to build a better PROW network in line with our strategic objectives set out above. ROWIP4 therefore has greater longevity and aims to provide a longer strategic vision for PROW across the County.
- 4.3. ROWIP4 aims to be community led and informed by the quality of information with continuous monitoring methods and regular reviewing of the policies in the document. We aim to achieve our strategic objective of making the network fit for the 21st century.
- 4.4. ROWIP4 is a long-term strategy with an improvement plan. Policies are set out as the mechanism for delivering the objectives within this 10-year timeframe. As part of ROWIP4, extensive consultation has been carried out across Council departments and with external organisations to develop policies and deliver this draft plan that is now open to public scrutiny through consultation (see table below). This engagement has additionally formed part of the draft implementation plan, since stakeholders highlighted specific areas of the PROW network which need improving and prioritising. In addition, quantifiable data from internal and external stakeholders has been gathered to inform our strategic objectives for the PROW network and these priorities inform the policies in the plan.

6. Internal and External Stakeholders:

Internal	External
Sustainable Travel	Area Action Partnerships
Countryside Team	National Trust
Public Health	Forestry England
Rights of Way Team	Local Access Forum
Highways	Sport England
Equality and Diversity	County Durham Sport
Legal Services	Special Access Consultant, Experience Community
Visit Country Durham	Cycling UK: North of England
North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Team	Wolsingham Wayfarers
Planning and Development Management	Walk and Talk Trust
Culture, Sport, and Tourism	British Horse Society

- 4.5. It is more important than ever that the access network provides high quality links to work and to local services from new and existing housing areas. High quality path provision assists regeneration and encourages businesses to invest and expand in County Durham.
- 4.6. The Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated that people now, more than ever before, understand the value of local PROW that are close to their home and recognise the importance of utilising greenspace for the benefit of their mental and physical health. This is in part due to the number of people who are now working from home, which increased significantly during the pandemic, as well as the isolation felt by many during lockdown. ROWIP4 comes at a time when people need and value their local PROW.
- 4.7. Although previous ROWIPs focussed on the PROW network, we recognise that this is one element within the wider access network. To strategically manage and improve the whole network, ROWIP4 will consider all routes and as such it covers PROW (footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways, and byways), railway paths, permissive paths, promoted routes, cycle routes, Open Access, or Coastal Access Land and other public sector land where public access is available. Where the plan states “path” this is in its broadest sense and refers to all types mentioned.

- 4.8. There are a wide variety of users of our PROW network, and the importance of encouraging the broadest cross-section of users from local communities is paramount; from horse-riders and cyclists who use the multitude of bridleways to walkers and running groups who utilise extensive footpaths for recreational means. Through ROWIP4, we will continue to have due regard for the Equality Act 2010⁶ by considering the widest range of users, in particular individuals with mobility issues. We will also continue to adhere to our duty to protect sensitive habitats and biodiversity in managing and improving access. Natural England's National Character Area⁷ profiles will be used to help determine access improvements which are appropriate to the landscape character of each area. Opportunities to contribute to leisure options will be a key objective of the plan.
- 4.9. The policies in ROWIP4 are different to policies seen in the previous three ROWIPs, as the policies seek to bring digital data and mapping into how the Council plan and monitor our PROW network for the benefit of communities, which will ultimately guide investment. ROWIP4 is designed to promote County Durham's PROW network to ensure it is more accessible and attractive for all our residents and visitors. An objective is to establish County Durham as the flagship area for access to the outdoors and to be seen as the nation's premier walking County.

⁶ Equality Act 2010:

⁷

<https://www.google.com/search?q=.%20%99s%20National%20Character%20Area&oeq=.%20%99s%20National%20Character%20Area&ags=chrome.69i57j0i22i30.701j0i7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

5. Policies

Policy 1: Managing and Delivering a High-Quality Access network

The Council and its partners will deliver high quality improvements to the network and their working practices to enable a sustainable, attractive, and efficient use of resources. The Council and its partners will:

- A. Protect and maintain the network by ensuring the rights of the public are asserted and protected through the allocation of an annual budget for maintenance and continuing the registration and protection of unrecorded rights, as well as the ongoing maintenance of network records;
- B. Modernise the network by improving existing routes and creating new paths only where there is a need and ensuring permissive access agreements are in accordance with the policies contained later within ROWIP4;
- C. Prioritise improvements. Specific priorities for ROWIP4 include:
 - a. Auditing and subsequently prioritising significant investment in signage across the County;
 - b. Identifying and investing in a network of bridleways;
 - c. Delivering the Stockton and Darlington Heritage Railway walking and cycling routes;
 - d. Prioritising PROW routes close to settlements (See Policy 2: Awareness of Public Rights of Way and other routes);
 - e. Allocating resources to work and liaise with communities (See Policy 4: Empowering Communities to 'own their Public Right of Way Network); and
 - f. Supporting the diversion of PROW out of farmyards where possible and rationalising routes where appropriate (See Policy 6: Ensuring the Countryside Code is followed, and Landowners are respected).

5.1. The Council and its partners will strive to manage and deliver the PROW network so that it fulfils its potential and is an available and enjoyable resource for the public. Good management includes maintenance, which is crucial to making the most of the network, as well as investment in improvements and encouraging people to use and enjoy the routes. Enforcing the Highway Law is also a vital area of work, and the Council and its partners will fulfil their duties to assert and protect the public's right to use the routes.

5.2. Local Highway Authorities have duties under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Highways Act 1980 to ensure that PROW are adequately

signposted, maintained, and free from obstruction. ROWIP4 will fulfil this duty by directing investment into the auditing of signage across the County, since there has been no strategic investment in signage in the last 20 years. This will enable signage to be of a high standard and available for people to use. It is crucial to have high-quality signage on the ground for people to feel confident using these routes, and many stakeholders agree that signage is the most important piece of infrastructure which needs improving to encourage public engagement with PROW. Due to the scale of the County, auditing of signage needs to be planned and carried out in a strategic and logical way.

- 5.3. Bridleways are an important element of the PROW network, yet despite this, they lack connectivity. Subsequently, the British Horse Society want to create new routes to expand the number of bridleways that already exist. It must be ensured that the development or enhancement of new bridleways is strategic, therefore, as part of the ROWIP4 delivery plan, we are planning to invest in enhanced bridleways close to local communities. This will create desirable and convenient locations where investment can take place to provide high-quality bridleways for all users.
- 5.4. In alignment with Policy 2, stakeholders believe ROWIP4 should focus its investment near local settlements and communities to develop circular routes for residents. The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated that having PROW or accessible routes close to communities meets the needs of a variety of users and encourages physical activity since routes are closer to people's homes and therefore easier to access. Policy 1, criteria d, states that ROWIP4 will target investment in routes near populations, with H100 routes as an example of this.
- 5.5. It is evident that social media has enhanced the number and variety of localised walking groups, who have an interest in improving walking and riding routes. In recognition of this growth in user-group popularity, all partners must liaise with these groups in local communities to stimulate greater engagement and investment of the PROW network, which will require the allocation of resources. Policy 4 reiterates the importance of engaging local communities and promoting the use of PROW routes.
- 5.6. Rationalising the number of routes may be necessary to ensure sustainability based on local need. It is a central issue which could save maintenance resources and benefit both private landowners and public users by closing some routes to provide a more sustainable, suitable route.

6. CASE STUDY: The Stockton and Darlington Railway

- 5.7. The Stockton and Darlington Railway⁸ is a 26-mile route in which people can walk, cycle and ride. The active mode route connects heritage attractions along the old railway line, which was the first public railway to use steam locomotives. The Stockton and Darlington Railway corridor will be a leading heritage transport destination and will improve the environment, economic growth and development, connectivity, physical activity, and place-making for rural communities. The route has £7.m worth of funding from the Levelling Up Fund and is to be completed by 2024, ahead of the bicentenary of the railway in 2025.

Question 2:

- A. Are the priorities in criterion C. the correct priorities for Durham County Council's Rights of Way Team? Are there any we've missed?
- B. Do you have any other comments on this policy?

⁸ The Stockton and Darlington Railway is a non-designated status route, unlike Public Rights of Way in the County, but rather like railway paths.

Policy 2: Awareness of Public Rights of Way and other routes

To support the tourist economy, connect communities and improve access to and the useability of PROW, the Council will increase awareness of the County's access network. The Council will:

- A. Work with internal and external partners to digitise the wider access network and public routes onto one digital platform. Actions will include integrating the Definitive Map of PROW with permissive routes within the County onto one digital sharing platform;**
 - B. Identify and map, onto a digital platform, a tiered system of PROW routes to ensure investment in the right places. Tiers will consist of branded national and regional routes, tourist routes and local routes, including the railway paths;**
 - C. Develop a working relationship with a smartphone app company who can host our branded routes**
 - a. Allocate a resource to monitor the app and website**
 - D. Identify and improve signage to gateway sites to public spaces and deliver improvement to key entry points (See Policy 1, criteria C).**
- 5.8. The overall aim of this policy is to map the PROW network digitally to create awareness of PROW and permissive routes for the public in order for these routes to be used for recreational, tourist and leisure means. The digital platform is for all to use which will include all leisure, tourism, and utility information and routes. The digital platform will use GPS software to provide directions and confirm positioning on the PROW network; the digital platform will not be reliant on broadband activity and thereby be reliable and efficient. Digital mapping additionally ensures the PROW network is fit for the 21st century. Many people do not rely on paper maps anymore, since smartphones and a multitude of apps, including Strava, Komoot and the Ordnance Survey (OS), are being used more frequently.
- 5.9. It is more accessible if data on where PROW routes are and how to access them, the facilities available and general information about the PROW exists all in one place. This will undoubtedly facilitate increased usage of the network. Access to PROW will therefore be attractive and convenient for our residents and help achieve the County Durham Partnership priorities which include connecting communities and helping people achieve long and independent lives.

- 5.10. County Durham Sport and Sport England highlighted that lack of confidence in using PROW exists due to the lack of reliable infrastructure, such as the insufficient provision of signs, which creates fear around following routes that do not have clear directions. People may be apprehensive about using new routes because of the uncertainty about what they will find when they venture off-road. Having access to information about PROW on digital platforms across the County thereby reassures people and provides confidence that PROW are available for the full range of users. By improving signage to gateway sites and key entry points, residents and tourists will feel more confident, safe, and welcome, as routes are clearly and physically signposted.
- 5.11. With a digital platform, users will also be able to report issues with routes in real time, pinpointing specific locations and addressing specific matters. By providing a real time digital platform, users will be able to provide feedback to the County Council and other partners to help them understand where issues are and to tackle them effectively, providing a network of PROW that are to a high standard. Therefore, the creation of a digital platform is a well-designed and strategic approach to ROWIP4.
- 5.12. To ensure digital information is up to date and is continually providing the correct information is the requirement of a specific role within the Council's Rights of Way Team. Hence, as part of this Policy, it is necessary that resources are allocated within the Rights of Way Team to monitor and contribute to social media sites and the digital platform created by ROWIP4. Ongoing maintenance of the digital information is vital if ROWIP4 is to adapt to technological changes and provide relevant information on PROW. This ensures that digital information and Policy 2 of the Plan are future proof by being kept up to date.
- 5.13. Additionally, to support County Durham's tourist economy, and in connection with the provision of a county-wide digital platform, it is intended to identify and map a tiered structure of branded PROW routes to encourage their use by visitors and County residents. The first tier consists of national and regional routes, such as the England Coast Path, Pennine Way, Northern Saints Trail, Coast to Coast Cycle Route, Teesdale Way and the Weardale Way. These routes will act as core spine routes, and we will look at the connections from other PROW to this core network. The second tier will consist of notable tourist destinations. Areas will include routes to and from Beamish, the Bishop Auckland Project, Durham City Peninsula, and Low and High Force. The Council will work in partnership with Visit County Durham, County Durham Sport, the Woodland Trust, the National Trust, and Forestry England, as well as the North Pennines AONB Partnership, the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership, and other stakeholders. Finally, as part of the third tier, it is

intended to identify and map local walking and riding routes along PROW and railway paths, and as part of the Heritage 100 (H100) franchise (see case study on H100 in Policy 4).

- 5.14. As part of Policy 1, criteria d, ROWIP4 has targeted investment in routes near populations. The H100 project is an example of a programme of branded walks which have been created close to populations and settlements.

Question 3:

- A. Do you agree that we should improve digital and physical signposting for our Public Rights of Way?
- B. Do you have any other comments on this policy?

Policy 3: Making our Network Accessible – ‘10 in 10’

The Council is committed to making PROW more accessible for all our residents. To achieve this, the Council will:

- A. Establish and promote 10 accessible routes in 10 years. These accessible routes will be prioritised in the northern, central, and coastal areas of County Durham, where there are fewer promoted accessible PROW. These routes will need to be wheelchair accessible; and**
 - a. Avoid routes with impassable bridges, stiles, and spring-loaded gates which hinder access for disabled users; and**
 - b. Have accessible parking and detailed route information to encourage their use and provide awareness of accessible PROW.**
- B. Consider how existing PROW can link with railway paths to create circular routes which supply a useable network of PROW for people to enjoy.**

5.15. The Council is committed to the principles of equality and ensuring people can have long and independent lives. Regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, economic status or ability, all residents of County Durham should have accessible, safe, and convenient choices to help them move more. We will continue to abide by the Equality Act 2010⁹ to ensure that when we devise strategic policies that direct investment, we will not discriminate against protected characteristics.

5.16. As part of the ‘10 in 10’ Policy set out in criteria A. above, the Council will create the ‘10 in 10’ routes in northern, central, and coastal parts of County Durham, as many of our main population centres are located in these destinations. The northern, central and coastal parts of County Durham, defined by their landscape character areas and which correspond spatially with the Tyne and Wear Lowlands, the Durham Coalfield Pennine Fringe and the Pennine Magnesium Limestone Plateau as set out in the [2008 County Durham Landscape Strategy](#), are pivotal for the development of accessible routes. This is because some accessible routes already exist and are promoted in the west and south of County Durham, as illustrated by phototrails.org. (see case study below).

⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/introduction>

- 5.17. The 10 accessible routes will be audited by a specialist Disabled Access Consultant and will help the Council devise a database where accessible routes are highlighted, and quality information and photographs are pinpointed about specific routes for people to make their own decision as to whether they can use a particular PROW. As a minimum, these routes will include appropriate infrastructure to ensure the PROW routes are largely accessible, with advantageous rest points and sufficient signage. It is additionally advantageous to have accessible routes near toilets; there must be 'a loo, a brew, and a view'. People need the appropriate services.
- 5.18. Accessibility means making routes suitable for a range of different users and ensuring they are maintained to a certain standard to help disabled users access the PROW network, thereby creating an inclusive network of routes. It also means providing the right information about a PROW for the individual to make the decision as to whether the route is accessible for them. ROWIP4 will aim to achieve this by providing accurate and high-quality information about PROW.
- 5.19. We believe that everyone should have some capacity to access the PROW network regardless of their personal mobility, and we will work with landowners to help support the provision of infrastructure on the PROW network to help achieve this inclusive approach. Infrastructure can include accessible parking and toilet facilities, family-friendly routes for people who use pushchairs and stable footpaths for people with carers. It also needs to be recognised that some PROW routes will never be accessible for all.
- 5.20. We understand that everyone across the County has varying needs, and there is no set standard for accessibility, though we believe it is about giving people access to quality information so individuals can make their own personal decision as to whether the PROW is suitable for them. Information can include the 'level' of the route, in terms of the route's difficulty, which could reflect the gradient and the existence of obstacles. Residents and tourists need physically accessible routes which must be successfully promoted so that everyone is aware these routes exist.
- 5.21. A major theme that came out of the stakeholder consultation was the need for circular routes for our communities to enjoy. Regardless of mobility issues, the requirement to develop a network of circular routes in communities is a theme for ROWIP4. Circular routes are important because they make the PROW more attractive by enabling individuals to see and access a variety of interesting landscapes compared to 'out and back' routes, and thereby engage a range of users. Users can include dog walkers, families, running clubs,

cyclists, horse-riders, and those with disabilities. It is comforting to users of circular routes to know that the route will always take them back to the start.

- 5.22. Furthermore, the railway paths around the County are valuable components in achieving accessible routes, since they provide a network of routes that are already largely accessible in terms of width, gradient, and surface. We will use the railway paths as a method for achieving circular routes by improving those PROW which connect to the railway path network. Railway paths provide a good starting point and usually comprise sufficient facilities and destination points due to their popularity. Moreover, by providing a network of PROW that a range of people can utilise for recreational means, biodiversity and surrounding land will also be protected and preserved since a sufficient variety of designated routes will exist, preventing 'footpath-creep'¹⁰.

6. CASE STUDY: Phototrails

- 5.23. [Phototrails.org](https://www.phototrails.org) provides key information on the accessibility of a route, with details on the terrain and gradient of a PROW, and with photos attached to illustrate the route's valuable features. This website is an excellent example of a website which incorporates important details about PROW in County Durham and elsewhere. The details on the website enable individuals to choose routes which are suitable to their skillset and needs. Condition surveys are also carried out annually to understand what specifically needs maintaining and improving on particular PROW on the website.

Question 4:

- A. Do you think establishing 10 accessible routes in 10 years is achievable or sufficiently ambitious?
- B. Do you have any other comments on this policy?

¹⁰ Footpath-creep is when individuals do not use the footpath in place and instead use the surrounding land, which is not suitable or lawful.

Policy 4: Empowering Communities to ‘own’ their Public Right of Way Network

The Council will, in alignment with the principles of the whole-systems approach and place-based approach, advocated in the Council’s ‘Moving Together’ Strategy, encourage communities to take ‘ownership’ of their local paths and PROW. The Council will build on the success of the Parish Path Partnership over the last 30 years and the Council will:

- A. Work with local community ambassadors in communities to help promote local routes and navigate people on certain PROW which intersect settlements;**
- B. Link with the ‘Active Places’ community resource within Culture, Sport and Tourism to raise awareness and maximise the local environment that supports physical activity;**
- C. Develop a strong relationship between local community ambassadors and the Rights of Way Team to manage the PROW network in local areas on a grass-root level;**
- D. Identify community hubs with facilities where information about local PROW is accessible for individuals to have a greater understanding of local PROW and the history or culture that is attached to them. These hubs could be local community centres or town halls;**
- E. Work with partners in education to promote local PROW and their links to local history and archaeology; and**
- F. Allocate specific resources within the Rights of Way Team to work with residents and Town and Parish Councils and local community groups to map where important PROW are in the different settlements.**

5.24. Community engagement is key to ROWIP4 as the PROW network is a community asset which meets a variety of policy agendas¹¹. Local authorities have fewer resources due to budgetary constraints, thus, the Council’s Rights of Way Team need to work in partnership with local Town and Parish Councils, as well as voluntary and charity organisations in the County and other partners.

¹¹ During the extensive consultation (stakeholder set on pages:16-17), Area Action Partnerships highlighted that ROWIP is a community asset and is a useful document for communities because it intersects a variety of corporate policy agendas, from leisure to climate change.

- 5.25. Organisations such as Sport England and County Durham Sport have found that Covid has changed the way people exercise and get active, therefore, ROWIP4 must support the provision of infrastructure which enables people to undertake different types of exercise that are suited to their needs and located close to their homes. Thus, identifying community hubs that already exist in settlements, such as town halls or community centres, provides a space where information about PROW can be accessed to further encourage physical activity in 'hyperlocal' environments.
- 5.26. Getting communities to feel passionate about routes which are local to them helps encourage a wide range of people to use the network, since contextualising the PROW network personalises PROW. It generates a more intimate connection and promotes physical activity in 'hyperlocal' environments, which in turn, benefits mental wellbeing and reduces the reliance on the private car. Moreover, getting people to care about their local path networks results in PROW being maintained as people have more pride in their local walks. It also helps protect the environment through reducing footpath-creep, since people are less likely to go off-route when PROW are well signposted and maintained.
- 5.27. To achieve local involvement and to promote physical activity, the Council are adopting a place-based approach and have taken inspiration from the [Culture, Sport and Tourism](#) volunteer programme, which establishes health walks and trains leaders; and from discussions with the Walk and Talk Trust on a number of educational programmes they offer to schools in County Durham. As part of ROWIP4, we want to contribute towards a partnership approach to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity as a tool to change lives. Partners include the National Trust, the Woodland Trust, and Living Streets.
- 5.28. Similar to the Culture, Sport and Tourism volunteer programme, ROWIP4 will support local community volunteers who will encourage physical activity in local areas. These local community volunteers will serve as volunteer community representatives and will monitor the PROW network, manage community involvement, provide knowledge about local routes, and create community-based routes. These ambassadors are active advocates who encourage physical activity through their knowledge of activities and opportunities specific to the area. We additionally aim to involve participants in the Guided Walking Programme; a programme managed by the Council's Countryside Team which comprises experienced walkers who have a great knowledge of the PROW network. Accessing 'hyperlocal' community-based routes in partnership with community ambassadors will help residents build their confidence in using PROW across the County for recreational means,

thereby encouraging exploration to take place further afield. Local routes are therefore good starting points to help develop personal confidence.

- 5.29. Public Health's Moving Together strategy takes a similar approach to Culture, Sport and Tourism's Physical Activity Framework strategy and volunteer programme. The Moving Together strategy aims to enable every resident in the County to access a range of movement opportunities to improve their physical and mental wellbeing by 2028. It achieves this through a place-based and whole-systems approach, where a variety of stakeholders are responsible for implementing the mechanisms at local level to enable this change. ROWIP4 is adopting the same approach through the aim of encouraging physical activity in local communities by improving the PROW network through greater maintenance of signage and path surface, as well as supporting the involvement of local community ambassadors, for example.
- 5.30. Another way to engage with local communities is through education. As part of the H100 programme, the charity 'Walk and Talk Trust' are creating 100 circular walking routes which connect to the heritage and culture of 100 settlements in County Durham. The concept is to promote and launch these walks in co-production with schoolchildren in the County. Once the schoolchildren are passionate about their local H100 walk, they will become ambassadors for the walks and have a lifelong interest in these local walking routes. These educational routes will enable children to develop skills such as map reading and to understand grid references, for example. See the case study below for more information on the H100.

6. CASE STUDY: Wolsingham Wayfarers

- 5.31. The [Wolsingham Wayfarers](#) are an example of local involvement in PROW and represent the positive community involvement we hope to see across the County. They are a voluntary group and were set up around 30 years ago in 1993 by the community in Wolsingham. The group support PROW in the local area and their objective is to maintain and promote 140 miles of designated footpaths within the Parish of Wolsingham and Thornley. The group additionally provide guided walks and receive funding from grant aid, including from the Parish Paths Partnership, which contributes towards the walking leaflets and footpath repairs they provide. For example, the group recently purchased posts to waymark local footpaths. The Wolsingham Wayfarers also work with private landowners on a regular basis, as well as Durham County Council, and have conducted path audits and devised local walks which are accessible for wheelchairs and pushchair users.

6. CASE STUDY: Heritage 100

- 5.32. The [Heritage 100](#) project aspires to create 100 walking routes throughout County Durham, with each route being circular and between 3-to-10 miles long. The aim is for these walks to be 'collectable', giving people the motivation to collect walks to complete together with friends and family. Each H100 walk will have a name and a narrative – a story to connect County Durham communities to the industrial and environmental heritage of the area through the PROW network, developing community knowledge about local PROW. 100 walks have now been identified including walks in Consett, Ushaw Moor and Seaham. These walks are a great way to connect to County Durham's unique heritage whilst simultaneously enhancing physical health and mental wellbeing. The charity Walk and Talk trust are now seeking to deliver the appropriate infrastructure, including physical and digital waymarking. The H100 walks, which are based around 100 settlements in County Durham, fit nicely with our priorities in Policy 1, which includes improving and investing in PROW close to where people live.

Question 5:

- A. Do you see the value in having local ambassadors to promote local routes and encourage use of the PROW network?
- B. Do you have any other comments on this policy?

Policy 5: Promoting the Economy and Cultural Identity of County Durham through our Public Rights of Way Network

The Council will market PROW to promote the tourist economy and cultural heritage of County Durham and to engage people of all ages. The Council will:

- A. Promote walking, and the other activities available on PROW, as a tourist pursuit in connection with Visit County Durham to enhance the tourist economy; and**
- B. Publicise PROW on local news sites, social media and through other means to promote PROW to local communities.**

- 5.33. The Council will promote and market routes that are important to the County and hold significant value, such as the newly created Northern Saints Trails (see case study below). It was highlighted during the stakeholder consultation stage that promoting and marketing PROW is a priority for stakeholders as the Council and its partners can make residents and visitors more aware of this marketable asset.
- 5.34. Outdoor recreation is an important income generator for County Durham due to the magnificent variety in landscapes and abundance of greenspace. It is important that ROWIP4 supports the tourist economy by improving existing PROW in all areas of the County and particularly in rural areas. Visit County Durham note that the annual income brought in through tourist attractions in County Durham is £507m¹². All areas in County Durham will economically benefit from developing PROW tourist attractions, but it is particularly important to the economies in the rural west of the County. The Plan is therefore focussed on developing the tourist PROW network and attracting visitors to the west of Durham, since the west faces greater rural isolation and deprivation in terms of employment and infrastructure. Notwithstanding this, the west of the County is superbly located due to the proximity of the North Pennines, which has attractive walking, horse-riding and cycling routes; it is thereby an ideal place to enhance PROW.
- 5.35. Furthermore, as part of the Inclusive Economic Strategy, the UK Active Deloitte report projected that the potential economic benefit of getting physically inactive workers to be active is up to £17bn per year, measured in healthcare

¹² This data can be accessed here: <https://www.visitcountydurham.org/destination-performance/>

savings and increased productivity. In addition, in line with the emerging Inclusive Economic Strategy, ROWIP4 promotes outdoor recreation as a major asset for the County as a method to improve physical connectivity between places and enhance digital infrastructure. Therefore, the Plan supports the ambitions to grow our green economy and support the economic growth that can be fostered through the walking and riding activities promoted by Visit County Durham. It is thereby essential for the County's economy that physical activity is promoted.

- 5.36. Effective promotion and marketing, as well as physical and digital signposting (set out in Policy 2) of PROW will encourage the use of the PROW network and educate potential users about the heritage of County Durham and how this can be linked to physical activity. Visitors and many County Durham residents are unaware of how extensive the PROW network is and how it can be used. This increased awareness could attract more visitors, and this would bring benefits to the County's visitor economy. The Council will additionally aim to connect PROW with local news platforms, such as Durham County News, as well as efficiently promote ROWIP4 and PROW to local communities through social media, an online website, leaflets, and bulletins, to generate greater awareness of county-wide PROW. This will make it easier for people to see the routes they can access which are located nearby, and thereby encourage the use of the PROW network.

6. CASE STUDY: Northern Saints Trails

- 5.37. [The Northern Saints Trails](#), which are based on ancient pilgrim routes, are marketed through a website, which outlines the trails, itineraries and where visitors can eat, drink, and stay when visiting the trails. This website highlights the importance of promoting tourist attractions through an informative online presence and is what ROWIP4 is aiming to achieve in Policy 2 of the Plan.

6. CASE STUDY: Hamsterley Forest

- 5.38. The Forestry England, who manage [Hamsterley Forest](#), have found that naming their trails after local features to incorporate the local landscape makes the walks more attractive, and helps people navigate the routes since there is a clear destination point. In addition, clearly waymarking the routes attracts an audience who utilise the routes as starting points to get more confident in following more advanced PROW across the County, since clearly waymarking routes makes the routes easier to follow with less confusion. The routes then become more accessible and inclusive too. Naming routes will also help bring attention to the cultural history of County Durham. The Hamsterley model of

branding walks was supported by many stakeholders and this model was used recently when developing the Northern Saints project.

Question 6:

- A. Do you think more could be done to promote PROW in County Durham and if so, how?
- B. Do you have any good ideas for how to advertise local walks in the community?
- C. Can county Durham make more of the natural environment from an economic perspective?
- D. Do you have any other comments on this policy?

Policy 6: Ensuring the Countryside Code is followed, and Landowners are respected

The Council is committed to educating users of the PROW network about the Countryside Code and the work of private landowners to ensure the network is used in a responsible way. The Council will:

- A. Work with local communities and primary schools to promote the accepted and expected behaviour when using the PROW network;**
- B. Develop a shorthand summary of the Countryside Code for Council Rangers and users;**
- C. Continue the strong working relationships with private landowners to ensure PROW are managed effectively;**
- D. Continue to support appropriate diversions of PROW out of farmyards and other working areas where such diversions will reduce conflict and benefit both land managers and path users; and**
- E. Continue to work in partnership with the Police in matters regarding anti-social behaviour to make the PROW network safe.**

5.39. Promoting the Countryside Code is important particularly following the Covid-19 pandemic, which increased the number of people accessing the PROW network and attracted a diverse set of new visitors. Unfortunately, however, this has also led to increased levels of anti-social behaviour. Therefore, educating the public about how to behave and respect the countryside is more important than ever.

5.40. County Durham has an extensive network of PROW and these need to be respected to ensure their high standards are maintained. Residents and tourists should be made aware of what is expected of them when accessing and utilising PROW in order to be responsible and create a safe PROW network. We will therefore produce shorthand copies of the Countryside Code for both Council Rangers and the public, which detail the rules and responsibilities for all users accessing PROW.

5.41. It is important that landowners understand what their duties are, and that people have a right to use PROW. Continuing to work with landowners to ensure PROW remain useable and well maintained is vital. We will aim to provide support to landowners and farmers to deliver greater security by re-directing particular PROW out of farmyards. Providing suitable alternative routes is essential, as it will make it easier for the public who will not have to negotiate relevant farmyards and thereby provide security to farmers through reducing potential criminal activity on PROW and subsequently their private

land. The Wolsingham Wayfarers offer a prime example which illustrates that having a strong relationship with private landowners ensures that the process of maintaining PROW to a high standard is much easier. We will additionally work with local communities and schools to communicate how important maintaining the PROW network is.

- 5.42. Furthermore, continuing to work in partnership with the Police will ensure the PROW network remains safe and secure. Anti-social behaviour, particularly illegal motorbike use on PROW, is becoming an increasing issue in urban and urban-fringe areas. We are seeing the fear of motorbikes gaining access as a key barrier to some landowners agreeing to make footpaths more accessible. Ultimately, anti-social behaviour is a police matter, but a partnership approach is the preferred method of addressing it. Therefore, we will share information with the Police in terms of the locations of where anti-social behaviour is most prominent to tackle the issue at hand. This will minimise the disruption for lawful users on PROW across the County and provide extra security to farmers and/or private and public landowners.

Question 7:

- A. Do you think there is anything else we can do to encourage good behaviour on Public Rights of Way?
- B. Do you have any other comments on this policy?

Policy 7: Incorporating Public Rights of Way in New Development

The Council will protect and enhance existing PROW and seek additions to the PROW network when new development is being planned. This will help promote mental and physical wellbeing. The Council will:

- A. Protect PROW from development within the County in accordance with Policy 26 of the CDP; and**
- B. Provide clear guidelines on securing S106 money and the spending of this funding in the right places to prioritise and protect the PROW network.**

- 5.43. Links to existing PROW from new developments are required to encourage sustainable travel, discourage reliance on the private car, and promote mental and physical wellbeing. This was a top priority of stakeholders. ROWIP4 will therefore make it easier, through a digital platform as stated under Policy 2, for property developers to understand where links to PROW can be achieved from development sites and to understand that ROWIP4 is a valuable resource to create wellbeing and healthy infrastructure.
- 5.44. Green Infrastructure, under Policy 26 in the CDP, is important to highlight here because it fulfils several important functions for our communities, which ROWIP4 is similarly aiming to achieve. These functions include equality of access, increasing recreational and sport activities, making towns and settlements attractive, improving health and wellbeing, and climate change mitigation. Furthermore, Green Infrastructure is important because it can enable the provision of safe and sustainable modes of travel (in accordance with Policy 21 of the CDP), such as walking and cycling, to take place through using the PROW network. PROW in development sites should enhance links to existing services and local amenities for the convenience of all users, increasing opportunities for healthy living and sustainable transport through active travel.
- 5.45. In terms of financially prioritising the PROW network and to support improvements to the PROW network across the County, financial contributions can be sought from open space contributions or through creative and quality

site design. Financial contributions must be negotiated on a site-by-site basis depending on the characteristics of the site¹³.

6. CASE STUDY: Mount Oswald, Durham City

- 5.46. Planning developments are starting to prioritise access to greenspace and PROW, particularly in terms of footpaths and cycleways. This is illustrated by Mount Oswald. The 38.62-hectare site is occupied by built development and is surrounded by university accommodation and buildings, residential blocks, and housing. Residential properties exist to the north west of the site and a footpath/cycleway runs adjacent to the northern site boundary. The newly widened and re-surfaced demarcated footpaths and cycleways connect residents to the A167 and to nearby facilities in Durham City.
- 5.47. Improvements to the footpaths and cycleways are evident in the pictures. The resurfacing and widening of such routes has provided an accessible means of access for residents, which are well lit and useable.

Question 8:

- A. Do you think it is important for developers to contribute to Public Rights of Way?
- B. Do you have any other comments on this policy

¹³ Once the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been adopted in early 2023, a link will be provided to the document.

Policy 8: Monitoring the use of our Public Rights of Way

The Council is committed to monitoring the use of the PROW network and understanding how the use of the PROW network impacts ecology and climate resilience. The Council will seek to support the provision of improved infrastructure for popular PROW destinations, whilst protecting local biodiversity. The Council will:

- A. Work with internal and external partners to develop technology-based methods of monitoring the PROW network; and**
 - a. Understand how Bluetooth and GPS data can be mined and utilised to help monitor the use of the PROW network.**
- B. Increase the number and distribution of reliable ‘counters’ on the PROW network.**

- 5.48. Monitoring will be achieved by installing additional counters onto the PROW network, as counters are used extensively by other organisations such as the National Trust, and they help provide accurate data on the number of visitors to a site or using a route. Counters are already in place on the Pennine Way and the England Coast path in County Durham, on the Northern Saints Trails, and on a key local route in the Deerness Valley. In addition, monitoring could be achieved by harvesting Bluetooth and GPS data from mobile phones.
- 5.49. Appearing as a common theme throughout this plan, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the behaviour of County Durham residents. The pandemic increased the number of people using the PROW network, therefore, monitoring the usage of the network is crucial to understand whether increased usage has been sustained and which routes are the most popular. Monitoring can also be used to measure the effectiveness of information and promotional campaigns which seek to encourage use. This will then inform decisions on the provision of infrastructure and where resources should be focussed to ensure these routes are maintained to a high standard. Infrastructure can include the surface of a PROW and sufficient signage/waymarking to protect biodiversity and direct people to the right place. Monitoring will therefore help the Council and its partners identify the relevant and correct infrastructure to invest in which will aim to accommodate the number of users in a particular destination in County Durham.
- 5.50. This Policy is of particular importance following the Council’s Ecological Emergency declaration, which aims to bring awareness to the decline in the abundance of natural life and therefore aims to restore habitats and species across the County. The Council are working on a Local Nature Recovery

Strategy (LNRS) which sets out strategic priorities to protect the County's biodiversity. Furthermore, when specific routes become popular, it is essential that the local environment and existing biodiversity is not harmed. Monitoring the PROW network and the number of users helps the Council seek to prevent harm to the environment in popular areas, by directing people along designated path networks that are fit for purpose, which in turn helps stop footpath-creep, preserving the surrounding land and protecting wildlife. Promoting and waymarking branded routes, as mentioned previously, would also contribute to this.

- 5.51. During the development of ROWIP4, the Council engaged with external stakeholders such as the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Team, who stated that due to the extensive nature of PROW in the County, monitoring is important because of ongoing maintenance issues, partly caused by climate change. Extreme weather (such as Storm Arwen¹⁴) and coastal erosion affects many routes, particularly coastal paths, and the ground is often difficult to navigate. Monitoring the PROW network regularly will therefore identify where areas need specific attention. Climate change is important to consider as the impacts of are likely to get more severe in the future.

Question 9:

- A. Do you think there are any other methods in which we can monitor PROW?
- B. Do you have any other comments on this policy?

¹⁴Storm Arwen hit the north of England in November 2021 and caused significant damage to the County in terms of fallen trees and power cuts.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. ROWIP4 is our plan to develop and deliver a high-quality PROW network which is fit for the 21st century in terms of travel, recreation, and enjoyment. The plan follows on from previous Council ROWIPs and continues to promote the vital contribution the PROW network makes to the wider economic, health, environmental and social agendas, as well as Durham County Council's corporate objectives.
- 6.2. Despite ROWIP4's differences to previous Council ROWIPs, as illustrated through the policies which seek to develop digital information, we believe this will stimulate public accessibility to the PROW network and help convey the natural beauty of the County. It is a 10-year strategy and has a strategic plan to improve PROW throughout the County. Therefore, the policies in ROWIP4 are vital to enable the Council and its partners to improve, implement and maintain county-wide PROW and provide accessible infrastructure for both residents and visitors.

Note.

- 6.3. ROWIP4 is not a replacement for the statutory duties of the County Council as a Highway Authority, and we will continue to carry out the full range of functions relating to public rights of way in accordance with legislation.

Question 10

Do you agree that the ROWIP 4 is the correct plan for public rights of way?

Do you have any other comments on ROWIP4?

Thank you for your comments.

Appendix A - ROWIP4 and the Council's Key Corporate Plans and Objectives

ROWIP4 will help implement and support the Inclusive Economic Strategy, which aims to physically connect communities in County Durham. The plan will be monitored annually and periodically reviewed to ensure the policies in ROWIP4, and the Inclusive Economic Strategy, are being delivered and this monitoring will be reported to the Local Access Forum.

The vision for County Durham 2019 – 2035

The [County Durham vision](#) was adopted in 2019 and set out the long term vision for the County as a place where there are more and better jobs, people live long and independent lives and our communities are well connected and supportive. The vision was built on an extensive public consultation and one of the outcomes highlighted through the consultation was that residents were rightly proud of the history and heritage of the county and its beautiful countryside.

The Council's Plan 2022-2026

[The Council Plan 2022-2026](#) supports ROWIP4 through the variety of objectives incorporated within the Plan, which will make the County a better place to work, live and visit. The corporate document sets out the vision for the Council in terms of making the Council fit for the future.

In accordance with ROWIP4, the Council Plan includes environmental objectives to 'create a physical environment that will contribute to good health'; to 'work with others to achieve a carbon neutral County'; and to 'protect restore and sustain our natural environment for the benefit of future generations'. ROWIP4 will aim to support these objectives by delivering a PROW network which is fit for the 21st century through improved signage and digital accessibility, for example.

The Council Plan additionally provides health-related objectives which link to ROWIP4: to 'tackle the discrimination of poor mental health and build resilient communities'; and to 'protect and improve the health of the local population'. ROWIP4 will help deliver these objectives through the promotion of a high-standard PROW network which will encourage local communities to engage with their local routes, thereby benefitting physical and mental wellbeing through physical activity.

Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) 2022-2035

The IES will create a strong County economy through harnessing the County's strengths, addressing areas for improvement, and delivering what 'levelling up' means to local people. ROWIP4 can support both the green economy and healthy workforces in alignment with the IES, as well as improve physical connectivity between places in the County and enhance digital infrastructure and connectivity. ROWIP4 therefore supports all 5 Ps (people, productivity, places, promotion, and planet) of the IES.

North East Transport Plan 2021-2035

The North East Transport Plan sets out the vision and objectives for transport in the North East from 2021 to 2035. The objectives include a healthier North East, appealing sustainable transport choices, and a safe and secure network. Policy areas include a commitment to Active Travel and Making the Right Travel Choice.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

LCWIPs enable a long-term approach to developing high-quality local cycling and walking networks, increasing the number of trips made by foot or cycle for utility means, such as to places of work or education. The focus of LCWIPs being centred around utility trips enables ROWIP4 to focus on recreation and everyday movement for local people.

Draft Physical Activity Strategy for Durham – Moving Together

This strategy is currently in development but will focus on a whole-systems and place-based approach to 'build stronger communities, including improved facilities and infrastructure to help make activity an easy option'. A whole-systems and place-based approach reflects the partnership position we are taking in ROWIP4.

Traffic Asset Management Plan 2021

The strategy looks at the quantity and quality of the existing transport assets infrastructure to determine how best to manage them now and in the future. The Plan set out what the Highways priorities are for funding the PROW network to ensure the network is maintained to a high standard.

Other relevant strategies include:

- [Public Health's Time to Talk initiative](#) – The initiative is to get people together to talk about their mental health;
- Public Health's [Healthy Communities Report](#) – This report ensures that the design of the built and natural environment contributes to improving public health and reducing health inequalities;
- Culture, Sport, and Tourism's Physical Activity Framework - This is an overarching strategy which will be developed in co-production with a number of community stakeholders to develop a whole systems approach to tackle inequalities in relation to physical activity and to develop effective and sustainable solutions;
- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy – Ensuring all organisations and services in the County prioritise wellbeing;
- Poverty Action Plan 2022-2026 – The Plan has been consulted on and the final version of the Plan is going to Cabinet in November 2022. The Plan addresses

the socio-economic factors associated with inequalities which prevent residents from accessing Council services;

- [Climate Emergency Response Plan](#) – The Plan was adopted by our Cabinet in June 2022 and is committed to reaching Net Zero by 2030, with an 80% real carbon reduction to emissions. County Durham aims to be carbon neutral by 2045;
- [County Durham Strategic Walking and Cycling Delivery Plan 2019-2029](#) – The delivery plan sets out the Council's goals to help more people experience the benefits of cycling and walking. It will deliver local and regional plans and policies which aim to reduce the reliance on private car travel and create confident cycling and walking communities;
- [The North East Active Travel Strategy 2023](#) – The strategy will thereby enable people to walk, cycle and wheel short journeys that would usually be made by car. The strategy will support local authorities and voluntary groups to deliver more walking and cycling routes;
- [Durham Tourism Management Plan 2022-2026](#) – the Management Plan is the prototype for how County Durham intends to grow the volume and value of its visitor economy between 2016 and 2020;
- [North Pennines AONB Management Plan 2019-2024](#) – The Plan provides a framework for action for the conservation and enhancement of wildlife, landscape, and aspects of our cultural heritage between 2019 and 2024.; and
- [Durham Heritage Coast Management Plan 2018-2025](#) – The Plan identifies the main concerns by covering the natural resources, the cultural and historic elements, and the social and economic conditions in coastal communities. These elements frame the Plan for the next 7 years.

Nationally, ROWIP4 supports a variety of important strategies and policies which aim to get people more physically active:

- UK Active: '[More people, More active, More often](#)' – a mission and vision to improve the health of the nation through promoting active lifestyles by facilitating partnerships, providing support, and a platform to help people get active¹⁵;
- Sport England: '[Uniting the Movement](#)' – a 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity¹⁶; and

¹⁵ This can be accessed here: <https://www.ukactive.com/who-we-are/#mission-vision>

¹⁶ This can be accessed here: <https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement>

- Public Health: '[Everybody active, every day](#)' framework for physical activity – This is an evidence-based approach for national and local action to address the physical inactivity epidemic¹⁷.

Appendix B - County Durham Plan Context

In the [County Durham Plan \(2020\)](#) (CDP), PROW are directly referenced in Policies 5, 26, 29, 42 and 58 and indirectly referenced in Policies 6, 34 and 38. Other policies in the CDP also protect the integrity of the countryside.

Policy 5 relates to Durham City's Sustainable Urban Extensions. At Sniperley Park, new PROW will link to the wider footpath network in the Browney Valley to the south and new PROW will provide opportunities for circular walks on the land north of Potterhouse Lane and south of Little Gill. Land at Sherburn Road will be allocated for sustainable patterns of development, enabling sustainable travel through the development of routes close to new housing estates for walking and cycling.

Policy 6, Development on Unallocated Sites, states that development on unallocated sites must not result in the loss of open land that has recreational (PROW), ecological or heritage value.

Policy 26, Green Infrastructure (GI) refers to the network of green and blue spaces and corridors that exist within and between cities, towns, and villages. PROW are an important part of this GI network since the Policy states that development will be expected to maintain or improve the permeability of the built environment and access to the countryside for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse-riders.

Policy 29, Sustainable Design, requires major development proposals to create a well-defined, easily navigable, and accessible network of streets and spaces which respond appropriately to local context to ensure that rights of way are well-managed and durable.

Policy 34, Wind Turbine Development: several issues influence the location of wind turbine developments and the acceptability of planning application proposals, one being PROW.

Policy 38, North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be conserved and enhanced. In making decisions on development, great weight will be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty.

¹⁷ This can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/everybody-active-every-day-a-framework-to-embed-physical-activity-into-daily-life>

Policy 58, Preferred Areas for Future Carboniferous Limestone Extraction requires local landscapes and PROW to be taken into consideration to minimise the views into extractions sites from nearby PROW.

Finally, Policy 42, Internationally Designated Sites, recognises that the increase of recreational pressure can cause substantial issues for internationally designated sites, thus, when maintaining PROW in these protected sites, internationally designated sites must be protected at all costs.

Durham County Council Equality Impact Assessment

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires Durham County Council to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different groups. Completion of this template allows us to provide a written record of our equality analysis and demonstrate due regard. It must be used as part of decision making processes with relevance to equality.

Please contact equalities@durham.gov.uk for any necessary support.

Section One: Description and Screening

Service/Team or Section	Spatial Policy Rights of Way
Lead Officer name and job title	Peter Ollivere Policy Team Leader
Subject of the impact assessment	Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)
Report date (Cabinet/CMT/Mgt team etc)	March/April 2023
MTFP Reference (if relevant)	
EIA Start Date	2/03/23
EIA Review Date	TBC

Subject of the Impact Assessment

Please give a brief description of the policy, proposal or practice which is the subject of this impact assessment.
It is a statutory requirement, due to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), that every local authority in the United Kingdom produces and publishes a plan on how the local authority is going to provide and improve public rights of way (PROW) in their area. PROWs include footpaths, bridleways, and byways. They can be used by a range of users – walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, and some off-road motorised vehicles. Durham County Council's ROWIP, which is a 10-year, long-term plan, namely ROWIP4, focuses on PROWs within the entire County and aims to maintain and develop shorter utility trips and longer recreational routes for all users within the County. ROWIP4 sets an ambitious but realistic strategic vision of how to improve the ROW network over the next 10-years, from 2023 to 2033.

ROWIP4 differs to previous ROWIPs in terms of the plan being more community led and driven by the quality of information, as well as implementing higher standard monitoring methods and developing a county-wide app. ROWIP4 is therefore more progressive and designed for the 21st century.

ROWIP4 thereby aims to provide a more accessible network of PROWs and greenspaces across the County. It is therefore imperative that infrastructure is implemented to support this aim. The Council will achieve this by proposing 8 different policies which incorporate stakeholder priorities and showcase County Durham's beautiful network of PROWs. The policies are the following:

- Policy 1: Managing and Delivering a High-Quality Access network
- Policy 2: Awareness of Public Rights of Way and other routes
- Policy 3: Making our Network Accessible – '10 in 10'
- Policy 4: Empowering Communities to 'own' their Public Right of Way Network
- Policy 5: Promoting the Economy and Cultural Identity of County Durham through our Public Rights of Way Network
- Policy 6: Ensuring the Countryside Code is followed, and Landowners are respected
- Policy 7: Incorporating Public Rights of Way in New Development
- Policy 8: Monitoring the use of our Public Rights of Way

Who are the main people impacted and/or stakeholders? (e.g. general public, staff, members, specific clients/service users, community representatives):

Anyone who lives, studies or visits County Durham may be interested in the ROWIP4. It is anticipated that it will have a positive impact on members of the public since they are the primary users of the PROW network. The project also impacts private landowners and private organisations who manage land, such as the National Trust or Forestry England.

Screening

Is there any actual or potential negative or positive impact on the following protected characteristics ¹ ?		
Protected Characteristic	Negative Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure	Positive Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure
Age	No/Potentially?	Yes
Disability	No/Potentially?	Yes
Gender reassignment	?	Yes
Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to 'eliminate discrimination')	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	No	Yes
Race	?	Yes
Religion or Belief	?	Yes
Sex	?	Yes
Sexual orientation	?	Yes

Please provide **brief** details of any potential to cause discrimination or negative impact. Record full details and any mitigating actions in section 2 of this assessment.

Whilst the ROWIP4 will have an overall positive impact on all protected characteristics, there is the potential to have a negative impact on older persons IF the awareness and information regarding PROWs are kept to an online forum only as older persons are less likely to use the internet or have a smart phone.

Personal safety will be a consideration as it is noted that some groups are more likely to be victims of crime or have a heightened perception of crime when using public spaces. This relates to all protected groups although there is a disproportionate impact for women, people from the LGBT+ community, people from minority ethnic groups, disabled people, people living in deprived areas, and people at the intersections of these groups.

¹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

Please provide **brief** details of positive impact. How will this policy/proposal promote our commitment to our legal responsibilities under the public sector equality duty to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations between people from different groups?

Positive impacts are achieved through the promotion of PROWs and ensuring wider access to PROWs for users. Discrimination will be addressed through ensuring all user groups and those with particular protected characteristics, such as age and disability, have greater awareness of and access to PROWs. Representatives from such groups have been consulted and will be further consulted during the full public consultation in May- July 2023.

In addition, to eliminate discrimination and promote equal access to county-wide PROWs, infrastructure will be implemented on PROWs, such as high-quality information, accessible toilets, and parking, clear waymarking and suitable rest-points.

To achieve equality of opportunity, PROWs will enable all users to utilise the network to access places of work and schools, important social infrastructure, and local amenities by forming part of a sustainable transport link to County Durham settlements. Connecting communities with sufficient links ensures equality of opportunity in terms of accessing local amenities, doctors' surgeries and greenspace, as well as cultural attractions etc.

By promoting and encouraging the use of PROWs in everyday life, people can socially interact with others more and to a better standard, achieving good relations between people of different groups. People and the multitude of users have equal access, which means others do not feel marginalised.

More is required to ensure that users have equal access and users from all backgrounds are encouraged to use PROWs.

Evidence

What evidence do you have to support your data analysis and any findings?

Please **outline** any data you have and/or proposed sources (e.g. service user or census data, research findings). Highlight any data gaps and say whether or not you propose to carry out consultation. Record your detailed analysis, in relation to the impacted protected characteristics, in section 2 of this assessment.

Census 2021

Nomis 2022

Research findings through the ROWIP Steering Group. The steering group occurred on a bi-monthly basis while ROWIP4 was being drafted and this began process began in February 2022.

County Durham Plan 2022

Review of previous ROWIPs and country wide ROWIPs produced by other local authorities.

Primary research through extensive internal and external stakeholder consultations carried out between April to July 2022. Analysing other Council corporate strategies to understand where internal policies align and to drive our strategic objectives.

Secondary research through analysing journal articles and other local authority ROWIPs.

Consultation is planned to take place between May 2023- July 2023 to collect information from the public – this will provide more user-detail in terms of understanding which groups access/use PROWs and what their ideas/priorities are for improving such access.

Screening Summary

On the basis of the information provided in this equality impact screening (section 1), are you proceeding to a full impact assessment (sections 2&3 of this template)?	Please confirm (Yes/No)
---	-------------------------

Sign Off

Lead officers sign off: Peter Ollivere	Date: 07/03/23
Equality representatives sign off (where required): Mary Gallagher, E&D Team Leader	Date: 23.03.23

If carrying out a full assessment, please proceed to sections two and three.

If not proceeding to full assessment, please ensure your screening record is **attached to any relevant decision-making records or reports**, retain a copy for update where necessary, and forward a copy to equalities@durham.gov.uk

If you are unsure of assessing impact please contact the corporate equalities team for further advice: equalities@durham.gov.uk

Section Two: Data analysis and assessment of impact

Please provide details of impacts for people with different protected characteristics relevant to your screening findings. You need to decide if there is or likely to be a differential impact for some. Highlight the positives e.g., benefits for certain groups and advancement of equality, as well as the negatives e.g. barriers or exclusion of particular groups. Record the evidence you have used to support or explain your conclusions, including any necessary mitigating actions to ensure fair treatment.

Protected Characteristic: Age		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to age?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
<p>Policy 2 Awareness of Public Rights of Way. This policy seeks to digitise the wider access networks and public routes onto one digital platform. This could have a potential positive impact on younger people who tend to be more comfortable using digital technology. Raising awareness of these routes could encourage them to use them.</p> <p>Positive impacts include encouraging a range of individuals, both young and old, to use local PROWs for physical activity and thereby make a positive contribution to their physical and mental wellbeing. Decreases</p>	<p>The resident population in County Durham increased by 1.7% (8,800 people) between 2011 and 2021, compared to a 6.6% increase across England. The proportion of children aged 0 to 15 remained relatively unchanged in this period at around 88,000. Across England this group increased by 4.6%. The number of residents of retirement age (65 and over) increased by 20.6% (19,000 increase) and this group now represents around 1 in 5 residents in the county (21.3%). (Census 2021)</p>	<p>Don't limit the provision of high-quality information about what is available at PROWs. Provide this information all in one place on an app or website AND in paper for at Hubs, Libraries, community centres or CAPs etc..</p> <p>Analysis of consultation feedback</p> <p>Address personal safety to ensure safer PROW</p>

<p>loneliness and isolation, generates greater connectivity between settlements making it easier to access local amenities and potential employment sites.</p> <p>There is potential for a negative impact on older persons IF raising awareness of the Public Rights of Way is only on a digital platform. Older persons are less likely to have access or use devices such as smart phones on which the digital platform would be used.</p> <p>Policy 3 Making our Network Accessible. This policy aims to establish and promote 10 accessible routes in 10 years. This will have a positive impact on older persons who are more likely to have mobility issues and benefit from access to routes that are made accessible including accessible parking, routes that do not contain bridges, stiles and other factors that may hinder access for persons with mobility issues. A key part of this policy is that better information will be provided so people with mobility issues can choose routes based on a high level of information.</p>	<p>Significant proportion of PROWs within the County have uneven surfaces (i.e., gravel), lack of toilet facilities, sufficient parking spaces or local car parks, local amenities, clear and legible signs and this deters users from a certain age group.</p> <p>Steering group and stakeholder consultation feedback.</p>	
--	--	--

Protected Characteristic: **Disability**

What is the actual or potential impact in relation to disability?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
<p>Policy 2 Awareness of Public Rights of Way. This policy seeks to digitise the wider access networks and public routes onto one digital platform. This could have a potential positive impact on people with disabilities if accessible routes are promoted and accessible online. Raising awareness of these routes could encourage them to use them.</p> <p>Positive impacts include encouraging a people with disabilities to use local PROWs for physical activity and thereby make a positive contribution to their physical and mental wellbeing. Decreases loneliness and isolation, generates greater connectivity between settlements making it easier to access local amenities and potential employment sites.</p> <p>Policy 3 Making our Network Accessible. This policy aims to establish and promote 10 accessible routes in 10 years. This will have a positive impact on people with disabilities who are more likely to have mobility issues and benefit from better access to routes that are made accessible including accessible parking, routes that do not contain bridges, stiles and</p>	<p>County Durham has a higher percentage of people with long term health issues and disabled people than the Northeast average, representing nearly a quarter of the overall population.</p> <p>The ONS 2022-09 reported the County Durham disabled employment rate is 45.7% compared to the general employment rate for County Durham of 72.4%.</p> <p>Pictures taken on PROWs and monitoring of PROWs.</p> <p>Previous accessibility assessments?</p> <p>Steering group and stakeholder consultation feedback.</p>	<p>See above</p> <p>Sign off and Implementation of the ROWIP4.</p>

other factors that may hinder access for persons with mobility issues. A key part of this policy is that better information will be provided so people with mobility issues can choose routes based on a high level of information		
--	--	--

Protected Characteristic: Gender reassignment		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to gender reassignment?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
Accessing open spaces and personal safety is more likely to be a heightened concern for transgender people.		Analysis of consultation feedback Address personal safety to ensure safer PROW

Protected Characteristic: Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to 'eliminate discrimination')		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
Not applicable		

Protected Characteristic: Pregnancy and maternity		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
Policy 3 Making our Network Accessible. This policy aims to establish and promote 10 accessible routes in 10 years. This will have a	Steering group and stakeholder consultation feedback.	Implementation of rest points on PROWs

<p>positive impact on people who are pregnant and with young families who may have mobility issues and/or find PROWs are not accessible for pushchairs or use is hindered as accessible routes are not local or due to a lack of parking or amenities such as toilets. A key part of this policy is that better information will be provided so people with mobility issues can choose routes based on a high level of information.</p> <p>It could increase the capacity for pregnant women to exercise and families to exercise together through accessing PROWs. Exercise facilities on PROWs should be located close to home, making PROWs more accessible.</p> <p>PROWs to provide and act as a connection to local amenities.</p>		<p>Promotion of these PROWs</p> <p>Circular walks with facilities such as toilets and car parks.</p>
---	--	--

Protected Characteristic: Race		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to race?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
<p>Accessing open spaces and personal safety is more likely to be a heightened concern for ethnic minority groups.</p>		<p>Analysis of consultation feedback</p> <p>Address personal safety to ensure safer PROW</p>

Protected Characteristic: Religion or belief		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to religion or belief?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
Accessing open spaces and personal safety is more likely to be a heightened concern for minority religious groups.		

Protected Characteristic: Sex		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to sex?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
Accessing open spaces and personal safety is more likely to be a heightened concern for women.		<p>Analysis of consultation feedback</p> <p>Address personal safety to ensure safer PROW</p>

Protected Characteristic: Sexual orientation		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to sexual orientation?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
Accessing open spaces and personal safety is more likely to be a heightened concern for LGB people.		<p>Analysis of consultation feedback</p> <p>Address personal safety to ensure safer PROW</p>

Section Three: Conclusion and Review

Summary

Please provide a brief summary of your findings; a summary of any positive and/or negative impacts across the protected characteristics, links to the involvement of different groups and/or public consultation, mitigations and conclusions made.

ROWIP4 is our plan to develop and deliver a high-quality path network which is fit for the 21st century in terms of travel, recreation, and enjoyment. The plan follows on from previous Council ROWIPs and continues to promote the vital contribution the Access Rights of Way network makes to the wider economic, health, environmental and social agendas, as well as Durham County Council's corporate objectives. ROWIP4 focusses on network paths which serve as strategic rights of way to provide important utility and recreational routes around the County. Therefore, ROWIP is a vital document which enables the Council to collect data and implement structures which will help maintain county-wide PROWs and provide accessible infrastructure for both residents and visitors.

Through ROWIP4, we will deliver a range of planned green networks which incorporate and provide multiple benefits simultaneously to local communities, such as the protection of biodiversity and wildlife, improvement to mental and physical wellbeing, and the reduction of carbon emissions. The Covid- 19 pandemic has emphasised the importance of accessing PROWs and the valuable role greenspace has in managing physical and mental wellbeing, therefore, the ROWIP project comes at a time when people in County Durham communities value their local green space more than ever.

As part of ROWIP4, we carried out extensive consultation with both internal and external stakeholders (as mentioned above) to deliver this draft plan. Stakeholders highlighted specific areas on the ROW network which needed improving and prioritising and these priorities have informed the plan's policies. The aim is to have a full public consultation starting in May 2023.

We have developed policies that are inclusive of all users' needs to be make the plan as inclusive as possible, whilst maintaining good relationships with private landowners. To reflect this, we have included policies such as 'Making our Network Accessible' – '10 in 10' (Policy 3), 'Empowering Communities to own our Right of Way Network' (Policy 4) and 'Ensuring the Countryside Code is followed, and Landowners are respected' (Policy 6).

Will this promote positive relationships between different communities? If so how?

Yes, ROWIP should promote positive relationships between different communities by encouraging all to use the right of way network. We will ensure residents and visitors can access PROWs across the county – we will minimise exclusion wherever possible. This will foster positive mental and physical health.

--

Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescales for implementation	In which plan will the action appear?
Public Consultation	PO	May- July 2023	
Consult with Disability Groups	PO/JK	May-July 2023	
Update ROWIP to reflect consultation feedback	PO/KGP	August/September 2023	
Develop 3 year action plan to deliver ROWIP4	Rights of Way Team Leader	May - September	

Review and connected assessments

Are there any additional or connected equality impact assessments that need to be undertaken? (If yes, provide details)	
When will this assessment be reviewed? Please also insert this date at the front of the template	

Sign Off

Lead officer sign off: Peter Ollivere	Date: 7/3/2023
Equality representative sign off (where required): Mary Gallagher, E&D Team Leader	Date: 23.03.23

Please ensure:

- The findings of this EIA are carefully considered and used to inform any related decisions and policy development

- **A summary of findings is included within the body of any relevant reports or decision-making records**
- **The EIA is attached to reports or relevant decision-making records and the report Implications Appendix 1 is noted that an EIA has been undertaken**

Please retain a copy for review and update where necessary, and forward a copy to equalities@durham.gov.uk

Cabinet

19 April 2023

**Corporate Asset Management Plan
2023-2025**



Ordinary Decision

Report of Corporate Management Team

Any Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Councillor James Rowlandson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investment and Assets

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present and agree the Corporate Asset Management Plan 2023-2025 which is a strategic plan setting out how the property portfolio will support the Council's corporate priorities and objectives and which provides the direction for the ongoing management of the portfolio over the next two years.

Executive summary

- 2 The size, shape and location of our land and property portfolio is vitally important to enabling the success of the Council's ambitions. It provides space for the delivery of our public services; it helps create jobs, housing and economic growth as well as income to invest in our services. The strategic management of this valuable resource in the context of broader objectives for the economy and the environment is important to the Council and to the communities we serve.
- 3 In 2009, the unitary County Council was formed from 8 authorities and information about the now combined estate brought together from each former district council and the County Council varied greatly in its availability and its quality. The process of reconciling this data has been prioritised alongside operational requirements and is ongoing.
- 4 The Council owns over nine thousand hectares of land and has an interest in nearly nine hundred buildings. The operational estate is

valued at £1 billion and costs £34 million annually to run. The estate is widely dispersed across the county and, in addition to the property we hold for service delivery, we have a significant legacy of sites used for reclamation, heavy industry and amenity sites. The historic and inherited nature of many of our assets bring specific challenges and responsibilities.

- 5 A significant programme of activities is underway within the Council to implement the Corporate Property Partnership (CPP) approach to asset management. This approach ensures that our property portfolio is managed and maintained consistently and corporately, allowing services to concentrate on their operational delivery.
- 6 A major component of the CPP model is the development a Corporate Asset Management Plan (CAMP) which sets out at a high level how the property portfolio will support the achievement of the corporate priorities and objectives and will provide direction for the ongoing management of the portfolio.
- 7 This CAMP is designed to provide this context and direction of travel for the near term. It has three elements:
 - **The Asset Management Strategy** – highlighting the strategic context, factors that will influence change, and translating organisational objectives into property objectives;
 - **The Asset Management Policy** – setting out the framework of rules, culture and behaviour that will ensure the consistent management and high performance of our property assets;
 - **The Asset Management Action Plan** – an action plan of activities and projects that deliver our property objectives.
- 8 Progress on delivering the activities in the Action Plan will be fundamental in the further development of the CAMP and, in particular, the delivery of the second iteration of the document in 2025. Wider consultation with external agencies, partner organisations and with communities will also inform the CAMP post-2025.
- 9 Amongst the many agendas supported by good use of our assets are the Inclusive Economic Strategy, the County Plan, the Climate Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan, the CAMP therefore has due regard to the role of our land and property in supporting these adopted plans.

Recommendation

- 10** Cabinet is recommended to
- (a)** approve the Corporate Asset Management Plan 2023-2025;
 - (b)** agree to the continued development of a second stage CAMP to be presented to cabinet in 2025.

Background

- 11 The way we manage our property assets is fundamentally important to the success of the Council but moreover to the success of our County. In 2019 the Council adopted the CPP model – sometimes referred to as a Corporate Landlord model - as an approach to asset management. The aim of the CPP model is to establish clarity of direction, vision and purpose for our property assets and to:
- enable us to more efficiently utilise our assets to deliver better services to the community;
 - unlock the value of our assets, seek efficiencies through joint arrangements with other public sector partners and maximise private sector investment;
 - integrate strategy about property with financial, economic, environmental and commercial considerations to support the delivery of our Council Plan.
- 12 The principle of the CPP model is that responsibility for all property related activity and expenditure is within the remit of CPaL under the direction of the Corporate Property Board (CPB). This approach assures that finances are properly prioritised, management is consistent, and opportunities are realised across the whole estate. In this way, we can ensure that the needs of the whole organisation, as well as individual service operations are met.
- 13 The CPP model has generated an extensive programme of activities that will ensure strategic asset management principles are embedded within the organisation. It will take some time to complete the programme due to the scale and scope of the change required and the need to adapt behaviours in the longer term.
- 14 The key benefits of the model so far have been:
- (a) establishment of the CPB, chaired by the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth, which oversees the delivery of the CPP model and ensures integrated management of the portfolio;
 - (b) greater clarity on roles, responsibilities and processes involved in property repairs and maintenance through the development of the Interim Maintenance Policy;
 - (c) realignment of property repairs budgets so that the principles contained in the Maintenance Policy are embedded in work practices and decision making;

- (d) standardisation of the Landlord Approval process has involved significant collaboration across the authority and will ensure consents are granted with consistency and with proper consideration of relevant implications;
 - (e) development of a framework to classify our assets which will allow us to refine data management and to identify areas of the portfolio that require review and greater clarity of responsibilities.
- 15 Despite the global challenges of the last three years, significant steps have been made to progress the delivery of the CPP model, but there remains a great deal to do.
- 16 One of the principal tasks in the CPP programme of activities is the development and delivery of the CAMP, setting out the strategic context in which property assets are managed. The remaining activities in the CPP programme form the basis of the CAMP action plan and will be fundamental to its further development.

The Corporate Asset Management Plan

- 17 The purpose of the Corporate Asset Management Plan is to set out strategically how the Council's property portfolio will support the corporate priorities and objectives, and to provide the direction for the ongoing management of the portfolio.
- 18 The CAMP is designed to provide this statement of intent for the near future (2023-2025). Over the course of this two year period it will be subject to changes and refinement as the implementation of the CPP model is advanced, and it will need to reflect changes in working practices and corporate ambition that are emerging post-pandemic.
- 19 A second stage, longer term CAMP will be presented during 2025.
- 20 This Corporate Asset Management Plan has three elements:

The Asset Management Strategy	<p>The direction for change</p> <p>This will set out at a strategic level what the Council wants to achieve from its property assets in the context of its organisational objectives and achieving its priorities. This will reflect different strategic issues including specific social, economic and environmental objectives as well as specific service and portfolio transformation objectives.</p> <p>It will translate organisational objectives into property objectives.</p>
-------------------------------	--

The Asset Management Policy	<p>The rules, culture and behaviour</p> <p>This will set out the rules and principles by which the property assets must be managed.</p> <p>It will provide the framework under which all activities will be undertaken and will ensure that performance is effectively and consistently managed to support the Council's strategic objectives.</p>
The Asset Management Action Plan	<p>The delivery plan</p> <p>This will be a short term, 'live' action plan specifying detailed activities, timescales, resources and responsibilities to achieve the property objectives. It mirrors the activities required to implement the Corporate Property Partnership model.</p> <p>This action plan will be actively managed and updated at least annually.</p>

- 21 There has been a multi-disciplinary approach to consultations on the CAMP to help understand service delivery challenges and future service developments so that, in turn, we can explore how the property estate can support these. The main findings are listed in the table below and have been incorporated into the CAMP:

Link to Council Plan and Key Strategies	<p>The Council Plan, County Durham Together, Customer Access Strategy, Digital Durham were cited as critical to determining the shape of the Council's future estate. Joining up these initiatives and understanding the corresponding property needs in each community will provide strategic direction for reviewing the estate and inform decisions on investments or disposals.</p>
Assessing estate proposals and investment	<p>We need to ensure that new initiatives and proposals, that often come with financial incentives, are properly assessed to ensure they fit the Council's strategic objectives and are not detrimental to progress in other areas.</p> <p>Similarly, opportunities to drive greater corporate benefits from programmes of work by investing more at the outset must be fully considered during option appraisal.</p>

Clarity of responsibilities	There are parts of the current estate where clarity of responsibility is an issue. Some of these have been addressed by the development of the new Maintenance Policy and by a focus on centralisation of maintenance responsibilities, but other areas require a review of current Policy and/or quicker access to comprehensive asset information.
Review of existing portfolio	Engagement with all services and an understanding of their future operating models together with a system of asset challenge will ensure that we have the right approach to property reviews. This must also link with Key Strategies and clarity on responsibilities.
Approach to partnership/collaborative working	We need to build on the work that is already happening with partners, and we need to make the processes more transparent, responsive and reflective of the benefits to be gained.
Operational management & staffing	Building suitability and design will be influenced by the way the services are delivered so operational models must be clear.

- 22 The further development of the CAMP (post-2025) will involve consultation with external agencies and partner organisations that work with the Council to deliver its objectives and with the communities that have an interest in how we use and manage our estate. It will also reflect the progress and conclusion of many of the key activities listed in the action plan (see part 3 of the CAMP).
- 23 The CAMP is attached at Appendix 2 for your attention. A summary of the contents is set out in the table below:

Introduction to the CAMP	An introduction to the purpose of the CAMP and the diverse nature of the property estate. It details of what is excluded from the scope of the document, background information about the corporate context the CAMP operates within, and the structure and status of the document. There is a summary of achievements made in corporate asset management over recent years together with some metrics that detail the scale of day-to-day operational management.
The Asset Management Strategy	Through pages 10-15 we set out the links between the CAMP and other strategic documents that impact on

	<p>and direct how we manage the property portfolio. These include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Plan 2022-2026 • Medium Term Financial Plan • Inclusive Economic Strategy • Climate Plan • Towns and Villages Strategy • Housing Strategy • Workforce Strategy <p>This section continues with the key drivers for change, both internal and external, and lists seven strategic property objectives that provide the framework for the holding and management of our portfolio.</p>
The Asset Management Policy	<p>The policy section sets out the rules, culture and behaviours that will enable us to deliver against the strategic property objectives. There are five 'directing principles' of working practice and decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that property assets are managed as a corporate resource and are used to support the Council's ambitions and priorities. • To ensure property assets provide the right spaces in the right places to support the delivery of services for the benefit of communities. • To ensure property assets are managed and maintained safely, effectively, efficiently and sustainably to take account of whole life costs and environmental impact. • To ensure consideration is given to the use of property assets to stimulate development and growth, support local business needs, optimise financial returns and support corporate ambitions and priorities. • To ensure opportunities for community involvement and partnership working are considered where they can provide efficiencies, benefits to communities and the property assets can be effectively managed. <p>Organisational, governance and resourcing arrangements are explained and it is acknowledged that this work is ongoing to ensure that they continue to reflect the needs of the organisation.</p>
The Asset Management Action Plan	<p>This section includes key statistics about the portfolio –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9,296 hectares (22,971 acres) of land and 893 buildings with a book value of circa £1.04bn and running costs of £34m • Annual rental income of £9m and outgoings of £2.5m • Numbers of properties in different service areas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales income of £2.2m (21/22) and required maintenance of £108m <p>The action plan of activities to implement the CPP model in the two year timeframe of this CAMP and beyond 2025 is summarised in this section.</p> <p>Fundamental to the success of the action plan is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to embed corporate working • Engagement with external agencies, partner organisations and communities • Developing data systems and enhancing property information • Improving policies and procedures
--	---

Conclusion

- 24 The CAMP is the fundamental strategic plan that sets out what the Council wants to achieve from our property and land. The plan sets out opportunities to support the achievement of our corporate objectives and wider goals for our county.
- 25 Engagement and development will be ongoing and will be an important part of ensuring that the CAMP supports and is consistent with wider corporate objectives and priorities.
- 26 Over the next two years the CAMP will be further developed and refined as the programme of activities listed in the CPP model and CAMP action plan are completed.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None

Author(s)

Anna Wills

Tel: 03000 265518

Sarah Ward

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

No implications.

Finance

There will be financial and resource implications arising from the further work to develop and implement the Corporate Asset Management Plan. These resource implications will be presented and considered as part of the CAMP implementation and with reference to MTFP requirements.

Consultation

The recent activities summarised in this report form part of the engagement process to develop the Corporate Asset Management Plan. Further engagement will be ongoing involving wider groups of stakeholders.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

No implications.

Climate Change

The Corporate Asset Management Plan will reflect the Council's commitment to carbon reduction/neutrality.

Human Rights

No implications.

Crime and Disorder

No implications.

Staffing

There may be changes to working practices and resource implications arising from the development and implementation of the Corporate Asset Management Plan. These resource implications will be considered as part of the CAMP implementation.

Accommodation

No implications at this stage, although the implementation of the Corporate Asset Management Plan is likely to result in changes to the existing property portfolio. Changes to the portfolio will be subject to option appraisal and corporate approval processes and governance.

Risk

None at this stage.

Procurement

None at this stage.

Appendix 2: Corporate Asset Management Plan 2023-2025

See document attached separately.

Durham County Council

Corporate Asset Management Plan 2023-2025



Contents

Foreword	03
<hr/>	
An introduction to the Corporate Asset Management Plan	04
<hr/>	
Part 1: The Asset Management Strategy	10
<hr/>	
Part 2: The Asset Management Policy	19
<hr/>	
Part 3: The Asset Management Action Plan	35

Foreword

The Council Plan captures the ambitions of the council and the role it plays in working to improve the lives of everyone who lives or works in the county. It also describes the wide range of public services that are delivered to make a positive difference to our residents and businesses as well as what we do to attract and welcome visitors.

Property is influential in the success of these ambitions as it provides suitable spaces and places from which to deliver public services, either directly or together with our partners. Property is also vital for the creation of jobs, new housing and promoting economic growth through the regeneration of our county. Property can also generate income to invest in our front-line services.

As with other councils, we face a range of economic, social and financial challenges that need be managed through careful allocation and use of resources to provide exceptional services. We believe in striving to be more effective in the way that we hold and use our property, to not only make savings on property-related expenditure, but to better link our property assets to service delivery so that services to residents are enhanced.

We are pleased to introduce this Corporate Asset Management Plan which sets out the basis on which our property portfolio is managed, how we wish to improve the estate and how we are making a positive contribution to both the delivery of public services and to the growth and development of Durham as a vibrant and ambitious county.



Cllr James Rowlandson

Portfolio Holder for Resources,
Investment and Assets

An introduction to the Corporate Asset Management Plan

Durham County Council owns and operates a large and varied property portfolio which extends to 22,971 acres in total, supporting 893 buildings, from which we deliver a wide range of services. Many of our property assets are held as a historic legacy, having been inherited through amalgamation of Districts and the County Council, acquired over many years bringing specific challenges and responsibilities.

We are committed to providing value for money through managing our people and resources effectively which includes all our property assets. It is essential that we continuously review how we use our portfolio to deliver the best outcomes. This Corporate Asset Management Plan has been produced to help ensure that the property portfolio supports the achievement of our corporate ambitions set out in the Council Plan 2020-2023 and associated corporate strategies.

The purpose of the Corporate Asset Management Plan is to provide a clear picture of what we want from our property portfolio going forward and set out the overarching principles by which we will manage it to achieve these objectives. This will be used to guide future planning and use of our property portfolio and influence all property related activities.

Whilst our property portfolio includes mainstream schools and housing, the growth of Academies and the development of a Housing Revenue Account mean that these currently have or are developing their own management and governance

arrangements and as such this Corporate Asset Management Plan does not refer to these assets in detail. Further consideration will be given to these specific areas of the portfolio in due course.



This Corporate Asset Management Plan also excludes the council's highway infrastructure and assets, the management of which is the subject of a separate Transport Asset Management Plan. This document sets out the extent of the road and footpath network that the council is responsible for and explains the approach to road safety, resurfacing and maintenance programmes, inspection regimes and major investment in the network. The aim of both the CAMP and the TAMP is to demonstrate that the council is making the best use of their assets across both the built estate and highways.

Background and context

The Council's last Corporate Asset Management Plan (2013-2016) was adopted by Cabinet in July 2013. The 2013-2016 Asset Management Plan set out our approach to ensure that we optimised the use of our assets in terms of service benefit, financial return and value for money. It also set out the context and environment in which we were then operating and how this directed the property priorities.

Since 2013, there have been a number of significant national and local influences that have impacted on the way the Council operates. In addition, the Council also agreed in 2019 to move to a Corporate Landlord model, referred to as the Corporate Property Partnership (CPP). It is essential that the way the property portfolio is managed reflects these changes.

The Council, like many others has been affected by challenges in areas such as health inequalities and wellbeing, rising demand for services, ongoing impacts of austerity, health and social care challenges, climate change and challenges in children's social care. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on how public services are provided in the short term, but it has also highlighted the potential to review how we will operate going forward and if we can transform our model of delivery.

As such, it is timely that the Corporate Asset Management Plan is reviewed and updated.

Property plays an integral role in supporting the achievement of all our ambitions and strategic objectives but is often not

explicitly recognised. The updating of this Corporate Asset Management Plan and the implementation of the CPP model will serve to ensure that consideration is given to property issues at the strategic level.

The Corporate Asset Management Plan sits alongside and supports the overall ambitions of the Council. It is very much integral to the achievement of these wider ambitions and recognises some of the challenges that we face in trying to ensure the property portfolio plays its part effectively. Some of the main strategic areas where property can support, or the future estate and its management must be influenced by, are summarised in Part 1.

Document structure

This Corporate Asset Management Plan has been developed as three elements, and is structured accordingly:

Part 1: The Asset Management Strategy

Part 2: The Asset Management Policy

Part 3: The Asset Management Action Plan

The content of each element is summarised below.

The Asset Management Strategy	<p>The direction for change</p> <p>This will set out at a strategic level what the Council wants to achieve from its property assets in the context of its organisational objectives and achieving its priorities. This will reflect different strategic issues including specific social, economic and environmental objectives as well as specific service and portfolio transformation objectives.</p> <p>It will translate organisational objectives into property objectives.</p>
The Asset Management Policy	<p>The rules, culture and behaviour</p> <p>This will set out the rules and principles by which the property assets must be managed.</p> <p>It will provide the framework under which all activities will be undertaken and will ensure that performance is effectively and consistently managed to support the Council's strategic objectives, in addition to statutory and legislative requirements.</p>
The Asset Management Action Plan	<p>The delivery plan</p> <p>This will be a short term, 'live' action plan specifying detailed activities, timescales, resources and responsibilities to achieve the property objectives.</p> <p>This action plan will be actively managed and updated at least annually.</p>

Document status

It should be noted that this Corporate Asset Management Plan is a document to provide the context, direction and prioritised actions for the near future. This is intended to serve for two years and will be subject to changes and refinement as the CPP Model continues to be implemented, and our restoration and recovery strategy moves forward.

Our restoration and recovery strategy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic may well include transformations in future working practices and service offers. This may impact on the way that our property assets are used in the future, and as such the way the land and buildings are managed must remain responsive to such changes.

As this initial Corporate Asset Management Plan is a first stage document, each of the three elements will be subject to review over the next 2 years to ensure they continue to meet and support corporate ambitions and priorities. In particular, the Asset Management Action Plan will be used as a live tool to direct and reflect asset management programmes of work undertaken and will be actively managed and amended as required.



Hardwick Park - Temple of Minerva



Durham Gala Theatre

Achievements to date

It should be recognised that since the period of the previous Corporate Asset Management Plan, through our Assets Transformation project we have continued to make good progress in developing our corporate approach to property asset management. Despite challenges due to resourcing and the COVID-19 pandemic, we have made a number of significant achievements.

A new Corporate Property and Land service was created in 2019, under a new Head of Corporate Property and Land (CPaL). This restructuring brought together strategic and operational property management functions which has supported the implementation of the CPP model. Additional changes were made to the CPaL team structure in 2020 to further consolidate construction programme and project management activities, and work will continue to review the structure to best meet the needs of the council going forward.

The implementation of the CPP model has necessitated the implementation of a new governance structure, and in 2020 we successfully established the Corporate Property Board (CPB) to provide leadership and oversight of the implementation of the CPP model.

We have reviewed governance arrangements and relationships between other boards and working groups with the CPB to ensure they work effectively and focus on relevant issues. This has included a reduction in the number of capital programme boards, the creation of a vacant property working group,

the establishment of a new capitalised maintenance board, and ensuring the CPB has oversight of various programmes such as our disposal programme and has considered proposals to dispose at less than best value, option appraisals and property rationalisation. Work continues to ensure that governance relationships between the CPB and other corporate boards and programmes such as the Carbon Board and Low Carbon initiatives are fully integrated.

Alongside new governance arrangements, we have undertaken work to develop, review and refresh many formal policies, procedures and processes to reflect our new way of working and good practice. As well as forming new internal communication and reporting structures, we have introduced procedures and guidance to better manage activities such as decommissioning of surplus buildings, changing the use of buildings, dealing with the sale of garden land and the production of a Property Maintenance Policy. The programme of activities within the Action Plan (Part 3) reflects ongoing work to develop a composite set of documented policies and procedures required to successfully deliver the CPP model which will be overseen by the CPB.

Achievements to date continued...

As part of the implementation of the CPP model, we have reviewed and realigned many property responsibilities and budgets. Whilst there is still more work to be done, there is now more clarity about property related roles and responsibilities in operational buildings which will be further rolled out across the remainder of the portfolio.

We have made significant progress in digitising and clarifying our land ownership and property records. We have also completed the IFRS16 lease project which has ensured that the data held regarding our leased properties is accurate, up to date and meets the requirements of the IFRS16 lease accounting standard.

We are working on our CORAM 2.0 data improvement programme to align the property help desk, repairs and maintenance, compliance, deed management, case management, contract SLA management and ensure this effectively interfaces with Asset Manager, our property data system. Work is ongoing to integrate capital projects and remaining legacy systems.

As well as these strategic achievements, we have continued to deliver our 'business as usual' activities and deliver a number of major projects during 2021/22.

This includes:

- delivering a capital programme with a budget of £112.5 million
- undertaking capitalised maintenance to a value of £5 million
- prioritising the disposal programme to meet our capital receipt target, resulting in the disposal of over 25 assets and removal in the region of 12 covenants, generating capital receipts of over £2.2 million
- undertaking 1,627 asset valuations for capital accounting purposes
- managing the design and construction of various school, Children's and Leisure Centre schemes, of the Low Carbon Morrison Busty Depot, of NetPark Phase 3 and of new bus stations in Durham and Bishop Auckland; progressing the design of the Durham Light Infantry museum and art gallery; managing the external construction of the Story (Durham History Centre); facilitating the demolition of Shildon School and plans for demolition of County Hall and wider Aykley Heads masterplan; delivering a rolling live programme of 50 inception reports/feasibilities and 150 design and implement schemes.

Part 1:

The Asset Management Strategy

The direction for change

In Part 1, we set out at a strategic level what we want to achieve from our property assets in the context of our organisational objectives and achieving our priorities. This reflects different strategic issues including specific social, economic and environmental objectives we have set as our priorities. Whilst we need to undertake further work to develop this further, we have set ourselves a number of high level strategic property objectives that will help us to manage the portfolio and use all our resources to best effect.



Corporate context

It is essential that the Corporate Asset Management Plan sits alongside our various strategic plans and that whatever we do with our property portfolio supports what the council as a whole is trying to achieve. This can often be a challenge as there may well be conflicting demands on the property estate, and it is important that we ensure we have a robust approach in our decision making. We also need to balance demands from our services for properties that support them in the delivery of services and demands from our

communities for properties to support local needs. The following corporate strategies (pages 11-14) illustrate the issues that impact on, and direct how we manage the overall property portfolio. As well as these corporate strategies which direct all our activities, more focused service specific strategies may require consideration of property implications as part of service and project specific business planning. This is a fundamental element of our evolving corporate approach to property asset management through the CPP model.

The Council Plan 2022-2026

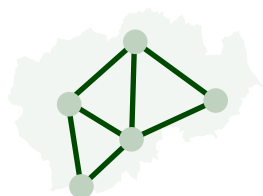
The Council Plan sets out the contributions that the council will make to help achieve the vision for County Durham which has three broad ambitions:



More and better jobs



Freemans Quay Leisure Centre



Connected communities



Annfield Plain Branch Library

The themes and priorities in the Plan centre on our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council and provide the direction and context for all our service plans and objectives. Equally, they have provided the focus for the development of our strategic property objectives.



People live long
and independent lives

The Council Plan sets out a commitment for the Authority to be regarded as an excellent council ensuring we manage our resources effectively, have effective governance arrangements, have a good grip on performance and finances and ensuring that we are fit for the future. This is a fundamental principle that underpins all our property activities and plans for improvements.

Medium Term Financial Plan, Capital Strategy and Property Investment Strategy

We will always have financial pressures and expectations that the property estate will deliver both capital receipts from disposals and revenue income. Our Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Capital Strategy provide the framework within which we ensure our financial resources are managed effectively such that service and financial planning is fully aligned with council priorities.

The MTFP recognises that we have a good track record in rationalising our buildings and transferring assets to communities, and these are activities that we will continue to consider to ensure we achieve value for money.

Our Capital Strategy ensures we make capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with service objectives and properly take into account stewardship, prudence, sustainability and affordability. The capital programme is prioritised and agreed through a corporate approval process and is supported in part by capital raised from the disposal of surplus property assets which is a funding source for the capital programme. By continually reviewing the performance of our property assets through our asset challenge programme, we can ensure that we identify opportunities to rationalise the estate and maximise wider benefits, including the support of the capital programme.

We also have a Property Investment Strategy which sets out our objectives relating to investing in property, and identifies the benefits, risks and our

approach to acquiring property in order to support the Council's priorities. We need to ensure that we only acquire investments which meet our objectives and provide a reasonable level of return after considering all risks as part of a robust business case and due diligence process. How we then manage these assets must reflect and be determined by performance against these objectives.



The Dunes Cafe, Crimdon



Tanfield Causeway Arch

Inclusive Economic Strategy

The County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy sets a clear, long-term vision for the area's economy up to 2035, with an overarching aim to create more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy. The vision, priorities and areas of focus within the strategy have been shaped by an Economic Statement which establishes the state of the county's economy today and the opportunities and challenges for the future. The Strategy seeks to overcome barriers in order to transform levels of growth and harness the county's potential, with all partners actively working towards this shared vision. We want to ensure we use our property assets to support these objectives and will undertake further work to understand the contribution our own property portfolio, and the way we manage it, can maximise income and support opportunities to enhance and improve places and businesses.

The Inclusive Economic Strategy will use a Delivery Plan approach throughout the strategy period to set out clear, tangible and transformative outcomes and enable regular reviews to respond to economic changes; allow priorities to be reassessed and recalibrated by future administrations; and actions to be refined based on whether outcomes are being achieved. This will ensure the Inclusive Economic Strategy remains a relevant and live document throughout its lifespan. As part of the formation of these Delivery Plans the role the CAMP and wider property portfolio can play in delivering economic growth will be considered in detail.

Climate Emergency Response Plan and Ecological Emergency

Our Climate Emergency Response Plan sets our own targets for carbon reduction, raising the target for carbon reductions from 60% to 80% by 2030 (from a 2008/9 baseline) and with a now enhanced aim of becoming a net zero Council by 2030 and to have a carbon neutral County by 2045. It is vital that we aim to reduce the council's carbon footprint which includes emissions from the use and occupation of buildings. Whilst the focus initially has been on setting clear design priorities in building fabric, form, building services and renewable energy in new buildings, these same principles are also applicable to refurbishments or works on buildings and land in our existing property portfolio. Whilst it may be harder, and potentially more costly to achieve retrospectively in existing buildings, all maintenance and other property activities will seek to support the achievement of our carbon reduction targets, through means such as the choice of energy efficient plant, equipment, materials or procurement options.

Cabinet formally declared an ecological emergency for County Durham in April 2022 and an Ecological Emergency Response Plan has been approved that in due course may merge with the Climate Emergency Response Plan. In line with our response to the climate emergency, we need to ensure that what we do with our landholdings and the way we deliver our services supports and benefits habitat and species diversity. As such, our corporate processes will include planning for the ecological emergency and take account of these priorities, including the allocation of capital and revenue funding within the annual MTFP planning cycle with a value for money outcome-based focus alongside other projects and programmes.

Towns and Villages strategy

Our Towns and Villages Strategy overlays and supports the delivery of the corporate vision, with a focus on improving benefits to the more deprived communities. Whilst it is aligned to existing and ongoing regeneration activity, it can assist in accelerating projects and tackling issues that are prioritised by individual communities. We will continue to anticipate and respond to how communities are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure our property portfolio and property management activities support recovery, strengthen community capacity and build resilience going forward.

Housing strategy

Through our Housing Strategy, we continue to focus on tackling homelessness and identifying opportunities for the provision of housing. We will continue to provide professional support when we acquire properties and ensure that appraisals of initial and ongoing costs are used to inform any investment decisions.

Workforce strategy

Our Workforce Strategy 2021-2023 recognises the need to respond to COVID-19 related and other challenges. Different ways of delivering our services, different ways for the public to access our services, opportunities to embrace new technology, ensuring all that we do is accessible and inclusive, and working with partners could all impact on our future operating model and therefore the requirements of the future operational property portfolio. It is essential that the makeup of, and way the property portfolio is managed, is sufficiently flexible to support and respond to these changes.

Key drivers

We want to ensure that the properties we use make a positive contribution to the way we operate and deliver our front line services. We will undertake further work to fully understand all our service priorities and how they may change in the future, and how the property portfolio can support wider corporate strategies.

Our property assets are costly to run and maintain, and we want to ensure that we maximise the benefits that we derive from them. These benefits may be monetary, but there could also be benefits to service delivery, communities or opportunities to drive growth.

Many of our property assets are old and their design and structures provide us with challenges if we want to use them flexibly as our service and operational needs change. The use and occupation of buildings can also have detrimental environmental impacts, particularly those with ageing plant and services within them. Effective management of our portfolio, including consideration of investment and decommissioning could help us minimise these harmful impacts.

There are many factors that will shape our future property portfolio. Some will be driven by our own direction and within our control, others will be externally influenced. Collectively they may well compete with one another, but by having clear strategic property objectives and strong corporate governance through the Corporate Property Board, we can ensure that the estate is managed, and that decisions are made in a way that supports the priorities and objectives within the Council Plan, and its associated strategic documentation.

Our property portfolio must be able to respond to these pressures and changes to meet the requirements of our services delivering both front line services and our back office functions. The future shape of our property portfolio and how we use it must be informed by the collective needs of all our users and we are developing this understanding through the implementation of the CPP model.

We want our property portfolio to provide fit for purpose, efficient and sustainable assets and we need to ensure we use all our resources to best effect to achieve that. By ensuring we routinely challenge the performance of our portfolio, we can ensure that we derive the maximum benefit from our most efficient, flexible and best quality buildings and that we ensure our buildings are appropriately utilised and support the user and customer experience.

The size, make up and geographic spread of our current portfolio gives us a real opportunity to reshape it to support our organisational transformations and changes to service delivery models and ways of working. By creating flexibility in our estate, we will be in a better position to respond to opportunities for change and to collaborate with partners and our communities.

Strategic objectives

Being an excellent council requires us to use all our resources to best effect. To help us do that, we have set out the strategic direction and what we want to achieve from our property portfolio by defining a set of high level property specific objectives within the context of our organisational objectives.

The strategic objectives we will adhere to for our property portfolio are:

Strategic objective	Purpose	Corporate drivers
To only hold (or acquire) assets for a defined purpose in support of a corporate objective with demonstrable benefits	<p>Ensure we have clear purpose to hold each asset</p> <p>Use asset challenge to identify assets not supporting objectives</p> <p>Ensure consideration of robust business case and appraisal prior to all acquisitions</p>	Council Plan – excellent council
To improve the flexibility in use and efficiency of our property portfolio	<p>Seek opportunities to rationalise the portfolio</p> <p>Use asset challenge to identify opportunities to improve utilisation, co-locate or reprovide space differently</p> <p>Use service improvement or development plans to inform strategic planning of the property portfolio</p> <p>Seek to achieve an optimum estate to maximise efficiency</p>	<p>Council Plan – excellent council</p> <p>Workforce Strategy</p>

To reduce the revenue impact/ operational cost of the portfolio	<p>Reduce operational costs through more effective use of buildings</p> <p>Ensure effective performance monitoring and energy management</p>	<p>MTFP</p> <p>Council Plan – excellent council</p>
To reduce the carbon impact of our portfolio	<p>Ensure sustainability and environmental impact is considered for all new build, refurbishment, and maintenance activities</p> <p>Ensure the way we use buildings minimises impact</p>	<p>Climate Emergency Response Plan and Ecological Emergency</p>
To use the property portfolio to support and drive growth and regeneration objectives	<p>Ensure we use our estate innovatively to identify opportunities to drive and support regeneration and development</p> <p>Ensure we consider growth and economic impact in the way we use and manage our property portfolio</p>	<p>Council Plan</p> <p>Economic Statement</p> <p>Towns & Villages Strategy</p> <p>Housing Strategy</p>
To support the capital programme through the generation of capital receipts from the property portfolio	<p>Use asset challenge to identify opportunities to release surplus assets</p> <p>Use our Disposal Programme to manage the delivery of capital receipts</p> <p>Seek to maximise capital value</p>	<p>MTFP</p> <p>Capital Strategy</p>
To generate revenue income and maximise benefits from our portfolio	<p>Ensure our management approach maximises financial returns and recognises other economic and social benefits</p> <p>Effectively manage the performance of our portfolio to meet target returns</p>	<p>MTFP</p> <p>Capital Strategy</p>

By defining these objectives to provide the framework for the holding and management of our property portfolio, we can create a clearer picture of how we want to shape our property portfolio going forward.

This Corporate Asset Management Plan provides the baseline for the current position and will be used to determine targets and performance measures by which we will be able to measure success against these objectives in the future. The development of a comprehensive performance management regime is one of the key tasks within the Action Plan for the coming year and will be used to develop the comprehensive Corporate Asset Management plan for 2025.

Implementation of the Corporate Asset Management Plan will be led by the Corporate Director for Regeneration, Economy and Growth reporting through the Corporate Property Board. Governance arrangements are set out in more detail within Part 2 (the Asset Management Policy).



Killhope Lead Mining Underground Installation



Killhope Lead Mining Centre – Lead Mining Shop and Store

Part 2:

The Asset Management Policy

The rules, culture and behaviour

In Part 2, we set out the rules and principles by which our property assets will be managed. It provides the framework under which all property related activities will be undertaken and will ensure that we can effectively and consistently measure and manage performance to support our services and corporate objectives, in addition to statutory and legislative requirements.

Our Corporate Property Partnership Model

The way we manage our property assets is important and as a council we made a decision in 2019 to adopt and implement what we call our Corporate Property Partnership (CPP) model. The principles of this approach are fundamental in directing the way we are now managing our property assets.

The aim of the CPP model is to establish clarity of direction, vision and purpose for our property assets and to:

- Enable us to more efficiently utilise our assets to deliver better services to our communities
- Unlock the value of our assets, seek efficiencies through joint arrangements with other public sector partners and maximise private sector investment
- Integrate thinking about property with financial, regeneration and other considerations to support the delivery of our Council Plan.

The over-riding tenet of the CPP model is that responsibility for all property related activity and expenditure is within the remit of the Corporate Property and Land (CPaL) service under the direction of the Corporate Property Board. This approach assures that finances are properly prioritised, management is consistent, and opportunities are realised across the whole estate. In this way, we can ensure that the needs of the whole organisation, as well as our individual service operations are met.

Services use property assets to support the delivery of their services. By transferring all property responsibilities and activities to CPaL under the CPP model, services can best use their skills and resources to focus on planning and delivering high quality services.

Directing Principles

In order to provide a strategic framework within which the property portfolio will be managed and to ensure we adhere to the strategic objectives set out in Part 1, we have defined five key principles. This is in effect an articulation of existing practice, but will ensure that all supporting policies, practices and management decisions are made consistently with a clear purpose.

The five directing principles are:



Corporate Resource

To ensure property assets are managed as a corporate resource and are used to support the council's ambitions and priorities.



Right space, right place

To ensure property assets provide the right spaces in the right places to support the delivery of services for the benefit of communities.



Well maintained and sustainable

To ensure property assets are managed and maintained safely, effectively, efficiently and sustainably to take account of whole life costs and environmental impact.



Optimise returns and support growth

To ensure consideration is given to the use of property assets to stimulate development and growth, support local business needs, optimise financial returns and support corporate ambitions and priorities.



Support community involvement and partnerships

To ensure opportunities for community involvement and partnership working are considered where they can provide efficiencies, benefits to communities and the property assets can be effectively managed.

Further detail of the aim of each of these five principles are set out below. We want to develop a culture whereby our behaviours and activities positively reflect these principles. As part of the adoption of each principle we have also included some core cultural values to provide a clear and consistent way of working.



Corporate Resource

To ensure property assets are managed as a corporate resource and are used to support the council's ambitions and priorities.

By adopting the CPP model, we have a clear directive that all our property assets are managed for the benefit of the council as a whole. The concept of this approach is that all property activities are coordinated through CPaL, including the strategic planning of the property portfolio, feasibility and option appraisals to support the needs of service areas as they evolve and ensuring decisions reflect corporate priorities.

We want our property portfolio to reflect our needs corporately and to support our objective to only hold (or acquire) assets for a defined purpose in support of a corporate objective with demonstrable benefits. This requires an in depth understanding of the needs of services and how they will develop in the future as well as full integration with our wider corporate strategies. It is essential that services consider property requirements and implications on the existing portfolio as part of their service development planning, and that any property implications are identified and considered in wider corporate strategies.

One of the early and key achievements in implementing the CPP model has been the creation of the Corporate Property Board which began in November 2020. The Corporate Property Board has overall responsibility for ensuring a corporate approach is taken in the management of all our property assets. The establishment of the Corporate Property Board has given us the ability to have a single and integrated oversight of strategic property related activities by bringing together senior representatives of all service areas across the whole organisation.

The Corporate Property Board is now firmly established as the driver and co-ordinator of strategic property activities and informing decisions on behalf of the council. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has presented new and additional challenges across all service areas, and the implications of this have been reflected in the activities of the Corporate Property Board (and will continue to do so).

The CPP Model remains the key programme of change that will ensure that the property portfolio is managed in a way that delivers our corporate priorities and that work is organised and delivered with consistency and efficiency. However, we still have a lot of work to do in fully implementing the CPP model and are actively working through a formal and comprehensive programme of activities which are reflected in the Action Plan for the coming year. The Corporate Property Board has a critical role in supporting, guiding and directing the work on the wider programme of activities to ensure it remains fit for purpose and representative of our corporate priorities and objectives.

To help us manage our property portfolio effectively and make informed and consistent decisions, we can categorise our property portfolio into 'family types'. Each family type will have a defined management approach which will enable us to ensure the best use of our property resources in managing each type of asset. It will also provide clarity and understanding for our property users and communities.

The rules, culture and behaviour

All decisions about our property portfolio must be evidence based and fully appraised. This requires reference to, and analysis of comprehensive and robust property data. Our property data is currently held on two systems:

- Deed Management System (DMS). This system holds the data and documentation on all property transactions undertaken by the Council, such as acquisitions, disposals, leases etc. This data provides the base source for 'family types' and confirms the legal status of the land held by the Council. This data is visually represented on the Council's GIS mapping system.
- AssetManager.Net. This system takes the base data from the DMS and GIS and adds an additional layer of information to each property type. Each property is given a Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) and aligned by service user. A key part of this system is to ensure Council compliance with CPIFA Financial Accounting Standards.

Our ambition is to fully integrate both systems across CPaL through the delivery of the Coram 2 system, which is currently under development. This will see the alignment and integration of the property help desk, repairs and maintenance, compliance, deed management, case management, contract/SLA management with data held in Asset Manager. A further programme of works will be undertaken to integrate capital projects and remaining legacy systems.

By managing our property portfolio corporately, we are able to challenge and continue to review our assets against defined criteria ensuring that we continue to meet our defined strategic objectives. These criteria will include assessment against technical property performance measures (such as their condition, future maintenance liabilities and operational costs), but also assessment against suitability and sufficiency for current and future operational needs. The development of a comprehensive property performance management regime, supported by excellent data is a key project in the implementation of the CPP Model.

Implementing a formal programme of asset challenge reviews enables us to continually identify opportunities to use our assets to best effect, and to develop a programme of rationalisation and portfolio transformation. By doing this, we should be able to reduce the overall size of our property portfolio and achieve a more cost effective and efficient use of the estate long term.

Culture

To ensure property assets are managed as a corporate resource and are used to support the council's ambitions and priorities:

- We will recognise that all our property assets are held as a corporate resource and are managed by CPaL reporting through the Corporate Property Board
- We will ensure that services consider property requirements and implications as part of service development planning and liaise with CPaL to ensure this can be considered in strategic planning of the estate
- We will ensure that all assets are categorised correctly and managed accordingly
- We will ensure that CPaL coordinate all property related information and use it to inform strategic planning and decision making



New Durham Bus Station
to open in 2023



Right space, right place

To ensure property assets provide the right spaces in the right places to support the delivery of services for the benefit of communities.

Our property assets have traditionally been the means by which we have delivered our services to our communities and are often the first point of access when interacting with us. This could be through the range of assets such as customer access points, libraries, museums, leisure and care facilities or parks and recreational amenities. We also provide office accommodation for our office based staff as well as depot and waste facilities.

However, the way that we deliver our services now, and how they will be delivered in the future is constantly evolving and this has been further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Services in the future may well be less focused on buildings but rather about the most effective ways of providing high quality services to customers, and we need to ensure that it is this that directs our future property solutions. Our Customer Access Strategy recognises that the way we interact with our communities is changing and that we need to be innovative in the way that we provide access in the future, whether through our own properties, those of partners or digitally.

Fit for purpose property is essential to the provision of quality services, and we will work to continue to better understand service and customer needs and ensure that the estate responds to and supports future service transformations. Whilst this primarily affects our operational portfolio, it is important that we also understand and respond to the needs of our communities and identify opportunities for property solutions.

The locations of our property assets are also historic and may no longer represent the best location for current needs.

Also, demographic changes or changes in community needs may have resulted in some of our property assets not being fully utilised. Many services have historically operated from individual premises, and we will seek out opportunities to improve service delivery through more integrated provision of our own services as well as opportunities to work more collaboratively with partners.

Whilst we will continue to support the provision of essential services and seek to support community needs, we will look for opportunities to meet these through fewer but better buildings.

By continuing to understand service and community requirements, we can inform our asset challenge programme. Putting this understanding alongside property performance data, we can seek to ensure that our property portfolio of the future provides the best space or accommodation in the best locations to meet our needs. If we identify property assets that are not used effectively or efficiently, they may become part of our rationalisation programme.

Culture

To ensure property assets provide the right spaces in the right places to support the delivery of services for the benefit of communities:

- We will ensure that CPaL and services work closely to share understanding of space and locational requirements for effective service delivery
- We will offer guidance and seek to identify opportunities to ensure that our property portfolio is suitable and sufficient to meet and respond to changing service needs
- We will seek to ensure that the property portfolio is supportive of inclusive environments for all users



Bishop Auckland Town Hall



Durham Town Hall



Well maintained and sustainable

To ensure property assets are managed and maintained safely, effectively, efficiently and sustainably to take account of whole life costs and environmental impact.

It is essential that we effectively maintain and manage our property portfolio to ensure all our properties are safe and function as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet the needs of all users. We must also ensure that any expenditure on maintenance is prioritised and effectively managed to make the best use of our resources.

The implementation of the CPP model and our Property Maintenance Policy is enabling us to do this effectively across the whole portfolio, so that we move away from fragmented and unclear maintenance responsibilities and different standards and procedures in different parts of the portfolio. The use and occupation of our buildings play a significant part in meeting our carbon reduction target, and through our maintenance activities we will ensure we identify opportunities to mitigate this impact. Retrofitting can be costly, but we will consider the whole life costs and environmental impact of our maintenance activities in our decision making.

Like many other local authorities, our property portfolio comprises buildings of various ages and construction types giving us real challenges to maintain these assets safely, cost effectively and to appropriate standards.

Through our programme of condition surveys we are able to assess the condition of the properties in our portfolio and prioritise works and expenditure where it is needed most. We are aware that we have

a sizeable level of required maintenance of approximately £108m (including £27m of redecoration) across our non-schools estate and that 29% of this relates to urgent/essential works. This figure, derived from the condition surveys, represents the sum needed to retain the asset in a condition in which it can perform its required function efficiently. It covers all elements of buildings and the associated external works. This is not a desirable nor a sustainable position and we will continue to look at our portfolio strategically to ensure that we target resources to those properties that provide long term provision for our services and to ensure that all our holdings are safe and secure for all users and our communities. This work enables a better informed decision making approach and ensures we minimise more costly reactive repairs.

As an employer and landowner we have many legal duties to ensure all our property assets meet statutory and regulatory requirements, and we will ensure works to meet these requirements are appropriately prioritised in accordance with our Property Maintenance Policy and compliance regime.

Not all properties in our portfolio require the same standard of maintenance. By categorising our property portfolio into 'family types', we can set different maintenance standards to reflect the type of asset. Whilst we will continue to develop this approach thereby ensuring we use our resources more effectively.

Within our property portfolio, we are custodians of a range of heritage and cultural properties which give us additional maintenance challenges. Such structures and sites are a legacy of the past and are of a historic nature, and how they are managed can be a sensitive issue within our communities. Such assets include statues, memorials, bridges and viaducts. We want to ensure these assets are maintained and managed in the best and most appropriate way, and there may be other bodies better placed to do that than we are. We will look at opportunities to safely protect their long term future, formalise maintenance responsibilities and minimise our financial responsibilities.

Culture

To ensure property assets are managed and maintained safely, effectively, efficiently, and sustainably to take account of whole life costs and environmental impact:

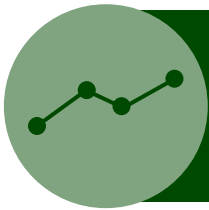
- We will ensure that our property portfolio is safe and secure and meets all statutory requirements
- We will ensure that our property portfolio is maintained in accordance with the Property Maintenance Policy and available resources
- We will ensure that CPaL develop and share property maintenance plans with services and that all property maintenance activities are suitably managed
- We will seek to reduce energy and water consumption and carbon emissions and ensure that our property portfolio is as sustainable as possible in its design, construction, operation and management



Mountsett Crematorium



Ropery Lane Cemetery



Optimise returns and support growth

To ensure consideration is given to the use of property assets to stimulate development and growth, support local business needs, optimise financial returns and support corporate ambitions and priorities.

We are both a significant landowner and also play a major role in driving growth and regenerating communities across our area. As such, we have the unique opportunity to be able to utilise our property portfolio to support and promote economic growth and regeneration. This could involve investigating the potential of our land and buildings to provide development or re-use opportunities for commercial use, housing or using it as leverage or as a catalyst for other investment. The adoption of the CPP model will help us take a fully corporate approach in seeking out and appraising such opportunities.

Our own properties play a role in, and impact on the environment and local economies of our towns and villages. This could be through the use and utilisation of a property as much as its physical presence and we will consider this impact in the way that we manage the portfolio in the future.

Obtaining the best value from our property portfolio will continue to be a priority, including optimising financial returns. Financial returns include both capital receipts from disposals of surplus assets and rental from our income generating assets. Our strategic objectives require us to support the capital programme through the generation of capital receipts and to generate revenue income and maximise benefits from our property portfolio.

As we work to increase the efficiency of our portfolio, we will naturally identify disposal opportunities for inclusion in the property disposal programme in accordance with our Disposal Policy. Over the past 6 years, we have delivered £54.6m from the sale of surplus property assets, which has been a significant element in funding our capital programme in support of delivering essential services. The property disposal programme will continue to be a source of capital funding and our work to rationalise the portfolio will continue to identify opportunities to generate capital.

The opportunities to deliver capital receipts from the sale of property will be considered in the context of overall benefits in accordance with our Disposal Policy. Our CPP model ensures that we make decisions corporately based on an appraisal of both financial and wider corporate benefits.

Once a property is declared surplus to our requirements, we will seek to dispose of it by the most appropriate means to maximise the receipt and minimise the time it is vacant.

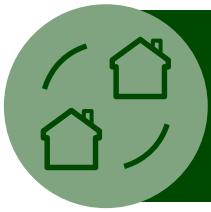
We hold a wide range of commercial and industrial properties that we lease out and manage. Our annual income from rents is approximately £8 million which makes a valuable contribution to our budget. We will manage these properties with a view to maximising our returns, minimising voids and arrears and meeting our obligations as landowner. However, we also recognise that some properties provide wider social and community benefits, and we will reflect these benefits in our management approach. For example, we may take a different approach in managing units focused on supporting start-up businesses (which is a priority in our Economic Statement) to that taken in managing properties let for income purposes to more established businesses.

We will keep our income generating assets under review to ensure they continue to meet our requirements and deliver acceptable returns. We will consider opportunities to reprofile our income producing portfolio, identify opportunities to generate new sources of income and to support growth and regeneration priorities.

Culture

To ensure consideration is given to the use of property assets to stimulate development and growth, support local business needs, optimise financial returns, and support corporate ambitions and priorities:

- We will use our property portfolio innovatively to stimulate and support development and regeneration opportunities at a local and regional level
- We will seek to optimise financial returns and commercial opportunities through our property portfolio
- We will manage our income generating assets effectively to balance financial objectives with wider corporate benefits



Support community involvement and partnerships

To ensure opportunities for community involvement and partnership working are considered where they can provide efficiencies, benefits to communities and the property assets can be effectively managed.

Whilst we have a large and varied property portfolio, we recognise the need to robustly manage its size and make up to achieve an optimum estate to maximise efficiency, at the same time ensuring we provide first class essential services. As the way that we work and provide our services is changing, so too are our needs for property. We want a property portfolio that is flexible and adaptable to these changing needs, and by working with other partners and organisations we may be able to better provide the 'right space in the right place' – one of our driving principles.

We continue to strengthen and develop our partnership working with the public sector and with our communities to deliver our services, such as through membership of the County Durham Together Partnership and our Customer Access Strategy. Through this engagement, we will also seek to identify similar opportunities in respect of property provision and ongoing management. This could range from co-location within operational buildings to transferring premises responsibilities or ownership. We will strive to make this process transparent, responsive and reflective of the benefits to be gained.

Local people are often best placed to determine need and manage the provision of community facilities in their area. Through the community building asset transfer programme, we have already successfully transferred over 40 community centres into the direct control of community

groups enabling local groups and parish councils to take control of the delivery of community services and activities in their local area. We have also transferred five leisure centres into community ownership generating about £1m in Medium Term Financial Plan savings.

We will continue to look at opportunities to seek out community groups and other partners who can take on responsibilities for properties. We will also develop a corporate approach to enable us to properly and consistently evaluate any proposal to transfer a property asset to partners (often referred to as community asset transfer). This will ensure we are confident there is a strong business case behind any proposal and that the long term future of the property is assured for the benefit of the whole community.

There may be occasions where we have a longer term strategic plan to use a property or piece of land for service development, but we could consider a temporary interim (or meanwhile) use until it is required, where there is certainty that it does not impact on our longer term strategic plans.

Culture

To ensure opportunities for community involvement and partnership working are considered where they can provide efficiencies, benefits to communities and the property assets can be effectively managed:

- We will work with community organisations and other partners to optimise the beneficial use and efficient occupation of our properties
- We will work closely with partners to identify opportunities for colocation and to drive efficiencies by working together
- We will consider opportunities for community and partner involvement in the management and longer term future ownership of our properties



Comeleon House



Bishop Auckland Day Nursery and Children's Centre



Derwentside Business Centre - Viewpoint

Property organisational arrangements and governance

The Head of Corporate Property and Land has managerial responsibility for all property services delivered through the Corporate Property and Land service (CPaL). The CPP model directs that all property related activities fall within the remit of CPaL which provides a complete property service through its in-house teams.

Decision making

The Constitution sets out how the council operates, how decisions are made and the rules and procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

The Constitution designates the Director for Regeneration, Economy and Growth as being responsible for the management of the majority of our property assets, with certain matters being delegated to the Head of Corporate Property and Land. The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investment and Assets acts as custodian and steward for the property portfolio and endorses the strategic and operational plans which ensures its appropriate management.

Any decisions about our property portfolio are made in accordance with the requirements of our Financial Procedure Rules which are also set out in our Constitution.

The Corporate Property Board was established in late 2020, and through its Terms of Reference is given overall responsibility for ensuring a corporate approach is taken in the management of all our property assets.

An introduction to the Corporate Property Board:

The Council is working towards a more corporate approach to the management of its land and building assets. This is important not only to effectively manage our assets, but it's critical ensure that the decisions made on our assets are able to support our financial position and to ensure joined up outcomes between regeneration, education and young people, adults and community.

Our approach to strategic management and decision making on our assets is part of the corporate property partnership model (CPP) and one of the key elements to implementation of a more corporate approach is the introduction of a Corporate and inclusive Board.

This Board will be pivotal in:

- Ensuring joined up decision making across multiple objectives
- Driving forward corporate approach and in co-ordinating strategic activities and decisions.
- The Board will ensure that the CPP model is efficiently and effectively put into place, and that all the necessary CPP model ingredients are developed and delivered, such as policy framework; performance and data management arrangements; budget framework; asset challenge framework; capital planning; and that the Council is properly resourced to implement and manage the CPP model.
- The Board will drive forward the implementation of the CPP model and co-ordinate strategic property activities and decisions. It's role in ensuring that opportunities and risks around the property portfolio are identified and assessed, and how property related decisions are made is going to be critical.
- The Board will also be critical to ensure that decisions made on a sound premise from an assets perspective, also support the wider objectives for regeneration, young people, adults and communities.
- The Board will reduce the risk of misunderstandings, improve information flow, enable earlier visibility on property related proposals and contribute to more robust and fit for purpose governance arrangements.
- The Board will also ensure that all property related projects and activities are aligned to corporate objectives and are appropriately resourced and co-ordinated.
- The terms of reference for the Board sets out the membership of that Board, meeting frequency, scope of activities, secretariat arrangements and its role in decision making processes. The Board may from time to time create sub-groups to work on more detailed areas of work.
- The Board will report to Cabinet where necessary and appropriate.
- Other existing groups/boards will report to the Corporate Property Board.

Cross department attendance at Board meetings is key to the successful implementation of a corporate and more strategic approach to managing the Councils land and buildings estate.

The Corporate Property Board is chaired by the Corporate Director for Regeneration, Economy and Growth, supported by the Head of Corporate Property and Land as vice chair. Meetings are held monthly and are formally minuted and outcomes reported. The Corporate Property Board will receive reports from other programme boards such as the Capitalised Maintenance Programme Board, the Carbon Board, the Education Review Board and the Vacant Property Group. These may be subject to change. Work is ongoing to review and refresh governance arrangements across property activities to ensure they make best use of time and reflect the principles of the CPP model.

Resourcing

The Corporate Property and Land (CPaL) service was established in 2019, and since that time it has been working to develop a more corporate approach to the management of the property portfolio. The implementation of the CPP model, and other corporate transformations have resulted in a proposed review of the current CPaL structure to ensure the requirements of the CPP implementation are effectively met. This work is ongoing, and delivery of the various activities referred to in the Action Plan (Part 3) will be dependant to some extent on the availability of resources, both financial and staffing.

The development of the programme of activities for the coming year will reflect resource availability. The Corporate Property Board is responsible for managing this programme of activities and ensuring appropriate resources are put in place.

Part 3:

The Asset Management Plan

The delivery plan

In Part 3 we set out our short term, 'live' action plan specifying detailed activities, timescales, resources and responsibilities to achieve our property objectives.

This action plan will be actively managed and updated at least annually. As this document will be used as the basis by which we will develop a more comprehensive Corporate Asset Management for 2025, it includes a number of strategic actions that will aim to be completed within that timeframe.

Our property portfolio

We have a very large and diverse property portfolio which we are responsible for running and managing. It is made up of a wide mix of buildings, structures and land reflecting our historic heritage and transition to a unitary council in 2009. The range of assets within our portfolio includes operational assets used for front line service delivery, assets to enable our communities to access our services and administrative buildings along with others such as depots, car parks, recreational and cultural assets. We also have a commercial portfolio, a number of heritage assets, parks and other land. As stated in the introduction, this document does not cover the management of our school estate which extends to over 160 maintained schools plus Academies and other educational facilities.

Key statistics (at 31 March 2022):



A book value of operational land and property circa £1.04 billion



9,296 hectares (22,971 acres) of land



893 buildings



Circa 3,300 use agreements including 954 leases out and 116 leases in



Annual rental income of £9 million



Annual rental outgoings of £2.5 million



1158 active property management cases



Our operational property portfolio represents a considerable resource – it has a book value in excess of £1 billion and it costs us in excess of £34m each year to run. Whilst we also use the portfolio to generate income and capital receipts, fiscal and resource pressures will be ongoing and the retention of the existing portfolio is neither sustainable, nor an efficient use of resources.

Actions for 2023-2025

We are actively working on the implementation of the CPP model. We have made a lot of progress in developing the culture of corporate working and understanding how we can do that most effectively. Resultant changes are ongoing and will continue during the period of this Corporate Asset Management Plan and beyond. The Corporate Property Board is managing the delivery of this programme and is receiving regular reports on progress and risk.

During the period of this Corporate Asset Management Plan, the priority is to develop the strategic framework supporting our operational and management activities. This will provide clarity of purpose and consistency of focus to our work. We also plan to further refine the longer term implementation plan which will remain live and be updated to reflect changing service and corporate requirements and priorities. The day to day activities of the CPaL teams will be informed and influenced by this programme of activities.

As such, this programme of activities provides the detailed workplan for the next two years and for our continued improvement beyond 2025. A high level summary of the whole programme, divided into its core themes, is set out over the page.

Theme	CPP Element	Key Actions
Define Need Set Strategy Plan & Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategy and planning ● Structure and governance ● Data management ● Asset challenge ● Sales and acquisitions ● Leasehold interests ● Commercial activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop CAMP; Partnership working protocols ● Appropriate and associated organisational changes as required ● Asset Categorisation; Asset Performance regime; Roll out CORAM 2.0 ● Develop Asset Challenge programme; Surplus property process review ● Standardise processes and documentation ● Review and update Estate management policies/processes ● Refresh Investment Strategy and review governance
Design Solutions Projects Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Design ● Project and programme management ● Contract arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuous review of new build policy ● Review governance/monitoring arrangements; Improve QMS across CPaL ● Standardise supplier lists; Develop Project Pricing Policy
Operation Maintenance Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategy and standards ● Performance and monitoring ● Operations and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop FM Strategy and review operating models/standards; Develop R&M prioritisation methodology ● Establish Performance standards/reporting; Benchmark performance/VfM ● Centralisation of Property budgets

Our property portfolio remains vital to the provision of high quality services to our communities, and it also gives us the ability to support the wider economic growth in our area. Closer corporate working between CPaL and services will help ensure this is achieved, and at the same time ensuring that our property portfolio is the right size and shape and is effectively utilised. Working with partner organisations and communities will help us identify joint property solutions to further improve our services and support community sustainability.

Developing our property data systems and enhancing understanding of our property information is a key element in the strategic planning of our property portfolio. By having a clear direction and a how we want our property portfolio to look in the future gives us the ability to ensure that our activities all work to meet this common goal. The way we manage the properties in our portfolio will reflect their individual contributions and use all our resources to support corporate priorities.

Our work in the coming year will ensure that we have quality data, policies and procedures to drive improvement and have a property portfolio that we are proud of. The full Corporate Asset Management Plan 2025 will develop the current position and provide a longer term vision.



Hardwick Park – Statue of Neptune

This page is intentionally left blank