



Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date **Monday 3 July 2023**

Time **9.30 am**

Venue **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

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

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the Special Joint meetings held on 14 April 2023 and 5 May 2023 and the meeting held on 24 April 2023 (Pages 3 - 30)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties
6. Towns and Villages Programme - Update (Pages 31 - 100)
 - i. Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth
 - ii. Presentation by the Head of Economic Development and the Economic Development Manager
7. Business Start-up Support - Overview (Pages 101 - 124)
 - i. Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth
 - ii. Presentation by the Managing Director of Business Durham

8. Quarter Four, 2022/23 Performance Management Report - Report of the Chief Executive Officer (Pages 125 - 148)
9. Refresh of the work programme 2023/24 - Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 149 - 170)
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
23 June 2023

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

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

Councillors M Abley, A Batey, G Binney, R Crute, M Currah, D Freeman, P Heaviside, G Hutchinson, A Jackson, C Lines, L Maddison, R Manchester, J Miller, R Ormerod, I Roberts, K Robson, K Shaw, M Stead and A Sterling

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris and Mr E Simons

Contact: Jill Hogg

Tel: 03000 269 711

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

**SPECIAL JOINT ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
AND
ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

At a **Special Joint Meeting** of the **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 14 April 2023** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Coult in the Chair

Members of the Committees:

Councillors E Adam, J Charlton, J Elmer, C Kay, R Manchester, C Martin, B Moist, D Nicholls, R Ormerod, J Purvis, J Quinn, A Reed, K Robson (Vice-Chair), D Sutton-Lloyd and S Townsend

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris, Mr E Simons and Mr P Walton

Also in attendance:

Councillor E Scott – Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors L Brown, L Fenwick, G Hutchinson and Mr T Cramond.

2 Substitute Members

No substitute members were in attendance.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items from Co-opted Members and other Interested Parties

There were no items reported.

5 County Durham's Visitor Economy

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which provided an overview of the tourism and visitor economy and cultural services (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

The Chair welcomed Alison Clark, Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism, and Michelle Gorman, Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy to the meeting. The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism introduced the presentation and highlighted recent significant strategic opportunities including the development of a new Destination Management Plan and the launch of the Inclusive Economic Strategy for County Durham.

The Committee noted that Visit County Durham (VCD) is part of the Culture, Sport and Tourism Service of Durham County Council and that VCD is the destination management organisation for County Durham. A recent review of destination management organisations resulted in the development of a new accreditation scheme for destination management organisations to become Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs). Visit County Durham, Newcastle Gateshead Initiative and Visit Northumberland were accredited by VisitEngland as LVEPs and in November 2022 the north east region (LA7 area) was selected for a new destination development partnership pilot with Newcastle Gateshead Initiative as the accountable body. The aim of the pilot is to develop new initiatives to attract visitors and investment into the visitor economy.

County Durham's Inclusive Economic strategy was adopted by the Council in December 2022. Key priorities of the strategy include the development of a clear brand and place marketing to attract inward investment, to grow the visitor economy and enhance the cultural and creative infrastructure. Work is currently underway to develop delivery plans to underpin the strategy which will be adopted later this year. The Destination Management Plan for 2023-2026 seeks to embed the aims of County Durham's Inclusive Economic Strategy.

The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism explained how the culture and heritage offer in County Durham is one of its most powerful assets and she illustrated how culture aligns with the visitor economy. The Committee heard that the Council directly delivers events and festivals such as Lumiere and the Bishop Auckland and Seaham food festivals. The Council manages its own theatre provision and it is increasing theatre productions in indoor and outdoor venues, casting local actors, writers and directors where possible.

Museums and heritage buildings are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike and the officer provided details of developments and new ways of working to attract more visitors and improve the quality of the existing visitor experience. The county also benefits from a unique landscape which supports the health and wellbeing of residents and the visitor economy.

Information was presented to the Committee on a Visitor Survey which gathered views of 1,200 visitors to Durham during the summer of 2022. The survey found that an increasing number of people use social media, with 50% of those surveyed finding information for their visit on Instagram. The most frequently listed attractions included Beamish Museum, Durham Cathedral and Castle and High and Low Force. In terms of visitor experience, respondents liked the peaceful nature of the county, the variety of things to do and the friendliness of the people. The availability of public toilets and the shopping experience were areas of dissatisfaction. All respondents said they would recommend the destination and 96% said they would visit again.

The Chair thanked officers for the informative report and presentation and invited comments and questions from Members.

Councillor Reed observed the importance of the transport system with regard to the visitor and tourism economy and asked what was being done to improve travel connectivity across the county and how information on travel options is provided to visitors. The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy highlighted that transport links across the county are a challenge however there is a dedicated Information Team which provide advice both pre and post visit and visitor information outlets are located at approximately 300 locations throughout the county. Councillor Reed spoke of the increase in holiday bookings by app, which also allow the user to book excursions and asked whether the Council has plans to introduce this. The officer explained that there were no plans to introduce an app and she explained that travel regulations require those offering packages, as would be the case with an app, to become bonded and by default, they would then become responsible for service providers. The officer confirmed that platforms are used, such as that provided by the National Tourist Board, on which itineraries and excursions are promoted.

Councillor Martin commented on the success of the regular events such as the food festivals and Lumiere and he referred to the popularity of walking and cycling and asked what action is taken to fill gaps in provision, at a local level.

Officers responded that there is regular dialogue with tourism businesses to encourage them to provide services, for example, to encourage cafés and bicycle shop start-up businesses in areas where there are walking and cycling routes. Business Durham is proactive in providing advice and guidance to small businesses, including advice on funding streams.

Councillor Ormerod pointed out that the North Riding of Yorkshire is represented in County Durham and he suggested that more could be done to promote the link. The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy responded that County Durham is promoted as the gateway to the Yorkshire Dales, however it is important to maintain the County Durham identity. Officers agreed to look into the suggestion in greater detail and referred to the attendance of Visit County Durham representation at the Yorkshire County show which aimed to further promote County Durham as a visitor destination.

Councillor Adam acknowledged the importance of a high level strategy and requested further detail on LVEPs. Councillor Adam also highlighted that smaller towns and villages are an important aspect of the cultural identity as they often have small heritage sites, parks and walking routes, using the example of Brightwater, which has a number of walking routes in the county and town and parish councils which host local events. He suggested that expanding the local offer may be key to achieving the aim of encouraging visitors to stay in the county for longer. The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism confirmed that the Destination Management Plan covers the full range of County Durham's assets and continued that one of the aims of LVEPs is to develop local economic growth and she recognised the role that small towns and villages play in developing the sense of place. She explained that the LVEP accreditation process was robust and focused on developing the visitor economy on all levels. The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism confirmed that VCD's website contains a great deal of detail about various towns and villages within the county and that the VCD Team work with AAPs, parish and town councils and other partners to promote local attractions and events.

The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy confirmed that her team would be getting in touch with AAPs to gather feedback on the current pages on VCD's website and in addition, the team would continue to work with Brightwater and promote walking routes within the county.

Referring to resources, Councillor Adam asked whether a figure was available as to how much investment would be required to make a significant impact on the visitor economy in the county.

The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy replied the figure was infinite however she recognised the limitations with regard to public sector funding and gave example of sources of private sector funding including the Arts Council and National Lottery funding.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships, Councillor Scott, spoke of the steps that had been taken to enhance the economic strategy and commented that the newly appointed Head of Economic Development will work with strategic asset partners to maximise resources.

Councillor Charlton expressed concern that the report omitted to mention important local heritage sites such as the Causey Arch, Tanfield Railway and the C2C cycle route. The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism responded that they are at the heart of the county's heritage and whilst they were not featured in the report and presentation, they are an essential part of the offer on the website. She referred to the emerging plans for the celebration of the bicentenary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 2025 and the hope that events and celebrations across communities along the route will attract funding. The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy highlighted that Tanfield Railway is a VCD partner and she added that the C2C cycle route and Causey Arch are significant assets. She informed the Committee that a great deal of work had been done in the Derwentside area to encourage small businesses to provide associated services for the walking and cycle routes.

Councillor Charlton observed that the visitor survey sample of 1,200 visitors was small compared to the number of visitors the county typically attracts and she suggested that liaising with hotels to ask their customers to complete a short questionnaire may have resulted in gaining a broader perspective. The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy replied that 1,200 was considered a sufficient sample to reflect visitors' views, however, she agreed to consider the suggestion for future surveys.

Councillor Moist expressed the view that the information presented did not reflect the 'asks' in the work programme and he commented that he would like to see detail on how the tourism sector is performing within the county's economy as a whole; how success is measured and an analysis of where improvements are required. He also questioned what action was being taken to keep pace with societal change and offer new activities. Councillor Moist also asked for information on how the county is taking advantage of the amount of people who are 'staycating' following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Officers highlighted information at paragraph 55 showing continued growth since the pandemic and that the draft Destination Management Plan will include projections over a 5 year period. A robust reporting system is in place with information on work with the business community, including jobs created and supported, being reported quarterly, through the Council's performance monitoring framework.

Councillor Moist requested that an update on the emerging Destination Management Plan be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee and he added that he would like to see how Visit County Durham measures its success. In response to a suggestion from Councillor Moist that a working group be set up to explore Members' suggestions for future work, the Chair pointed out that Members were at liberty to contact Visit County Durham to put forward their suggestions.

Councillor Quinn asked whether a recent newspaper report that the comedian Roy Chubby Brown was asked not to return to the Empire Theatre was correct. The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism clarified that when the reporter asked whether the theatre planned to book the act, the response to that question was no. Councillor Quinn then asked whether information on ticket sales for the comedian's previous performance was available and the officer responded that she could provide that information following the meeting however previous events had not been sold out. Councillor Quinn stated that he would be concerned if the Council was no longer offering alternative / adult comedy and the Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism clarified that the Council has a duty to produce a varied programme. She added comedy is an important part of the programme and noted that the Comedy Store will appear at the Empire Theatre in May.

Councillor Sutton-Lloyd welcomed the engagement with strategic partners and the work done at a grass roots level. He spoke of the county's vast array of assets including the landscape, natural habitats and walking and cycling routes and agreed with the suggestion by Councillor Moist that a discussion with Visit County Durham to develop ideas would be useful. The Chair commented that if Members were agreed that they would like to pursue this, the matter could be explored further.

Rosemary Morris requested further information on the emerging Destination Management Plan, in particular in relation to visitor profiles, including which demographics were being targeted and what the offer is for different age categories of visitors. She raised concern at the lack of hotel / overnight stay accommodation in the smaller towns and villages.

Officers explained that the Destination Management Plan aims to encourage more people to visit, to engage in a greater range of activities and to stay in the county for longer. Analysis of data from previous years indicates a gap in the family product and officers confirmed that the target audience includes the family market and plans are being developed with a view to visitors of the future.

In response to a question from Rosemary Morris as to the offer provided for the cruise market, the Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy highlighted work carried out with the Port of Tyne, Newcastle Airport and private sector partners to develop products specifically for the cruise market. In response to a question as to whether coach tours of the county are offered, officers replied that the majority of coach tours take visitors to destinations out of the county, however, an increasing number of tour guides are offering guided walks within the county.

Councillor Elmer observed the lack of a distinctive shopping experience and remarked that the county has a culture of food production through allotments, breweries and farms and many producers would like to sell their products in shops but find the cost of rents prohibitive. The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy replied that evidence suggests that Durham is not known for a distinctive shopping experience. A number of Community Interest Companies have collaborated to use premises in the city as a 'shop-window' from which to sell their products. In addition, the county's attractions are encouraged to sell locally produced products.

Councillor Elmer also remarked on the negative impact of encouraging more tourists into the county on fragile ecosystems. The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy stressed that the negative impact of tourism is a consideration; the aim is for slow and steady growth and the Destination Management Plan is being developed with the principles of sustainability. In addition, tourism planning applications are assessed for their impact on the environment.

Councillor Robson referred to the county's international student population and asked what is done to encourage students to venture out of the city centre. He suggested that the production of a publication similar to Durham County News to promote tourist and visitor attractions may be useful and he added that he would like to see the county promoted internationally; noting that the smaller towns and villages often have stories to tell. Officers informed the Committee of the engagement work done with Durham University students during open days and freshers' week and the distribution of the Durham Pocket Guide.

The Committee heard that social media influencers are encouraged to visit the county's 'hidden gems'. Officers pointed out that advertising can be costly, however, government funding had been used in previous years to advertise County Durham on the London Underground and in King's Cross Station.

The Committee noted the 2025 Stockton and Darlington Railway bicentenary celebrations will provide an opportunity to promote Durham nationally and internationally. Councillor Robson referred to the links with the Locomotion No 1 historic pub near Newton Aycliffe and the interest that could be generated with railway enthusiasts in the USA. The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy spoke of the bicentenary being a topic for discussion during the recent trade missions to America, which is an important target market for the county.

Councillor Nicholls commended the Council's increased social media presence on Instagram. He spoke of the difficulties that tourists may encounter when arriving in the county in relation to public transport, with its disconnected public transport system.

Councillor Nicholls expressed his concern to see well established high street businesses closing and he questioned how new independent traders would be able to afford business premises, particularly in city centres. He asked officers what action could be taken to reduce rents, repurpose the high street and to improve the Park and Ride. The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy informed the Committee that colleagues in Regeneration, Economy and Growth are working with businesses, consultants and private developers to reduce rents and encourage investment and it is hoped that there will be signs of improvement in Durham City in the near future.

In addition, there are plans for more experience-led high streets, where leisure facilities and shops sit alongside each other. The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism added that the LVEP will consider various approaches to deliver economic growth and create opportunities.

Following the discussion, the Chair proposed an amendment to the recommendation contained in the report which was agreed. The Committee therefore

Resolved:

- a) That members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the information provided in the report and during the presentation.

In addition, following a proposal from the Chair, the Committee agreed an additional recommendation:

- b) That a further update report on County Durham's Visitor Economy be included in the proposed 2023/24 work programme of both Committees which will be considered and discussed by Members at the July meeting of the respective Committee.

6 Such other business

Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee were reminded that a visit to various parks, open spaces and nature reserves within the county will take place on Wednesday 10 May 2023 and they were requested to confirm their attendance by responding to the email from Diane Close, Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

This page is intentionally left blank

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

SPECIAL JOINT
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
AND
ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a **Special Joint Meeting** of the **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** and the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 5 May 2023** at **9.30 am**.

Present:

Councillor K Robson in the Chair

Members of the Committees:

Councillors E Adam, P Atkinson, L Brown, B Coult, L Fenwick, I MacLean, C Martin, J Purvis, J Quinn, A Reed, I Roberts and S Townsend

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris and Mr E Simons

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors J Charlton, J Elmer, A Jackson, C Marshall, D Nicholls, D Sutton-Lloyd, R Ormerod and Mr T Cramond and Mr P Walton (co-optees).

2 Substitute Members

Councillor Deinali was in attendance for Councillor Nicholls.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items from Co-opted Members and other Interested Parties

There were no items reported.

5 Regional and Local Transport: Policy and Delivery Update

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which provided an update on transport policy and delivery in County Durham and the wider region (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

The Committee welcomed Mark Jackson, Head of Transport and Contract Services who introduced the presentation, outlining the scope and scale of the work of the teams, namely Transport and Infrastructure Projects, Integrated Passenger Transport and Strategic Traffic Management. He explained that current national transport policy has a focus on plans for decarbonisation and the government's 'Bus Back Better' strategy aims to deliver better bus services for passengers. Sub-regional work with Transport for the North on the Strategic Transport Plan reflects the direction of travel in terms of reducing carbon outputs and improving air quality. Regionally, the north east has a North East Transport Plan and the Committee noted that it is anticipated that the North East Mayoral Combined Authority (NEMCA) will bring forward a revision of the North East Transport Plan.

The Head of Transport outlined plans being delivered locally including the County Durham Plan, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and plans for EV charging and improvements in relation to air quality and carbon reduction as part of the Climate Emergency Response Plan.

The Committee received information on the powers and principles of the devolution deal and the Head of Transport explained the pipeline of interventions that Durham would like to see included within the North East Transport Plan. The Chair then invited questions and comments from the Committee.

Mrs Morris asked what assurance could be given that timescales, targets and infrastructure will be in place to support the ambitious plans, in particular, in relation to electric vehicles. The Head of Transport acknowledged that EV ownership is increasing at pace and he pointed out that targets are in place in relation to the number of EV charging points and highlighted that the evolving picture is not a 'step change' in relation to EVs and that EVs is one solution that is available. He also referred to the work being done to fully evaluate the transport network in advance of the devolution process. He continued that the network needs to provide connectivity with the correct frequency and that a simplified pricing system will, it is hoped, attract more users.

The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager explained that, in the current deregulated environment, bus operators may choose when and where to operate services and they bear the financial risk when passenger numbers decline.

Councillor Adam referred to the North East Mayoral Combined Authority and asked what action Durham was taking to ensure its plans have equal weighting alongside those of the other six authorities in the Combined Authority. Councillor Adam also commented on the lack of funding for Durham from the City Regional Sustainable Transport Fund and he asked whether this would impact on Durham's plans. The Head of Transport and Contract Services pointed out that the devolution deal will shift power from central government in terms of funding and responsibility, which will enable the Council to pursue its ambitions for growth. He also explained that devolution will provide more certainty on longer term funding, for example the multi-year settlement for the highways funding block and the integrated transport block. He added that, in terms of transport, there was not expected to be a great deal of change as the functions of the Joint Transport Committee will remain the same. He highlighted that the City Regional Sustainable Transport Fund is one funding stream and Durham will work with the other six authorities to look at the funding opportunities to bring forward the pipeline of projects which are ready to feed into the various funding rounds. The Head of Transport and Contract Services highlighted that he represents the authority on various workstreams, which ensures Durham's voice is heard.

Councillor Deinali raised concern that rural parts of the county which currently suffer problems with regard to public transport may be left behind and she also raised the point that if Durham lacks funding, its schemes may lag-behind those of the other authorities. The Head of Transport reiterated that whilst Durham does not have access to the City Regional Sustainable Transport Fund, significant funding is available through the Bus Service Improvement Plan which is aligned to County Durham, as well as funding in respect of highway maintenance, integrated transport and active travel.

The Committee then welcomed Victoria Lloyd-Gent, Senior Active Travel Officer to deliver a presentation on active travel, which, she explained, had been an area of investment by government, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The government had established the Active Travel England Inspectorate to work with local authorities to deliver on standards required for local walking and cycling links.

The Senior Active Travel Officer highlighted key policy documents, in particular, the LTN (Local Transport Note) 1/20 which sets out standards for infrastructure. She explained the vision and aims of the work included in the County Durham Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan.

The Committee noted the work on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPS) and the development of LCWIPS for 12 main towns. The officer also explained the projects LCWIP Lite and Routes Within 5 Miles of Durham City which were being developed to address gaps in the network.

Councillor Townsend commented on the success of the 'Borrow a Bike' scheme in Shildon and spoke anecdotally of residents' concerns regarding the lack of street lights on walking and cycling routes. The Senior Active Travel Officer responded that street lighting was a key factor considered within LCWIPS in terms of the safety of routes and she agreed to pass Councillor Townsend's comment to the relevant team.

Councillor Adam expressed the view that he would expect some road space to be repurposed in order to ensure that active travel routes are safe and he expressed concern that some local walking routes are inaccessible. The Senior Active Travel Officer pointed out that the Active Travel Strategy aimed to change how the public take short journeys and the more recreational aspects of the strategy were the remit of the Rights of Way team. The Head of Transport and Contract Services highlighted that in some circumstances, it will be necessary to repurpose road space for active travel modes or bus priority and this may be a requirement of some funding streams. He assured the Committee that the aim is to balance provision and plans going forward will include investment in footway maintenance and improvements to rights of way to ensure that they are inclusive for those individuals with mobility issues. He also confirmed that all schemes are subject to consultation.

In response to a question from Councillor Coult as to how the Council encourages walking to school, the Senior Active Travel Officer highlighted the work of the Road Safety team which had engaged with approximately 90 schools on walking bus routes. He continued by highlighting a project in Newton Aycliffe, which involved Durham County Council and the Police working with the school and parents to educate in relation to safe walking routes to school.

The Chair observed that a number of short journeys in cars are made by commuters driving to and from local shops and he asked what could be done to change their behaviour. The Senior Active Travel Officer referred to recent talks with developers regarding mobility hubs which could deliver shopping to communities. In addition, opportunities for active travel are increasing and cargo and electric bikes are becoming more popular.

Councillor Deinali asked whether the work on the development of walking and cycling routes aligned with work done by public health in terms of levels of deprivation and obesity.

The Senior Active Travel Officer replied that areas of health deprivation score highly in terms of funding for LCWIPs and the LCWIP Light and Routes within 5 Miles of Durham City offer opportunities to adapt schemes to target specific areas.

The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager, Cathy Knight, introduced the presentation relating to bus services. She referred to the adverse impact on the service throughout the pandemic which had significantly reduced patronage. The Committee noted the service had worked with operators on recruitment campaigns and recent evidence suggested improvements, locally and nationally. The Committee heard that local bus services operate in a deregulated environment and circa 90% of bus services operate without financial support from the Council, however, the remaining 10% were supported by the County Council. Whilst bus passenger numbers had returned to 80% of pre-Covid levels, operators had reviewed their networks, some journeys had been withdrawn, with the Council supporting some journeys.

The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was published in 2021 in response to the Government's National Bus Strategy and the North East BSIP was selected to receive funding upon the condition of the implementation of an enhanced partnership. The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager outlined the projects to be delivered, including the introduction of a multi-operator fare cap, enhancement of the network and improved information on bus services. BSIP funding will also be used to introduce new services and increase frequency of existing services.

Councillor McLean expressed concern at the damage to the environment resulting from the manufacture and transportation of vehicle parts from overseas and he suggested that more could be done in relation to tracking the total carbon footprint of these parts and highlighted the need to use parts produced in the UK.

The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager responded that steps have been taken to encourage the Department for Transport to consider the 'Well to Wheel' approach.

Councillor Adam questioned how the public could be encouraged to 'talk up buses', as, whilst services had improved since the pandemic, they remained unreliable, information on Apps was inaccurate and bus interiors were often dirty. Councillor Adam also asked whether funding was currently available or whether it was conditional on implementation of the plan. The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager confirmed that the funding was being accessed and she acknowledged that bus operators had work to do, however, evidence suggests that services are improving. There had been engagement with the Department for Transport to address issues such as the shortage of drivers. The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager highlighted that the Bus Service Improvement Plan includes plans to upgrade to new zero emission vehicles however the current BSIP funding could not be used for vehicle improvements. She added that work is taking place with operators regarding fleet replacement plans and she also referred to funding available through the Department for Transport's ZEBRA (Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas) funding to support the introduction of zero emission buses.

Mr Simons referred to the aim to increase patronage and questioned how performance could be measured and what targets could be imposed on bus operators if targets were not being delivered. The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager explained that the Bus Service Improvement Plan includes a number of key performance indicators including patronage, reliability and punctuality. She pointed out that the majority of the funding will be used for passenger benefits such as fare initiatives and capital improvements. Penalties could be imposed through contracts however, she noted that the work is very much a partnership and there may be valid reasons for underperformance which are beyond bus operators' control. She highlighted that it is a partnership approach working together to address problems.

Craig MacLennan, Transport and Infrastructure Projects Manager, delivered the presentation relating to current and future infrastructure projects including the Toft Hill Bypass, projects on the A19 corridor and Jade Enterprise Zone. Referring to rail opportunities, the officer highlighted that Durham was successful in three expressions of interest in respect of the 'Restoring Your Railways' fund at Ferryhill, Consett to Newcastle and Weardale. There are further policy ambitions for rail enhancement at the Leamside Line, Chester le Street and the Durham Coast Line.

Mrs Morris asked whether a cost estimate was available for the proposals for the Consett to Newcastle opportunity to reintroduce a rail passenger service. The Transport and Infrastructure Projects Manager explained that both options would cost approximately £750 million and Mrs Morris pointed out the cost in terms of the environment. The Transport and Infrastructure Projects Manager commented that feasibility studies would be carried out which would consider all issues, including environmental issues and he clarified that no announcement on funding had been made at that time.

In response to a question from Councillor Atkinson as to whether the new Bus Station at Durham was on schedule for completion in July, the Transport and Infrastructure Projects Manager replied that he expected that Members will be updated on progress in the near future.

The Committee then welcomed the Electric Vehicles Project Officer, Tracy Millmore who delivered a presentation on electric vehicle infrastructure. Introducing the presentation, the Project Officer reminded the Committee that the government will ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and in 2035 all new vehicles must be zero emission vehicles. Providing background, she explained that in 2019 funding was secured for the SOSCI (Scaling On Street Charging Infrastructure) project, for 100 EV chargepoints and further funding was secured for two on-street residential charging projects in 2020. In 2021 an EV community group was established with residents of Durham. 'Rev-up' project funding was gained in 2022 to investigate the approach to EV charging installation and successful project delivery led to the Council being awarded funding to deliver the LEVI (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) project. The project will test approaches for EV infrastructure which will support the Council's work to install new charge points at another 250 sites across the county. The team also supports 3 car clubs which provide an EV car to support communities.

Councillor Adam referred to the role of social landlords in relation to the installation of EV chargepoints and asked how they were being engaged. The officer highlighted that a meeting had been held recently with social housing providers and all had expressed an interest in working with the team. It is hoped that supportive evidence from the housing providers will help to gain capital funding to progress the work.

Mrs Morris asked whether the service had considered integrating EV charging points into existing street lighting columns and the officer explained that this had been considered however there may be issues with regard to trailing cables and the charging rate would be relatively slow.

In conclusion, the Head of Transport and Contact Services commented that it is hoped that the new Mayoral Combined Authority will encourage future funding opportunities and collaborative working.

Resolved:

That the information in the report be noted.

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Monday 24 April 2023** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor K Robson (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors A Batey, G Binney, G Hutchinson, C Marshall, C Martin, J Miller, B Moist, A Reed, I Roberts, A Surtees, S Wilson and D Sutton-Lloyd

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris and Mr E Simons

Also Present:

Councillors E Scott and K Shaw

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Jackson and A Sterling.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor D Sutton-Lloyd was present as substitute for Councillor A Jackson.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

5 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

There were no items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.

Councillor B Moist left the meeting at 10.34 am

Councillor S Wilson left the meeting at 10.50 am

6 Inclusive Economic Strategy Delivery Plan - Update

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which set out how the service would coordinate activities via the County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP) to develop a Delivery Plan for the Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) (for copy of report, see file of Minutes).

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the County Durham Economic Partnership and the Head of Economic Development were in attendance to deliver a presentation providing detail on the County Durham Economic Partnership structure, how it works in partnership and its key reporting relationships and how it will co-ordinate activities to develop a delivery plan for the IES. In addition, Andy Kerr, Head of Economic Development delivered a presentation providing more detail in relation to the process for the development of the Delivery Plan via the establishment of thematic groups which will be driven by the partnership with the individual plans prepared by these groups then merged into an overall IES Delivery Plan (for copy of slides, see file on Minutes).

The Chair of the CDEP explained that the partnership communicates as a Hub with the other partnerships, and subgroups that form the County Durham Partnership. He continued that the CDEP focus on looking at outcomes and determine how to achieve that outcome. The partnership has brought together the relevant people with the required skills to develop the IES Strategy and confirmed that the Board will take the strategy and plan forward which will hopefully achieve good results for the county. The Chair then explained the structure of the CDEP, the reporting relationships and wider reporting relationships.

The Vice-chair of the partnership confirmed that the partnership is about key partners in the county working together to achieve agreed aims and objectives, the strategy was developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders with all partners working together to achieve a shared vision and make a positive difference in the county. The Vice-chair then highlighted three quotes from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder (Councillor Scott), the Chair of the CDEP (Glyn Llewellyn) and the Vice-Chancellor of Durham University. She then continued by highlighting that behind the Board there are a number of anchor organisations/bodies which were involved in the development of the IES strategy. The next step in the process is to ensure that the IES Strategy works therefore a plan needs to be developed to ensure that the strategy is delivered, and she confirmed that thematic groups have been established to drive forward the development of the various plans which will be merged into the IES Delivery Plan.

The Head of Economic Development informed members that it is intended that the IES Delivery plan will be coming for consideration and comment to the committee in late summer. In relation to the County Durham economy today he commented that between 2006 and 2020 County Durham's growth was 26.8% however the national figure was 49.6% and that there is a significant and growing gap between the county's and national performance and that if the growth of the county's economy had been the same as nationally we would have a £12bn economy as opposed to a £9bn economy. He highlighted that the evidence gathered to develop the IES had identified a lot of strengths within the county, including our major employment sectors, major businesses and key opportunities for growth.

The Head of Economic Development then explained the delivery framework, the areas focused on in the plan for delivery, the 5 Ps (people, productivity, places, promotion and planet). He continued that in relation to delivery, there has to be flexibility within the plan as it progresses to take into account change impacts on County Durham. He confirmed that performance in relation to the delivery of the plan will be monitored.

The Funding and Programmes Manager, outlined the approach which had been adopted in relation to the development of the plan and that in relation to the 5Ps they had identified what needs to be done, what we are doing currently, is it delivering what is needed, is more collaboration needed, build partner commitment to shared vision with interconnected business plans and the partnership tracking performance in relation to the delivery of the plan. She confirmed that the Delivery plan will be considered by the Board and Cabinet in November 2023.

It was confirmed that thematic working groups under the 5Ps have been established and that the groups are currently meeting and will present to the partnership in the coming months and that the draft Delivery plan will be presented to E&E OSC in Autumn prior to consideration by the Partnership and Cabinet.

Members were then presented with detail of the membership of the various thematic groups, showing the breath of those involved together with detail of a sixth group looking at innovation and chaired by the University. It was confirmed that work is currently on going looking at establishing an independent review panel and it was explained that each of the thematic groups has a Terms of Reference which identified: the name of the group; accountable to; aims and purpose; chair and vice-chair; membership; responsibilities of members and frequency of meetings.

The Vice-chair of the CDEP commented that she is Vice-chair of the productivity group which is focused on driving up productivity in the county and confirmed that the group is focusing on promoting high growth opportunity sectors; fostering collaboration and attracting more businesses and investment in our specialisms;

supporting our SMEs in the county to grow through access to supply chain and exporting opportunities and promoting our research and business strengths.

Councillor B Moist commented that it was a good report, but he wanted to see action with clear actions identified for delivery. He continued that in areas such as business growth the county was behind the national level, the delivery plan needed to be developed, public needed to know when actions in plan would be delivered. He suggested that members get involved in the drafting of the Delivery Plan via working groups.

Mrs R Morris suggested that this was an opportunity to set targets and gave the example of young people who are NEET, with a target set to reduce the current figure by 3%, this was what she would want to see in the Delivery Plan going forward. She continued that we have a large NEETs problem in the county and that we need to get advice/support to young people sooner as to the options available and commented that t levels are currently not offered within schools in the county. She asked for more information on new industries and commented that cyber security, robotics, data analytics and technologies which were key growth sectors had not been mentioned in the presentation. She then asked who were the employers that had been engaged with during the process.

The Head of Economic Development responded that they were working on the delivery plan to take to Cabinet in November and that there will be real tangible targets within the plan to monitor. It is currently planned that the draft plan will go back to the partnership in June and then back to the E&E OSC in Autumn. He highlighted that the partnership includes a range of partners which sit on the various groups as highlighted in the presentation and confirmed that work is still ongoing throughout the county. He confirmed that the work of the various thematic groups is underpinned by data, and this will be drawn out in the plan. In addition, discussions are taking place with big employers already in the county such as Hitachi around areas such as electronics and the retraining of staff and also with companies looking to move to the county.

The Economic Development Manager commented that in relation to the People thematic group they are looking at employment support, supporting those at entry level and those who are NEET, considering the best elements of the DWP to deliver through the SPF. In addition, the group is also looking at older people with support for training. In relation to advice to young people about career pathways he agreed that the choices are limited and that there is a need to provide advice to young people and carers at a younger age. He continued that many SMEs in the county don't know how to engage with the process or don't have the time and resources to do so. He confirmed that discussions are taking place in relation to how they can facilitate the engagement of small businesses.

Mr E Simons asked at what point would targets be included within the Delivery Plan. He highlighted that he would want to see targets for growth etc clearly visible within the Delivery Plan and that he suspected it would be two years before there are accountable measurements.

The Head of Economic Development responded that the report today was to explain the process of shaping the delivery plan and that it would be brought back to committee in late summer/autumn and that it would include targets and metrics. They were trying to define what the activities were and to align those targets and ensure that there were outcomes against each of the actions so that they could be held to account.

Councillor A Reed commented that prior to the 1990s our towns and villages had businesses located within them and they were thriving. However, subsequently the decision was taken to move businesses away from our towns and villages to areas located near key roads which left residents in towns and villages without work unless they could access transport. She then asked as to what support was available to existing small companies within towns and villages and to encourage businesses to locate to our towns and villages. In addition, she commented on her concern at the loss of skills within the county as a result of an ageing workforce and highlighted the importance of young people being trained in those skills. She then asked for clarification going forward, as to the how the county was going to compete with the rest of the country.

The Head of Economic Development responded that the county has two real advantages in that we have strategic sites allocated across the county and that a lot of local authorities did not have land identified. They also had a clear strategy and partners aligning to the strategy and devolution opportunities. He stated that the skills worry was across the piece and a lot of it was retraining in existing professions and the homing of the skills set in the county.

Councillor J Miller commented that a major issue in the county was the availability of public transport to enable residents to get to and from work and he used the example of interest in relation to 101 call handler jobs, however unless you had your own transport you would be unable to do the shift work required. He highlighted that it was pointless having available jobs if residents can't get transport to and from those jobs.

Councillor A Surtees referred to the evidence gathered during the Big Conversation that only had 1455 responses out of 533,100 residents in the county and highlighted that the comments made gave a picture at a point in time. She also referenced the 2021 Census which would also contain pertinent information; however, it was now a further year since this information was gathered and the economy had significantly changed. The Council therefore needed to be constantly gathering information and data to develop the Delivery Plan.

She commented that she was concerned that the report stated that the actions would be evidence based however this evidence was gathered over a year ago.

Councillor C Marshall highlighted that the county does need an Inclusive Economic Strategy and the importance of access to local good quality jobs. However, he commented that a lot of the evidence within the report was based on county wide and that the various towns and villages within the county have different needs, ambitions, and barriers and therefore 'one size does not fit all' and that this needed to be reflected in the Delivery Plan. He continued that in relation to barriers, poverty within the county was a huge barrier preventing access to housing, education etc and he commented that there was no acknowledgement of this in the strategy. In addition, other councillors had previously raised issues with IT connectivity and transport in the county and he highlighted that he hoped work on the above issues was taking place behind the scenes. He concluded by emphasising the need for the large programmes planned for the county to be delivered and used the examples of the Towns and Villages Programme and the Leisure Centre Transformation Programme.

The Chair agreed with a number of the comments made throughout the meeting and stated that he saw councillors as an enabler to enable people to set up business, to enable people to build houses and enable people to get on in life. He referred to Newton Aycliffe Industrial Estate within his local area and commented that children from the two comprehensive schools and they had the university training college that taught children mechanical skills and there was also an ITEC, but they still had a large number of unemployed young people in the local area.

Councillor C Martin commented that the Strategy needed to be delivered by clear pathways to ensure that people know how they can move in relation to economic improvement and that three areas of focus were important: Transport to and from work at the right times; how we meet skill shortages and ensure that those being trained are on right pathways and how communities improve/encourage business development in local areas.

Councillor D Sutton-Lloyd highlighted that he wanted to see actions delivered and commented that in his local area there were excellent training providers.

Councillor A Batey commented that a lot of young people in the county don't attend local schools so can't take advantage of any link that the local school may have with local businesses, not all young people attend a school linked to Employment Zones. She further commented that career guidance and support to young people was no longer available following the abolition of the Careers Service.

Mrs R Morris suggested that they needed to focus on the worst performing areas in the county and look at how they could lift their performance first.

She then suggested that the authority may want to revisit who they are currently working with and may need to consider as to whether they are engaging and working with the right people.

Councillor E Scott referred to the lack of careers advice and indicated that she would like to see some digital local resources for schools and hoped to come back later in the year with some details on this.

Councillor I Roberts highlighted that many young people even after passing the required courses are not given further opportunities. They wanted to work but the opportunities were not given to them.

The Chair commented that sadly it is not just young people, older employees having done a job for many years are suddenly required to have specific qualifications because of changing regulations.

Resolved: The Committee endorsed the proposed process and timescales for the development of a Delivery Plan for the IES and to review the draft plan before it is presented to Cabinet in November.

Councillor E Scott left the meeting at 10.53 am

7 Quarter Three 2022/23 Revenue and Capital Outturn Report

The Committee considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and Corporate Director Regeneration, Economy and Growth which provided details of the forecast outturn position for quarter three revenue and capital for Regeneration, Economy and Growth (REG) as at 31 December 2022 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor J Miller made reference to page 45 of the pack, paragraph 18 where it was stated that the overspend in Planning and Housing was largely due to anticipated additional expenditure of £0.79m in Housing Solutions with regard to temporary accommodation in the form of B&B and holiday lets. He continued that the county had a lot of empty properties which could be brought back into use and suggested that Durham County Council compulsory purchase these properties, undertake the necessary works and then rent them out to residents who would otherwise be accommodated in B&B and holiday rents. This would produce a rental income for the authority.

The Finance Manager commented that he would take this comment/suggestion back to the service and confirmed that the service was currently looking at buying accommodation in areas where there was highest need in the county.

Councillor C Marshall referred to the capital programme and asked for details of the inflationary pressures. He also asked for more detail in relation to the legal costs and professional fees totalling £0.775m in respect of Milburngate.

He asked for clarification as to whether the legal costs had resulted because Durham County Council had tried to sue the developer.

The Finance Manager referred to the capital programme and inflationary pressures and indicated that he would get a response to this from the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services. He would also discuss with Legal Services and provide a response in respect of Milburngate.

Councillor K Robson made reference to his local leisure centre run by the Parish Council and commented that they were claiming back VAT and that they expected to receive a substantial sum of £200,000. He continued by asking whether Durham County Council was pursuing any such claims.

The Finance Manager confirmed the Durham County Council was pursuing such a claim and that the authority was expecting good news in relation to the claim. He confirmed that once he received the information regarding Durham County Council's claim, he would provide a response for circulation to members of the committee.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

8 Quarter Three 2022/23 Performance Management Report

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which presented an overview of progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework and highlighted key messages to inform strategic priorities and work programme for the period in and to the end of quarter three, October to December 2022 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor C Marshall suggested that the current Key Performance Indicators in relation to percentage of Business Durham floor space that is occupied, should be revised/replaced or a further additional indicator added identifying new premises built for Start-ups and Small and Medium Enterprises SMEs or premises that had been repurposed, again for the use of start-up businesses and SMEs. He continued that there was a need in the county to create a new stock of business premises for smaller businesses including start-ups. He then referred to the Selective Licensing Scheme, he understood that enforcement was falling to the Environmental Health Officers and that the service does not have the staff to carry out the inspections. He asked for clarification as to whether the Service had the resources to carry out the necessary inspections and any enforcement action.

The Strategy Team Leader agreed to take back for discussion with the service as to what Key Performance Indicators can be provided in the future and to provide a response in relation to who is responsible for carrying out inspections and enforcement under the Selective Licensing Scheme and whether there are sufficient resources available to support the required inspections and enforcement action.

Councillor J Miller commented that there are streets of empty properties in the Selective Licensing areas and that he understood that if a property in a Selective Licensing area does not have a tenant, then it was not subject to the enforcement powers within the scheme.

The Strategy Team Leader agreed to follow up with the Service and provide a response.

A number of members requested that the Selective Licensing Scheme come to a future meeting of the committee. It was referenced that the Selective Licensing Scheme had featured in the housing focused meeting held in March however, members still had questions and concerns which needed to be responded to by the service. It was confirmed that the Selective Licensing Scheme had been raised at a recent meeting of the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that initial discussions had been held with the Head of Planning and Housing about future housing items for the 2023/24 work programme and that the Selective Licensing Scheme had been identified as an item for inclusion. However, it was felt by members that the Selective Licensing Scheme needed to come to formal committee early in the 2023/24 work programme.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted and 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.

9 Minutes of the County Durham Economic Partnership Board held on 8 February 2023

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Economic Partnership Board held on 8 February 2023 be noted.

This page is intentionally left blank

**Economy and Enterprise
Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

3 July 2023

**Towns and Villages
Programme**



**Report of Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration,
Economy & Growth**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This cover report accompanies the presentation to Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee and provides an update on the established Towns and Villages Programme. Specifically, this report;
 - (a) sets out the approach to delivery of the Towns and Villages Programme
 - (b) highlights the scale of current project activity underway and delivery completed during 2022/23;
 - (c) details the outputs achieved during 2022/23;
 - (d) notes links to wider programme delivery;
 - (e) provides a programme delivery timetable 2023/24 & 2024/25;
 - (f) provides target outputs to be achieved 2023/24

Executive Summary

2. Towns and Villages is a £25m countywide investment programme to support the transformation of our towns, villages and main centres. It is central to our place-based regeneration activity and serves as a catalyst for aligning and leveraging other investment and funding.

3. The investment programme was established in 2018, and is underpinned by an Investment Plan that was approved by Cabinet in February 2021. This Investment Plan identifies five strategic themes under which the funding can be spent, covering strategic investments; housing and community; environment and health; built environment; and transport and connectivity. Each theme has a number of project areas, and officers then work with Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and local members to identify the spend priorities and projects within their areas.
4. Of the £25m investment, countywide **£6.3m had been** spent by end of 2022/23; a further **£12.9m is** committed to projects and programmes; and **£5.9m** remains available for future allocation against the Investment Plan themes. In addition to that funding an additional **£114.47m** through other funding streams has been spent or committed in our towns and villages.
5. The Towns and Villages investment to date has covered a wide range of activity, including 50 areas of Neighbourhood Retail Improvements; the delivery of 35 town centre vibrancy events; retail training courses; the conversion of 4 vacant council premises to new homes; 6 community resilience projects; 1,846 properties receiving energy efficiency measures; action to bring vacant properties back in to use, including 6 problem properties demolished; and multiple walking and cycling improvement projects.
6. In addition to the county-wide activity there are a number of key targeted investments, including £4.5m towards the council's £6m commitment to the Horden regeneration masterplan, which is also identified in the North East devolution deal as a County Durham priority for investment.
7. Looking forward, the focus in 2023/24 will be on the delivery of the £12.9m of committed funding and working with local AAPs and stakeholders to prioritise the allocation of the remaining £5.9m of remaining funding.

Recommendation(s)

- 8 Members are asked to consider and scrutinise the presentation, report and supporting information in relation to the delivery of the Towns and Villages Programme

Background

- 9 The Towns and Villages Programme was established in 2018, recognising the significant and diverse pressures being experienced in our main centres and beyond, across the County. These issues included tackling pockets of high levels of property vacancy, delivering new residential units, enhancing environmental conditions and improving the vibrance of our main retail centres.
- 10 Subsequent reports reflected significant consultations and evidence relating to our Towns and Villages, firstly establishing the five key themes for the programme and then in February 2021, a more detailed investment plan, which set out project activity, financial allocations, spatial priorities and the creation of an Area Improvement Fund delivered through the AAPs.
11. Due the financial pressures facing the Council a full review of the capital programme in the Medium-Term Financial Plan 13 (MTFP13) was undertaken to assess future budget priorities. Through this process the Towns and Villages programme has been identified as an ongoing priority for the County, and the full £25 million previously allocated to the programme has been safeguarded in the 2023/24 budget setting process.

Investment Plan Delivery

- 12 The delivery of the Towns and Villages Programme is predicated on an approved Investment Plan, which identifies five strategic themes:

Figure 1: Investment Plan themes



- 13 Under each theme there are a number of identified projects with an indicative funding allocation, but these remain flexible to allow budgets to be reallocated within the overall funding package should new local priorities within the themes emerge.

Figure 2: Current allocations against themes and projects

Theme	Project	Total	Spend to date	Committed	Remaining funding
Strategic Investments	Digital High Street	775,000	255,516		519,484
	Retail Hub	300,000	47,252	167,000	85,748
	Neighbourhood Retail Improvements	2,750,000	976,719	1,604,965	168,316
	Towns and Villages Vibrancy	200,000	33,845	42,000	124,155
Housing and Community	Community Housing	650,000	2,027	134,000	513,973
	Housing Opportunities Fund	150,000	85,500	64,500	0
	Improving Community Resilience	2,000,000	198,714	1,503,982	297,304
	Green Homes Fuel Efficiency Programme	950,000	950,000	0	0
	Horden Regeneration Programme	4,500,000	98,840	4,401,160	0
	Allotment Improvement Programme	75,000	0	75,000	0
Environment & Health	Enhanced Environmental Maintenance	500,000	335,299	164,701	0
Built Environment	Vulnerable Buildings	1,250,000	98,618	245,000	906,382
	Property Reuse and Conversion	500,000	370,000	50,000	80,000
	Dean Bank Clearance and Improvement	150,000	145,942	0	4,058
	Easington Colliery Programme	1,050,000	522,886	527,114	0
	South Moor Improvement Programme	200,000	7,728	192,272	0
	Sacriston Workshop Conversion	200,000	200,000	0	0
Transport & Connectivity	Walking and Cycling Routes	3,750,000	203,312	2,300,598	1,246,090
	Neighbourhood Parking and Circulation	850,000	241,835	370,000	238,165
Local Programme	AAP Area Improvement Fund	4,200,000	1,496,797	1,024,133	1,679,070
Total		25,000,000	6,270,830	12,866,425	5,862,745

- 14 Of the £25m investment, countywide **£6.3m had been** spent by end of 2022/23; a further **£12.9m has been** committed; and **£5.9m** remains available for allocation against the Investment Plan themes. A detailed update on project delivery, outputs and expenditure is attached at Appendices 2-5.

External funding to enhance delivery programmes

- 15 Developing cohesive packages of project activity at a local level through the Towns and Villages Programme has provided opportunities to secure additional external funding in line with programme objectives. To date £20.3m of public match funding has been secured through programmes including Reopening Your High Streets Safely, The Welcome Back Fund and Additional Central Government Funding (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero) and Walking and Cycling from Central Government Department for Transport via Sustrans.
16. A further £94.2m of funding has been secured through other programmes including UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Rural England Prosperity Fund, Multiply, National Heritage Lottery Fund Seaham Townscape Heritage, Future High Streets Fund, Heritage Action Zone (HAZ), Stronger Towns Fund, all complementing the place-based investment and regeneration.

Governance

17. The Towns and Villages Programme was established with clear governance around the programme, utilising existing arrangements where possible.
- 18 As the programme has developed and pilot projects have been replaced by those identified in the Investment plan the key elements of programme Governance include;

Towns and Villages Board – comprising Portfolio Holders for Regeneration and Partnerships, Assets and the Director of Regeneration Economy & Growth. This group scheduled for quarterly meetings has overseen the roll out of the detailed programme set out in the Investment plan Cabinet report

- Economy & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee – the original Towns and Villages report identified the role for scrutiny in the overall governance of the programme
- AAPs - beyond the initial consultation, the allocation of £4.2 million through the programme across the 14 AAPs and the creation of Towns and villages Task and Finish groups at a local level has provided an additional level of oversight of both local needs / aspirations but also the perceived fit of the main programme delivery.
- Internal Monitoring Structures – the existing process for the monitoring of capital scheme progress and oversight by the major programme Board ensures effective alignment of delivery, oversight of expenditure, and the identification and management of project and programme risks.

Improved working delivering place solutions

- 19 A key aspect of the initial Towns and Villages programme was to ensure additional resource is directed to communities and programmes with identified needs, wherever possible linking with mainstream Council investment and partner expenditure to coordinate and maximise local investment and change.
- 20 The delivery of the Towns and Villages programme continues to be programmed in consideration with mainstream council and partner investments in communities, maximising impact while minimising disturbance at a local level.

- 21 Cross service co-ordination extends beyond the sequencing of delivery, however. One of the initial areas identified for the programme was working with communities affected by long term empty properties, working with property owners and landlords with the aim of bringing empty properties back into use wherever possible.
- 22 Through this work and the process set out in the March 2021 Cabinet report, a co-ordinated approach to the identification, risk rating and resolving of empty commercial properties has been developed which follows similar processes in place for empty homes. This process, which also links with the Multi Agency Problem solving groups at a local level is currently tracking 46 properties countywide having seen six demolished and five refurbished / brought back into productive use through the various strands of Towns and Villages programme activity. Positive engagement has been made with a further 20 owners.
- 23 The programme continues to provide direction to key public, private and voluntary sector organisations that make up the County Durham Partnership enabling them to work together to improve the quality of life of our residents and is helping inform the delivery plans for the Inclusive Economic Strategy and the Shared Prosperity investment plan.

Conclusion

- 24 The Towns and Villages programme is the main catalyst for place-based regeneration in our communities across the county. It is a significant investment programme which leverages other funding opportunities through targeted spend and interventions in line with the approved Investment Plan.
- 25 The thematic approach allows a strategic framework for investment, which can align spend at a local level to locally defined priorities. The next steps are to deliver the £12.9m committed spend, leverage further funding opportunities, and work with local areas to prioritise the remaining £5.9m to create strong, successful communities across County Durham.

Background papers

- [Towns and Villages Way Forward - DCC Cabinet December 2018](#)
- [Towns and Villages Strategy- DCC Cabinet October 2020](#)
- [Towns and Villages Investment Plan - DCC Cabinet February 2021](#)
- [Towns and Villages Place Shaping – Approach to Regeneration of Buildings and Land– DCC Cabinet March 2021](#)

Other useful documents

- None

Author(s)

Graham Wood

Tel: 03000 262002

Julie Anson

Tel: 03000 262008

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

The Towns and Villages budget was agreed alongside approval of the Investment Plan. This provides a core allocation of £20.8 million and a £4.2 million allocation delivered by the Area Action Partnerships, in line with programme priorities.

Developing cohesive packages of project activity at a local level has provided opportunities to secure additional external funding in line with programme objectives. To date £20,228,188.00 of public funding has been secured through programmes including Reopening Your High Streets Safely, The Welcome Back Fund and additional Central Government Funding (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero / Department for Transport).

Staffing

Two project posts within the Community Economic Development Team are funded through the Towns and Villages programme. Programme delivery is generally undertaken by existing staffing resource.

Risk

Risks are monitored at a project and programme level in line with existing capital project monitoring requirements. There are no significant risks.

Equality and Diversity

None.

Accommodation

None

Crime and Disorder

Elements of Neighbourhood Retailing Improvements and the focus on addressing vacant property across the County include specific reference to addressing / designing out Anti-Social Behaviour.

Sustainability

A corporate sustainability appraisal of the programme has recently been undertaken. The Programme includes numerous projects with strong sustainability credentials including the Green Homes project, Investments in Walking and Cycling, Community Resilience and the various strands focussed on the improvement and reuse / conversion of vacant property.

Human Rights

None.

Localities and Rurality

The Towns and Villages programme was established with a focus on the needs of small localities specifically including areas that typically fall outside of main programme interventions. Initial and ongoing engagement with local members and AAPs ensure local and rural needs are identified and addressed through the programme.

Young People

None.

Consultation

The Investment Plan was developed following several rounds of member and AAP discussions including two full rounds of AAP engagement focusing on local needs and programme themes. Project teams continue regular engagement with AAP Boards and the newly established Task and Finish groups.

Health

Built and natural environmental improvements along with significant allocations encouraging active mode shift and improvements in the least energy efficient Housing stock provide significant health benefits linked to the programme.

Personalisation

None.

Appendix 2: Towns and Villages Project Summary and Outputs Achieved 2022/23

The project position detailed below covers all Towns & Villages Funded Programmes only and does not include Capital Programme Funded schemes which often link and add benefit to the delivery in our towns and villages.

Strategic Investments

Digital High Street

The Digital High Street Project was established to provide free wifi coverage across the main town centres as part of the shift to leisure focussed uses in town centre and a desire to improve user experience, functionality and extend the dwell time.

Wifi systems have been installed in Bishop Auckland, Stanley, Seaham, Chester le Street and Barnard castle using Towns and Villages funding alongside AAP and Town and Parish Council contributions.

We have been evaluating the data produced by the systems installed across the County and have identified that, despite the systems providing good coverage across the town, the number of authenticated users remains low. Combined with advances in technology which includes the masking / randomising of devices identity, the systems will now not provide us with an insight on the numbers of people using the centre or any of the fine detail of visits such as dwell time heat maps or entry / exit points that we originally envisaged. As a result, we have concluded that these pilot schemes will not be extended. The expiry dates in each locality is detailed below:

Bishop Auckland – June 2023

Stanley – June 2023

Seaham - May 2024

Chester-Le-Street - May 2024

Barnard Castle - June 2024

The original focus was to improve our understanding of the use of the individual centre along with improving user experience and encouraging businesses to embrace digital opportunities. Our focus through the programme continues to be on regenerating our high streets. We are exploring other avenues that will enable us to understand how our town centres are used, and where we can focus regeneration efforts, whilst also

offering us value for money, alongside the continued investment in physical improvements to the centres.

Retail Hub

The retail hub has focussed on providing several strands of support to the retail sector, aimed at supporting growth and resilience in both the retail and the hospitality sector.

Strand 1

Retail training is being offered free of charge which is focussed on broadening sales and improving resilience of our independent retail and hospitality sector in the County.

14 training courses have been undertaken across the County, covering Digital Media for Business, Customer Service & Sales, Level 2 Food Safety, Level 3 Emergency First Aid at Work, targeted in areas where businesses have asked for retail support training when engaged via the Neighbourhood Retail Parade Programme. Areas covered include Seaham, Consett, Newton Aycliffe, Durham, Chester le Street, Shildon and Bishop Auckland. 23 people have benefitted from training which has been delivered both face to face and virtually.

Retail Hub 23/24 Programme

The current offer is listed below:-

- Digital Media for Business
- Customer Service and Sales
- Customers with Disabilities
- Dementia Awareness (for both employers and employees)
- Customer Service across Cultures
- Level 2 Food Safety
- Level 3 Emergency First Aid at Work
- Level 2 Certificate in Retail
- Level 2 Certificate in Customer Service
- Level 2 Certificate in Hospitality
- Developing Teamwork
- Dealing with difficult customers

Engagement with the retail sector in 3 key Towns regarding the proposed retail training offer. The first retail training offer review took place on 2 May 2023 in Spennymoor, the second 1 June in Chester le Street and third 7 June. The current offer will then be

reviewed, this is to ensure it is fit for purpose to help grow the retail sectors skills and development.

Retail Hub Strand 2

This strand in the early stage of development is focussed upon supporting new business formation and growth, through shared retail space, temporary retail offerings and meanwhile uses of existing town centre property. A procurement exercise has been completed and a contract awarded to Shop Jacket, to work alongside DCC on a call off contract basis to tackle long term empty units, helping to support and enhance the place.

Targeted areas of focus in 23/24 are proposed to include areas with high vacancy rates, please see below:-

Centre	Vacancy Rate (%) 2021	Vacancy Rate (%) 2022	% change
Barnard Castle	9.9	10.6	+0.7
Bishop Auckland	27.7	26.3	-1.4
Chester-le-Street	14.5	13.1	-1.4
Consett	13.1	12.1	-1.0
Crook	11.4	12.1	+0.7
Durham City	16.2	14.3	-1.9
Ferryhill	8.9	13.3	+4.4
Newton Aycliffe	26.2	20.4	-5.8
Peterlee	32.3	32.8	+0.5
Seaham	7.3	6	-1.3
Sildon	15.8	16.8	+1.0
Spennymoor	17.3	14.8	-2.5
Stanley	15.8	16.7	+0.9

Engagement with empty retail owners and shopping centre management agents has commenced. In addition, an application process has been prepared which will enable us to offer support and enable temporary space use proposals in the form of pop-up retail use, to help reactive units, enhance an area's offer, bring a new use of activity

to a town, this links closely in supporting the towns and village vibrancy theme. Initial interest in this project is currently being worked through in Durham City, Bishop Auckland and Peterlee, with interest also being expressed from Chester le Street.

Neighbourhood Retailing Programme (NRP)

This project has continued to undertake scoping exercises which are used to identify opportunities for potential improvements which link across the programmes themes and also to wider investments.

50 Areas have been scoped to date focusing on the identified areas listed within the Towns & Villages Programme Delivery Table and including a further 10 Areas (Southmoor, Stanhope, Wolsingham, Frosterley, with additional parades in Newton Hall, Framwellgate Moor and Gilesgate).

The scoping phase of the programme is beneficial in identifying a wide range of neighbourhood and village issues, whilst ensuring a cross service co-ordination to delivery, whilst maximising impact and the best use of available budgets.

Project opportunities identified have included continuing to invest and support the retail sector with grant support via the Targeted Business Improvement Scheme, identifying problem buildings/sites alongside engaging owners, street scene improvements including planting, street furniture including seats, bins, bollards, public realm enhancements, accessibility improvements, access to community and public venues such as community/village halls, doctors, schools where they join neighbourhood parades, new EV charging points. In some NRP areas car parking and circulation issues have been a priority and cross funded via the T&V Neighbourhood Parking and Circulation budget. Under this project theme the team also deliver projects for the AAP utilising both NB, AAP, and T&V Small Area Programme Budgets.

The Neighbourhood Retail Programme has an assigned budget of £2,750,000, of which £142,000 is capitalised to provide additional resource to support the Community Economic Development Team to accelerate delivery.

NRP 2022/23 Programme Delivery and Outputs

Targeted Business Improvement Schemes completed with funding from NRP Programmed

73 Businesses Supported

19 Grants Paid

63 FTEs Created

136 Jobs Safeguarded

10 Units which were empty now back into use – this approach tackles twin challenges of supporting existing retail property to be improved and to bring back into use vacant property

18 New Businesses Created

27 Grant GOLs issued - Financial commitments of £197,000 made via TBI Grant Offer Letters with works underway.

In addition, there are a further 65 applicants who have been invited to full application.

Environmental & Public Realm Schemes completed

Cornforth, where we have installed new seating, paintwork to railing, bins, bus shelter planters, lamp columns, soft landscaping improvements. Professional cleaning and sealing of walling in the main retail parade area complete.

Crook – completed scheme to mitigate parking and enhance kerb appeal with soft landscaping as you enter the Town Centre Market Place, opposite the post office and general convenience store, teamed with enhanced/raised kerb line to mitigate parking.

Ferryhill Railings and Public Realm.

Seaham Artillery Gun Public Realm – decommissioned heritage artillery gun and enhanced area of new public realm – Note funded via AAP T&V. Creating a new heritage visitor attraction to the town on North Road.

Designs

Completed designs and costs for New Brancepeth. Delay linked to ownership/adoptions, accessibility ramp and consultation required.

Holborn Close, Spennymoor -Design Request submitted

Newton Hall Design Requests submitted for two schemes.

Some minor environment enhancement schemes undertaken to NRP areas scoped have been completed utilising budget from Enhanced Environmental Maintenance Budget in the Towns & Villages programme detailed further within the report.

Housing & Community

Community Housing

The Community Housing project was established to supplement the extensive private and social housebuilding programmes identified for the County, facilitating the development of small residential schemes focussed on specific communities of interest such as Disabled residents, those with Learning disability or specific community groupings.

During the last twelve months the first Community Housing scheme providing seven residential units for young homeless clients has been delivered without Towns and Villages capital, instead using £75,000 of S106 funding and COMF Covid Outbreak Management Fund in the East of the County which also resulted in an empty building being brought back into use.

A further small-scale Community Led Housing scheme is at development stage awaiting planning determination. This scheme, at Canney Hill Bishop Auckland is seeking financial support (as yet uncommitted) to provide 14 affordable rent dwellings for young disabled adults comprising 10 wheelchair bungalows and 4 houses in conjunction with a Registered Provider not known yet.

It is worth noting that working alongside community led organisations can take a considerable amount of time in the development stages. This project links closely to the Vacant and Vulnerable buildings whereby problem sites and units have been reconfigured bringing problem empty buildings back into active use whilst delivering upon affordable and other specialist housing needs within the community, cross cutting against two Towns and Villages themes.

Housing Opportunities Fund

Designed to address the twin challenges of vacant property and the demand for small scale residential development opportunities, funding from the Housing Opportunities fund £150,000.00 has been fully expended and has brought two vacant Council owned premises at Coundon Grange and the former Shildon Peoples centre back into use, the third property identified in Chester le Street has been sold by DCC.

At Shildon the former Peoples Centre has been converted to 4 x 1-bedroom flats targeting local people as end users.

At Coundon Grange 3 bungalows have been refurbished back into use. Both are being managed through the Local Lettings Agency.

The Housing Opportunities Fund has final external garden works which will complete September 2023.

Improving Community Resilience

The Community Resilience project has been established to address localised issues of concern which can help to maintain the social fabric and improve the resilience of our local communities.

Based on the experience of the pilot scheme and sector pressures, the Towns & Villages Community Resilience Fund has been developed with three key objectives:

- Provide targeted investment for communities to save community assets that would otherwise be lost

- Strengthen capacity and capability in communities to support them to shape their places and develop sustainable community businesses, services and spaces
- Empower communities in left behind places to level up

Note there is a wide variety of projects coming forward which have benefits linked to improving services to offer support in the current Cost of Living Crisis. For example extensions to enable enlarged and improved space for Foodbank operations, warm rooms where meals are being provided to communities, plus classes to help people cook on a budget, offering clothing exchange spaces, energy efficiency works to reduce running costs, which enable further revenue spend on expanding activities and services on offer, private space for advice and support linked to social welfare, in addition to low cost community gym facilities linking health and wellbeing improvements to our communities.

Improving Community Resilience 2022/23 Programme Delivery and Outputs

Since the launch internally of the programme and engagement with AAPs, Durham Community Action and the Community Buildings Team in April 2022.

Six Grant Offer Letters have been issued total £983,400.00, attracting £8.3+M:-

Lowes Barn Community Project – New Build Community Centre (£150,000.00) was the first to receive a funding award in May 2022. With match funding of £596,178.00 secured, works are nearing completion, with delays linked to supply chains. Grant released and scheme completed as of April 3rd 2023.

Redhills Revealed is an exciting major restoration project with a grant award from this specific budget (£306,656.00) with expected draw down in April 2023. With match funding of £7m+. Programme delivery timeline currently awaited.

Cotherstone Chapel has received an award (£120,000.00) with the community pledging a £115,560.00 and further funding secured to the tune of £60,000.00

Woodhouse Close has also received a grant award (£47,400.00) awarded to assist the extension, the project has attracted a further £102,600.00 of match funding.

Pilot Project Peterlee & Horden Rugby Club £300,000.00 with match secured including revenue from National Lottery.

Fishburn Community Centre has received a grant award up to (£60,000.00) to support a much needed extension to enable provision of their activities. The project has attracted a further £75,000.00 of match funding.

Business Cases drafted:-

St Pauls Centre, Spennymoor

All Saints Church, Muggleswick

Arlington House, Durham City

A further 5 applications: - are being worked up and queries responded to at present covering the following areas: -

Spennymoor Youth and Community

St Thomas Hall, Stanhope

Sherburn Road Community Centre

Belmont Community Centre

Oakenshaw

Projects being awarded and developed offer a diverse range from improving accessibility, reducing running costs through solar installation, and packaged of capital works including minor upgrades, extensions and new build schemes.

Green Homes Fuel Efficiency Programme Complete Attracting match £18.257M

The Green Home programme has provided the opportunity to directly improve the poorest performing properties which result in fuel poverty.

Where available the Green Home programme has aligned with external funds to maximise the delivery and improvement opportunities to the poorest low EPC (i.e. D, E, F & G) energy rated properties countywide by providing brick and stone external wall insulation to solid wall homes. Prominent streets and elevations have been prioritised for retrofit to maximise uplift and impact.

Towns and villages funding has been used to provide necessary match to secure three rounds of central Government Funding (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero) funding totalling £18.257m. This figure was increased over the 3rd phase of the scheme as DCC had been so successful in delivery and were asked to increase numbers. 1846 properties across County Durham benefitted from measures across the scheme with over 2000 measures having been installed.

Horden Regeneration Programme

The Horden Regeneration Programme has been developed to support and accelerate the public commitments to regeneration and development as identified in the Horden masterplan with a particular focus on commencing the acquisition, and clearance of property in the Numbered streets.

In 2019 public consultation was carried out which showed a range of options that provided a solution for the housing issues in the Numbered Streets. The preferred option was identified as full-scale acquisition and demolition of the area, with new homes to be provided in place of the existing homes.

Following the consultation, the Council have committed £6m to commence the delivery of the masterplan. This includes £4.5m Towns and Villages funding, which is the biggest single allocation in the County.

Since that time the Council have been developing a delivery strategy and phasing plans for the preferred option which will allow the Council to make bids for external funding as it becomes available. The delivery strategy also identifies where the Council should dedicate its initial £6m funding to achieve the greatest impact. The delivery strategy and phasing plan are now complete, and a final review is being undertaken. An Acquisition and Demolition Strategy and Decant Strategy are being finalised to assist in the relocation of residents.

A paper is being prepared for an Autumn 2023 Cabinet, which will seek approval for the proposed delivery approach,

Allotment Improvement Programme

This small-scale project recognises the significant provision of allotments across many communities in county Durham and the variable quality of the allotment sites both in terms of the facilities on the site and the impact on neighbouring areas.

This project has been linked to the review of allotments. A recent Cabinet Report agreed on 18.01.23 signed off the proposed small grant scheme, which included this allocation and is scheduled to launch its first round of bidding in June 2023, with a further round later this financial year. The overall project will run for two years, however T&V expenditure will be committed 23/24.

There are 60 allotments run by groups and 100 run and managed by DCC. A further £175,000.00 is being made available to support this project totalling £250,000.00. Funding applications will need to provide match at 50%. Types of improvements will include repairs to fencing, replacement fencing, improvements to tracks, paths, car parking, drainage and clearance of derelict areas.

Environment & Health

Enhanced Environmental Maintenance

A Significant feature of the consultations undertaken throughout the Towns and Villages programme have been residents and members focus on ensuring high levels of enhanced environmental maintenance.

The programme will continue to align to the areas and scope in the Strategic Investment Programme NRP Areas, with call off for works in line with delivery programme 23/24. Significant areas of improvement have been undertaken in the following areas complementing the wider T&V Programme delivery-

Easington Colliery, West Cornforth, Wingate, New Brancepeth, Dean Bank, Spennymoor, Peterlee, Seaham, Crook, Dales, Tow Law, Tudhoe, Ferryhill Station, Lanchester.

Built Environment

Vulnerable Buildings

A significant concern raised by residents and retailers alike has been the levels of vacancy across the County and in particular those long term vacant commercial premises which aren't maintained and provide a negative impression of an area.

Focussing on initially engaging with property owners of such premises and exploring the opportunities for redevelopment and investment, the vulnerable buildings programme supports wider property improvement projects and provides a focus for enforcement activity if properties aren't maintained or brought back into use.

Since the beginning of the programme five properties have been demolished often linked to concerns over building safety. Demolition works may be undertaken by the Council with charges placed against properties to secure the funding committed.

Officers meet on a monthly basis to discuss emerging problem properties and ongoing engagement with land and property owners to ensure DCC maximise actions across services. This includes Community Economic Development, Planning and Building Control, Environmental Health.

A List of 46 problem commercial properties has been developed based on Customer Service reports / complaints along with member, MP and key stakeholder concerns. A dozen of these are designated as of the highest priority requiring multi service input and working alongside Police and Fire Brigade in a partnership approach in some cases linked to public safety.

20 properties/site are underway with positive engagements in making progress to help support them being brought back into use or finding alternative uses, with support and assistance from DCC.

This year action has been taken against 10 long term vacant properties.

Property Reuse, Conversion and Improvement

This project has proved successful in helping to support the purchase and major conversion to facilitate reuse in some of our main Centres. A small revolving loan budget is available County wide with the aim of:

- Encourage purchase and/or improvements to premises across the County's retail town and village centres with a focus on vacant and derelict premises and sites
- Support regeneration of areas suffering from market vulnerability and to tackle poor building stock that may contribute to town or village centre decline
- Secure opportunities to deliver sustainable uses including residential, leisure and commercial

All loans issued to date have received payments as agreed as part of their loan offer and terms and conditions.

Three loans have been issued this financial year expending this year's allocation. Two properties in Bishop Auckland to support purchase of vacant properties and One property in Seaham undergoing a major conservation and heritage restoration scheme, which is bringing back into use vacant upper floor space on two units and creating a third retail ground floor space, as well as improving two existing businesses.

The three loans above will anchor in a further estimated £2,7396,616.00 private sector investment against our loans issued £120,000.00. On completion these schemes will support the creation of 35 FTE jobs.

Dean Bank Environmental Improvements Complete

As part of the long-standing regeneration programme at Dean Bank, improvement works have been delivered to compliment a £1 million demolition programme of 36 properties by Bernicia Homes. Towns and Villages funding has been utilised to improve the landscape solution for the site and to support a wider package of works to address remaining empty properties at Faraday & Stephenson Streets.

Former Easington Colliery School

This project focuses on the identification of opportunities to make change and improvement in Easington Colliery.

The acquisition and demolition of Easington Colliery School and subsequent environmental improvement is a major part of this commitment and was commenced as a pilot initiative. Remaining funding is allocated towards providing public open space across the cleared site in line with discharging the conditions of the planning consent.

South Moor Improvement Programme

The pilot scheme focusses on a long-standing problem site on the main street comprising of an exposed gable and poorly maintained gap site.

Proposals to resolve the exposed gable and provide a low maintenance improvement have been designed and agreement with adjacent landowners secured. Currently awaiting costs.

Sacriston Workshop Conversion - Co-operative Building Refurbishment

A Pilot project during COVID to refurbish and convert the Council owned former Sacriston Co-op building into Enterprise Workshops offering start up units for community and social enterprises, which is now the home to Live Well North East, Sacriston Youth Project, Woodshed and RecycLD.

Works to date have led to the creation of 12 FTE Jobs supported by eight Sessional workers, eight Volunteers and engaging 175 Participants.

The CIC secured an additional £97,004.82 from the Community Led Local Development programme to create and refurbish four community enterprise spaces, just completing on site end of December 2022. Further funding from various external organisations such as JD Foundation, Sport England, County Durham Community Foundation, various charitable trusts and S106 totalling a further £235,000.00 has helped them to renovate the units they occupy. Further fundraising efforts will continue to bring the entire building back into use.

DCC are the freehold owner of the building, which stood derelict for several years prior to the CIC securing a long-term lease.

All DCC held budget has been expended against this project during 23/24. However, support will be made available to assist them to bring into use and attract further potential external funding sources moving forward.

Transport & Connectivity

Walking and Cycling – Attracting £1.5M secured from Central Government - Department for Transport via Sustrans

A significant feature of the second round of AAP focussed consultations was in the development of further opportunities for Walking and cycling at a local level.

The project looks to enhance the investments made through the Local Transport Plan and as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plans. A particular priority being given to addressing breaks in the current walking and cycling network and Connecting residential areas and employment sites with the main walking and cycling infrastructure.

The 2022/23 programme includes planned feasibility work on the Brandon to Bishop Auckland, Bishop Auckland to Barnard Castle, Witton le wear to Chester le Street and Belmont viaduct feasibility studies, with works underway along the Waskerley Way (Consett) and addressing breaks in the network /surface improvements along sections of NCN1 in East Durham. This scheme, which directly links into the £1.5m secured from Central Gov Department for Transport via Sustrans project to improve the route north from Haswell, is currently on site and will create a better surfaced route all the way to the county boundary at Wynyard.

Neighbourhood Parking, Traffic and Circulation Programme Delivery and Outputs

This project seeks to address locally raised car parking, traffic and circulation issues. The projects are identified during scoping exercise and often considered alongside Neighbourhood Retailing schemes or alongside work undertaken by Clean and Green

/ Highways teams to harden verges on residential estate. Schemes include improved bay marking and signage through to the creation of new parking facilities.

Delivery 2022/23

Willington Car Park no.2 complete.

Sherburn Hill Hub Car Park Extension complete

Crook Kerb line and planting mitigation of car parking

Further schemes at Blackhall Colliery, Newton Hall & Shildon are currently being designed, including EV charging points where possible.

Local Programme

AAP II Area Improvement Fund

The AAPs have awarded funding to the tune of £1.5m with further commitments, including budget transfers, to a variety of projects, ranging from parks, access improvements, play and sports pitches, changing facilities, parking, community and village hall improvements, cemetery improvements focus on access, community speed watch and mobile CCTV.

Example projects completed include Mainforth Sports Complex, 3 Bridges Newton Aycliffe and lighting at Christopher Walk, Great Aycliffe Garden, Bishop Middleham Community Centre Windows and car park improvements.

Appendix 3: Towns and Villages Looking ahead to the 2023/24, 2024/25 Programme

Programme Priorities 2023/24 and Beyond

The approval of the UKSPF Investment Plan provides an immediate opportunity to expand or extend some strands of activity initiated through the Towns and Villages programme. The ongoing review of external funding opportunities will be maintained with a view to securing further resource to deliver scoped project opportunities and maximise investment in our Towns & Villages.

Investment Mapping – which was developed initially to help guide the co-ordination of investment. The investment mapping work underpinning the Towns and villages programme can also support the UKSPF and Rural England programmes along with targeted measures in our identified left behind neighbourhoods.

NRP 2023/24 Programme

The following delivery will continue as detail in Investment Plan funded from the existing budget allocation:-

Framwellgate Moor Front Street Public Realm and Traffic Project

Commenced on site March 2023 the scheme will see the public realm footway enhanced benefitting 33 businesses on the busy parade.

Phased approach to minimise disruption with completion August 2023 which will see new drainage, block paving, tarmac footway, improved pedestrian crossing point, restricted illegal parking to footway opposite retail parade, traffic calming measures to ensure the permanency of the current 20mph limit to help mitigate traffic congestion. Planters with miniature trees are also being investigated at the build outs to soften the landscape whilst also ensuring visibility lines are clear.

Road resurfacing of this area is also planned for 2023/24 and the scheme will be co-ordinated to minimise disruption for businesses and residents, the road resurfacing is funded from Highways Maintenance budget.

Newton Hall Alnwick Road Retail Parade

Target property owners to support accessibility improvements and Targeted Business Improvements in addition to enhancing the street furniture and improved trade refuse screening to enhance the kerb appeal of the key retail parade. Discussions have taken place with Clean & Green, Highways. To ensure a co-ordinated approach to delivery.

Holborn Close Spennymoor

Designs are underway to enhance a key entrance to the private retail zone and entrance to the town centre and main DCC Car Park. In addition to the visual enhancement access for pedestrians will also be included in the design and delivery of the project.

New Brancepeth

Design and Costs completed to see new public realm improved to enhance village seating adjacent to corner of the NRP area and main car park adjacent to the retail core. Repairs to wall adjacent retail area and new street furniture. Liaison ongoing with the AAP re contributions and a potential S106 application to follow for public art at the site.

North Road, Seaham Interpretation Scheme

Funding secured from NB to deliver scheme to complement heritage project to display George Elmy Lifeboat Disaster memorial area and artillery gun adjacent.

Sherburn Road NRP Area

Currently at feasibility stage, With Design Request to follow.

Brandon

NRP area privately owned engaging owners linked to problem empty properties, public realm works and ASB issues requiring CCTV. This will cut across various elements of the programme, in development stage, however delivery will take place 23/24, supported by additional contributions from local members.

Frosterley

Two areas of enhanced public realm, paving, seating and soft landscaping identified alongside railings to enhance the environment and setting in the NRP thoroughfare. Designs and estimates to be provided and then delivery.

Bearpark

Design Request to be submitted to improve small area of public realm adjacent retail core. Parking mitigation identified to be included to protect improved paving. Wider problem vacant properties also being addressed with engagements with owners. Planning being discussed on Former Loves Site, alongside AAP discussions over the future use of a CISWO owned Community Centre. Delivery of the wider elements included as a typical example of the scope and complexities to be developed and delivered over a two-year period in a specific village location.

Targeted Business Improvement Targeting and Delivery to continue

Tracked alongside the public realm enhancements across all areas identified in the programme, engagement with the retail sector continues, with 65 applicants currently Invited to Full Application. **Note timing of delivery** is private sector led some clients deliver within 2-6 months dependant on planning permission and some take considerably longer 12-18 months linked to private sector finance, appointment of architect, planning, building control and contractor availability alongside weather and avoiding main retail trading seasons ie Summer and Christmas.

Areas include Ferryhill, Framwellgate Moor, Chester le Street, Coxhoe, Easington, Wingate, Langley Moor, Murton, Peterlee, Crook, Frosterley, West Auckland, Stanhope, Wolsingham, Lanchester, Spennymoor, Newton Aycliffe, Consett, Shildon, Stanley Tow Law.

NRP 2024/25 Programme

Beech Road, Framwellgate Moor

Improve entrance to retail area, steps and cobbles to be improved for accessibility, with new street furniture. Design Request submitted.

Ushaw Moor

Enhance public realm light touch and targeted retail. Issue in this area links to traffic, parking and circulation investigation and feasibility required before progression. NRP area is in close proximity to the school and doctors' surgery, creating a very busy thoroughfare during peak times.

Sherburn Road NRP Area

Delivery of works subject to design and feasibility

Further areas for consideration in deprived/ left behind or priority localities to be considered and discussed as estimates are received to enable delivery.

Community Housing 2023/24 Programme

2023/24 to review the scope of the scheme in light of mainstream Homes England resource to consider Specialist Accommodation Team to lead development and delivery, subject to ensuring that the need of the local community is being met and ensuring the provision is affordable and specialist housing, if further schemes from community led organisation do not come forward.

Improving Community Resilience 23/24 Programme

Continue support, development and delivery of the five projects currently underway and support eight further applicants.

2024/25 Programme

Further drawdown and request will be prepared upon receipt of applications being discussed to firm up timescales, delivery and costs. seven of which are updating costs and finalising applications.

There is the opportunity to match fund, align or extend the programme further linked to both the UKSPF Communities and Place Theme and the Rural England Prosperity Fund Programme which is currently being developed.

Allotment Improvement Programme 2023/24

Scope of allotment areas and delivery in 23/24 to expend £75,000 as a grant scheme

Opportunities exist to link this project to the emerging priorities around community food programmes and cost of living responses being developed through the UKSPF programme.

Enhanced Environmental Maintenance 2023/24 Programme

It is proposed that the following delivery will take place in the areas listed below as a guide, plus additional as we develop the interventions and costs moving forward, Framwellgate Moor, Newton Hall, Blackhall, Tow Law, Wheatley Hill, Frosterley, Stanhope, Wolsingham funded from the existing budget approved.

Vulnerable Building 2023/24 Programme

Continue approach and development/delivery in line with Environment Scrutiny Committee on 20th March to continue the six stage process with land and property owners. Identify, Establish, Engage, Educate, Encourage, Enforce, engagement, and steps to action.

Property Reuse, Conversion & Improvement 2023/24 Programme

Continue Loan Scheme with available budget. 2 loans to be issued. 1 currently being assessed.

Loan payback application will be made to bring funding back into programme as part of the agreed revolving loan offer.

Former Easington Colliery School 2023/24 Programme

It is proposed that a further report will be brought to consider opportunities for developing an end use solution for this site which could include expediting residential development on the site, which would avoid abortive / short term public open space

works that are required as a planning condition in advance of the long term redevelopment.

Walking and Cycling 2023/24 Programme

NCN 1 in the East of the County – currently on site in Shotton/Wingate/South Hetton areas initially, then improvements will continue east towards Hartlepool and South towards County Boundary.

Waskerley Way C2C route – surface/drainage improvements A68 to Consett programmed for Autumn 23

Howngil Viaduct improvements programmed for Autumn 23
Brandon to Bishop Railway Path – Relley Bridge Feasibility works ordered

Auckland Walk Railway Path– Spennymoor to Coundon - surface/drainage improvements (awaiting costings)

Belmont Viaduct Feasibility complete

Bishop Auckland to Barnard Castle feasibility study currently out to Bloom (procurement)

Neighbourhood Parking, Traffic & Circulation 2023/24 Programme

It is proposed that the following delivery takes place funded from the existing budget allocation :-

Ash Crescent Seaham

Scheme designed and costed in previous year to proceed to delivery subject to Strategic Highways agreement following formal consultation process. Delay linked to resource of Strategic Highways, now proceeding through process.

Blackhall Colliery Middle Street

Scheme concept prepared mitigating illegal parking and danger to pedestrians. Scheme proposal has been consulted with Durham Police and agreement. To provide two loading bays and protect pedestrian footway with guardrail in this built-up location.

Annfield Plain Consett – Former Kelly's Bakery Site

Identified as a long-term problem and vacant building, subject to CPAL report and approvals this will then enable planning discussions to take place regards end use of the site, subject to agreement to demolish and clear this site. Parking in this area for the retail, residential and school access requires intervention. Proposals to develop a local car park area is supported by members. Expect Designs and costs 23/24 with delivery asap subject to demolishing the site. This could impact construction of a new car park facility to 24/25

Marshalls Terrace, Gilesgate

Design engagement required to consider improvements to visibility, parking and crossing for pedestrians in this busy location. Links cycling and walking project.

Newton Hall Canterbury Road, Car Park and EV Charging

Designs are partially prepared for this DCC owned car park to improve layout, and minimise maintenance moving forward. Addition of a new EV charging point

Car Park Shildon Town Centre

Re-lining, footway link improvement, EV charging.

Redworth Road Car Park Area Adjacent NRP

Car parking mitigation to restrict illegal parking and protect DCC landscaping.

Further areas for consideration in deprivation or left behind places to be considered and discussed as estimates are received to enable further delivery.

Appendix 4: Updated Towns & Village Investment Plan, February 2023

Theme	Project	Capital Allocation	Revenue Allocation	Total
Strategic Investments	Digital High Street	575,000	200,000	775,000
	Retail Hub		300,000	300,000
	Neighbourhood Retail Improvements	2,750,000		2,750,000
	Towns and Villages Vibrancy		200,000	200,000
Housing and Community	Community Housing	650,000		650,000
	Housing Opportunities Fund	150,000		150,000
	Improving Community Resilience	2,000,000		2,000,000
	Green Homes Fuel Efficiency Programme	950,000		950,000
	Horden Regeneration Programme	4,500,000		4,500,000
	Allotment Improvement Programme	75,000		75,000
Environment & Health	Enhanced Environmental Maintenance	500,000		500,000
Built Environment	Vulnerable Buildings	1,200,000	50,000	1,250,000
	Property Reuse and Conversion	500,000		500,000
	Dean Bank Clearance and Improvement	150,000		150,000
	Easington Colliery Programme	1,000,000	50,000	1,050,000
	South Moor Improvement Programme	200,000		200,000
	Sacriston Workshop Conversion	200,000		200,000
Transport & Connectivity	Walking and Cycling Routes	3,750,000		3,750,000
	Neighbourhood Parking and Circulation	850,000		850,000
Local Programme	AAP Area Improvement Fund	4,200,000		4,200,000
Total		24,200,000	800,000	25,000,000



Appendix 4: Updated Towns and Villages Investment Plan (Feb 2023)

Programme Delivery & Planned Delivery 23/24 & 24/25

Theme	Project	21/22		22/23	23/24	24/25
Strategic Investments	Digital High Street	Bishop Auckland & Stanley Pilots, then Chester-le-Street, Seaham, Barnard Castle		Designed Wi-Fi scheme for installation in Consett Spennymoor and Crook, Durham City Design underway	Continue offer Bishop Auckland, Stanley, Seaham, Chester le Street, Barnard Castle. Investigate new opportunities in emerging technology	Phase 2 of delivery digital offer
	Retail Hub	Digital Media in Business training; Customer Service training; Emergency First Aid at Work; Food Safety in Catering training; 5x drop-in sessions and business support;		14 training courses have been undertaken across the County, covering Digital Media for Business, Customer Service & Sales, Level 2 Food Safety, Level 3 Emergency First Aid at Work	Engagement to Retail Sector offer Re 12 available courses: 2x Digital Media in Business training 2x Customer Service training 2x Emergency First Aid training 2x Food Safety training	Will ascertain Retail needs to develop the offer
	Neighbourhood Retail Improvements	Gilesgate x3 Proudfoot Drive Esh Winning South Stanley New Shildon Willington Silverdale Place Coundon Pelton Wheatley Hill Castleside Tow Law	Annfield Plain Cornforth Lanchester Blackhall Framwellgate x3 Murton Sacriston Easington Colliery Ushaw Moor Blackhill Station Town Haswell South Moor	Newton Hall x3 Belmont Carville Thornley Sherburn Hill New Brancepeth Bearpark Brandon West Rainton Pittington Wolsingham Stanhope, Frosterley	Delivery in: Framwellgate Moor, South Moor Coxhoe, Wheatley Hill, Spennymoor, New Brancepeth, Newton Hall, Tow Law, Seaham, Crook, Sherburn Road, Brandon, Ch Le St, Frosterley, Bearpark, Consett, Ferryhill, Horden	Delivery in: Thornley, Shildon, Cornforth, Annfield Plan, Pelton, Stanley, West Auckland, Framwellgate Moor, Ushaw Moor, Sherburn Road, Consett, Coundon, Eldon, Willington, Wolsingham, Stanhope

Towns and Villages Programme Delivery (continued)

Theme	Project	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Strategic Investments	Town and Village Vibrancy	Bishop Auckland Food Festival Seaham Food Festival Durham Book Festival S&DR community engagement Digital Library development	Bishop Auckland Food Festival, Seaham Food Festival Creative Economy Dev Digital Library Delivered Activities, Festivals and Events across all main towns "Winter Wonders" Oct – Dec Durham City Christmas Festival	Bishop Auckland & Seaham Food Festivals Programme of Town Centre Events and Activities developed and delivered Linking UKSPF (12 across main towns) plus 75 th Anniversary of New Towns at Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe Spennymoor Family Fun Street Festival	Events and Activities scope to develop following feedback with communities
	Community Housing	Discussions took place with; Durham Action on Single Housing (DASH) Craghead Development Trust Oakenshaw Community Association Canney Communities	East Durham Community Initiatives (EDCI) completed	Canny Hill Bishop Auckland is in development stage Further opportunities for community housing schemes to be considered	Further opportunities for community housing schemes to be considered
Housing and Community	Housing Opportunities Fund	Interventions in Targeted Delivery Plans areas	Shildon Peoples Centre converted to 4 x 1 bedroom Flats Coundon Grange 3 bungalows refurbished back into use	/	/
	Improving Community Resilience	Houndsgill Viaduct Scheduled Monument Project feasibility Peterlee & Horden Rugby Club Community Building	P&HRC Planning Approved, funding dev. Lowes Barn New Build Redhills Revealed GOL	Redhills Revealed Delivery Cothelstone Chapel Woodhouse Close X 6 further schemes to be delivered	14 Schemes ref report
	Green Homes Programme (External Wall Insulation Installs)	300 Properties/ EWI's complete	1846 Properties benefitted including solar phot voltaic panels, renewable heating	/	/



Towns and Villages Programme Delivery (continued)

Theme	Project	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Housing and Community	Hornden Regeneration Programme	Identify investment priorities through masterplan Commence acquisition and clearance of targets/problem properties	Undertake site assembly and marketing	Preparation and finalisation of Acquisition and Demolition Strategy and Decant Strategy. Autumn 2023 Cabinet, which will seek approval for the proposed delivery approach, CPO approach and the acquisition and demolition of properties.	Planning application to be prepared and submitted Acquisition of properties by negotiation will commence. Subject to approval, demolition of properties can be expected in Q4 of 24/25.
	Allotment Improvement Programme	/		Identify and implement 12x allotment improvement schemes	Identify and implement 12x allotment improvement schemes
	AAP Small Area Improvement Fund	Engage with 28 AAPs and deliver 28 schemes, identifying Small Area Programme opportunities	Delivery of AAP Small Area improvement schemes	Delivery of AAP Small Area improvement schemes	Delivery of AAP Small Area improvement schemes
Environmental and Health	Enhanced Environmental Maintenance	Deliver environmental improvement programme aligned to neighbourhood retail programme and targeted delivery plan areas	Delivered environmental improvements in 14 Areas	Deliver environmental improvement programme aligned to neighbourhood retail programme and targeted delivery plan areas	
Built Environment	Vulnerable Buildings	Address 3x priority buildings Stanley/Shildon, 2x buildings in Chester-le-Street	20 properties being brought back into use 10 with Action Taken	Address 5 priority properties	Address 5 priority properties
	Property Reuse and Conversion	5 Loans approved	3 Loans approved	Review loan take up and repayment rate Target 2 Loan approvals	Review loan take up and repayment rate Target 3 Loan approvals
	Dean Bank Clearance and Improvement	Conclude landscaping of recent clearance sites.	Demolition of 36 properties, landscape solution completed	/	/

Towns and Villages Programme Delivery (continued)

Theme	Project	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Built Environment	Easington Colliery Programme	Complete demolition programme at former Colliery School	Completed phased programme of clearance Review End use ref pocket park see report	Develop end use solution	Delivery or facilitate end use solution
	South Moor Improvement Programme	Improve key problem site and vulnerable property	DCC CCS developing design solution. Landowners' permissions now in place.	Costs and delivery	/
	Sacriston Workshop Conversion	Improvements to Sacriston Coop Buildings, Workshops 4,5 & 6 completed to Coop Buildings	2 further units brought back into use creating 5 independent spaces. CLLD Match funding attracted supporting 4 units	Support to CIC to attract external funding to complete empty units remaining potential UKSPF	/
Transport and Connectivity	Walking and Cycling Routes	Audit of opportunities along the Weardale Way Enhanced walking and cycling linked to Stockton and Darlington Railway 200th anniversary	Feasibility and design: Railway Paths to Bishop Auckland, south of Pesspool Wood to Wingate East Durham Rural Corridor at Trimdon link to Coxhoe, Relley Bridge, Houndsgill Viaduct, Belmont Viaduct, Barnard Castle to Bishop Auckland	Feasibility and design continue and Delivery: NCN 1 East Shotton, Wingate, South Hetton Wakerley Way C2C Auckland Walk Spennymoor to Coundon Seaham to Ryhope Murton to Dalton Park link	Delivery continues from programme feasibility outlined in 22/23 and 22/24
	Neighbourhood Parking and Circulation	Easington Village Parking/Traffic project Identification and design of four parking and circulation schemes Parkside Traffic Improvement scheme	Delivered Willington Car Park, Sherburn Hill Hub, Sacriston, Crook	Ash Crescent Seaham, Framwellgate Moor, Blackhall Colliery, Newton Hall, Shildon x2, Annfield Plain, Gilesgate	To be identified following costs and delivery of 23/24 schemes linking NRP Areas listed.



Appendix 5: Towns and Villages Delivery by Location (June 2023)

Geographical split of monies paid out

Towns & Villages Programme	Total spend to March 2023	Total expenditure to date	3 Towns	4 Together	BASH	Chester-le-Street & District	Derwent Valley	Durham	East Durham	East Durham Rural	Mid Durham	Great Aycliffe & Middlesbrough	Spennymoor	Stanley	Teesdale	Weardale
Digital High Street	£255,516	£269,878			£55,358	£55,402			£61,110					£45,458	£52,550	
Retail Hub	£47,252	£47,252	£3,350		£6,701	£9,549	£4,916	£7,083	£4,917			£7,383		£3,353		
Neighbourhood Retailing	£976,719	£1,051,719	£212,761	£33,378	£19,486	£177,616	£59,806	£129,074	£155,594	£28,641	£31,535	£19,565	£116,498	£25,360	£33,018	£9,387
Towns & Villages Vibrancy	£33,845	£45,845							£28,922			£4,923	£12,000			
Vulnerable Buildings	£98,618	£98,618				£3,795			£94,823							
Community Housing	£2,027	£2,027			£2,027											
Property Reuse, Conversion & Improvement	£370,000	£370,000			£150,000				£120,000				£100,000			
Housing Opportunity Fund	£85,500	£85,500			£85,500											
Enhanced Environmental Maintenance	£335,299	£338,490	£10,975	£17,023	£26,520	£30,213	£27,496	£24,834	£84,797	£8,516	£38,952	£9,568	£21,452	£13,525	£11,503	£13,116
Allotment Improvement Programme	£0	£0														
T&VC Walking & Cycling Routes	£203,312	£203,312			£2,985		£71	£61,782	£135,447		£42				£2,985	
Dean Bank Bernicia Environment Improvements	£145,942	£145,942		£145,942												
Easington Colliery School	£522,886	£522,886							£522,886							
Traffic Neighbourhood Parking & Circulation	£241,835	£241,835	£37,959			£31,621		£35,255	£137,000							
South Moor Development Site	£7,728	£7,728												£7,728		
Sacriston Co-op Buildings Refurbishment Grants	£200,000	£200,000				£200,000										
Improving Community Resilience (inc Redhills)	£198,714	£489,954						£150,000	£279,954						£60,000	
Hornden Housing Feasibility Plan	£98,840	£98,840							£98,840							
Green Homes - Phase 1b & 2	£950,000	£950,000	£12,825	£176,225	£163,400	£94,145	£110,675	£23,340	£135,565	£21,090	£18,555	£67,735	£21,090	£78,280	£27,075	
AAP Area Improvement Programme II	£1,496,797	£2,138,702	£210,000	£141,685	£210,000	£84,278	£210,000	£170,306	£170,000	£164,431	£187,786	£170,916	£157,300	£50,000	£180,000	£32,000
TOTAL	£6,270,830	£7,308,528	£487,870.00	£514,253.00	£721,977.00	£686,619.00	£412,964.00	£601,674.00	£2,029,855.00	£222,678.00	£276,870.00	£280,090.00	£428,340.00	£223,704.00	£367,131.00	£54,503.00

Total payment split approximately across identified AAP areas

Spend across geographical areas

Committed places in development/designs/fees/publicly announced

This page is intentionally left blank

Towns and Villages Programme

Economy & Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3 July 2023



Agenda and Objectives

Page 68

- Background
- Strategic Context
- Investment Plan
- Delivery to Date
- Outputs and Outcomes
- Case Studies
- Summary
- Questions

Background

Background

- Three Cabinet reports 2018-2021 set programme principles, five delivery themes, and a full investment plan
- Two full rounds of Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) consultation identified localised priorities and tested investment plan assumptions
- Targeted Delivery Plans (TDPs) for 7 housing areas prepared
- Towns and Villages Task & Finish groups established by all AAPs
- Funding, delivery and planned works were reviewed as part of Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP 13) considerations
- Continued commitment to supporting the transformation of the County's towns and Villages
- County defined thematic investment with locally defined spend

Strategic Context

Strategic Context

Page 72

Devolution

- £48m per year investment fund
- Initial £17.4m brownfield fund
- New powers to drive the regeneration, including compulsory purchase powers and the ability to establish mayoral development corporations
- Transport funding and powers
- Specific Rural Portfolio

Inclusive Economic Strategy

- Place is one of the 5Ps
- Towns and Villages one of the key drivers of that section of masterplan
- Emerging Actions – rolling review of Masterplans

Additional funding and investment

Total £94.2m

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund **£30.8m**
- Rural England Prosperity Fund **£3.5m**
- Multiply **£2.8m**
- National Heritage Lottery Fund Seaham Townscape Heritage **£1.6m**
- Future High Street Fund **£19.9m**
- Heritage Action Zone **£2.6m**
- Stronger Towns **£33m**

Investment Plan



Investment Plan Themes



Strategic Investments

To help achieve more and better Jobs through support for town and neighbourhood centres; link with Partner and wider investments to maximise outcomes; and to maximise integration between council activity and communities;

£4m Budget

£1.3m Spend to April 2023

£1.8m Committed

£900k remaining uncommitted



Housing and Community

To support the accelerated delivery of the Housing Strategy; deliver resilient, inclusive and connected communities; and maximising the benefits from S106 monies and private investment;

£8.3m Budget

£1.3m Spend to April 2023

£6.2m Committed

£800k remaining uncommitted



Environment and Health

To create local opportunities for physical activity; mental well-being through high quality environment; and support opportunities for addressing climate change helping to enable people to live long and independent lives;

£500k Budget

£331k Spend to April 2023

£165k Committed

Investment Plan Themes



To drive and support regeneration activities within our towns and villages; find innovative solutions to underused/derelict land and buildings; support independent retailers and businesses to achieving more and better jobs; and to provide clean and attractive built environments that communities are proud of; and

£3.4m Budget

£1.4m Spend to April 2023

£1m Committed

£990k remaining uncommitted



To ensure connected communities through excellent connectivity for businesses, workforce and learning to help ensure our residents can access more and better jobs; optimise the use of well-maintained and connected transport corridors; encourage the use of alternative modes of transport including walking and cycling for long and independent lives.

£4.6m Budget

£445k Spend to April 2023

£2.6m Committed

£1.4m remaining uncommitted

Delivery to date

Total Spend to-date

Page 78

- **£6.3m** spent by end of 22/23
- A further **£12.9m** committed
- **£5.9m** remaining to be allocated against investment plan priorities
- **£470k** additional government funding from Reopening High Streets Safely (RHSS), Welcome Back Fund (WBF) on cross cutting projects during 20/21
- **£18.3m** additional central government funding leveraged in (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero)
- **£1.5m** additional funding secured for Walking and Cycling from Central Government Department for Transport via Sustrans

Spend to-date & Committed

Theme	Project	Total	Spend to date	Committed	Remaining funding
Strategic Investments	Digital High Street	775,000	255,516		519,484
	Retail Hub	300,000	47,252	167,000	85,748
	Neighbourhood Retail Improvements	2,750,000	976,719	1,604,965	168,316
	Towns and Villages Vibrancy	200,000	33,845	42,000	124,155
Housing and Community	Community Housing	650,000	2,027	134,000	513,973
	Housing Opportunities Fund	150,000	85,500	64,500	0
	Improving Community Resilience	2,000,000	198,714	1,503,982	297,304
	Green Homes Fuel Efficiency Programme	950,000	950,000	0	0
	Horden Regeneration Programme	4,500,000	98,840	4,401,160	0
	Allotment Improvement Programme	75,000	0	75,000	0
Environment & Health	Enhanced Environmental Maintenance	500,000	335,299	164,701	0
Built Environment	Vulnerable Buildings	1,250,000	98,618	245,000	906,382
	Property Reuse and Conversion	500,000	370,000	50,000	80,000
	Dean Bank Clearance and Improvement	150,000	145,942	0	4,058
	Easington Colliery Programme	1,050,000	522,886	527,114	0
	South Moor Improvement Programme	200,000	7,728	192,272	0
	Sacriston Workshop Conversion	200,000	200,000	0	0
Transport & Connectivity	Walking and Cycling Routes	3,750,000	203,312	2,300,598	1,246,090
	Neighbourhood Parking and Circulation	850,000	241,835	370,000	238,165
Local Programme	AAP Area Improvement Fund	4,200,000	1,496,797	1,024,133	1,679,070
Total		25,000,000	6,270,830	12,866,425	5,862,745

Outputs and Outcomes

Outcomes

- Greater focus on joined up delivery of Place agenda
- Packaged approach to project delivery maximising investment and community outcomes while minimising disruption
- Provided an anchor programme for **£20m** of match funding and supported and guided wider investment funding of an additional **£94m**
- Approach has informed and supported delivery of wider programmes
 - Reopening your High Street, Welcome Back Fund, LAD programme
 - Informing the development and delivery of the Communities and Place Investment Strand of the UK Shared Prosperity Programme 2022-25

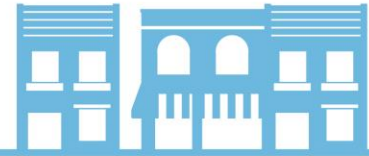


262
businesses
engaged with

72 retailers
have applied or applying
for support through our
Targeted Business
Improvement scheme



Created
18 new
businesses and brought
19
properties
back into
use



Created
106
new jobs
142
Safeguard
jobs



Attracted an additional
£1,203,502
of private sector
investment
into County Durham retail and
leisure businesses


£514,254
paid through grants



Works underway
will create
71 jobs and attract
£2,144,110
of private investment
through award of grants totalling
£1,253,701



Outputs delivered

- 50 Areas scoped for Neighbourhood Retail Improvements and underway
- 35 Vibrancy Events have taken place
- 14 Retail Training courses delivered
- 5x Town Centre wifi installations completed
- 4 vacant DCC properties converted / refurbished providing 7 residential units
- 6 Community Resilience projects approved in full, 1 complete, 1 underway, 4 pending start dates and 3 business cases under development
- 1,846 properties receiving energy efficiency measures.
- Action taken against 10 long term vulnerable properties. 6 properties demolished
- 3 property reuse loans paid out, 1 business case pending decision.
- 4 Neighbourhood Parking schemes implemented
- 2 schemes underway Waskerley Way Consett & NCN1 East Durham sections of Footpath / Cycleway created / upgraded and 4 Feasibility Studies completed

Delivery by location

Geographical split of monies paid out

Towns & Villages Programme	Total spend to March 2023	Total expenditure to date	3 Towns	4 Together	BASH	Chester-le-Street & District	Denwent Valley	Durham	East Durham	East Durham Rural	Mid Durham	Great Aycliffe & Middlesbrough	Spennymoor	Stanley	Teesdale	Weardale
Digital High Street	£255,516	£269,878			£55,358	£55,402			£61,110					£45,458	£52,550	
Retail Hub	£47,252	£47,252	£3,350		£6,701	£9,549	£4,916	£7,083	£4,917			£7,383		£3,353		
Neighbourhood Retailing	£976,719	£1,051,719	£212,761	£33,378	£19,486	£177,616	£59,806	£129,074	£155,594	£28,641	£31,535	£19,565	£116,498	£25,360	£33,018	£9,387
Towns & Villages Vibrancy	£33,845	£45,845							£28,922			£4,923	£12,000			
Vulnerable Buildings	£98,618	£98,618				£3,795			£94,823							
Community Housing	£2,027	£2,027			£2,027											
Property Reuse, Conversion & Improvement	£370,000	£370,000			£150,000				£120,000				£100,000			
Housing Opportunity Fund	£85,500	£85,500			£85,500											
Enhanced Environmental Maintenance	£335,299	£338,490	£10,975	£17,023	£26,520	£30,213	£27,496	£24,834	£84,797	£8,516	£38,952	£9,568	£21,452	£13,525	£11,503	£13,116
Allotment Improvement Programme	£0	£0														
T&VC Walking & Cycling Routes	£203,312	£203,312			£2,985		£71	£61,782	£135,447		£42				£2,985	
Dean Bank Bernicia Environment Improvements	£145,942	£145,942		£145,942												
Easington Colliery School	£522,886	£522,886							£522,886							
Traffic Neighbourhood Parking & Circulation	£241,835	£241,835	£37,959			£31,621		£35,255	£137,000							
South Moor Development Site	£7,728	£7,728												£7,728		
Sacriston Co-op Buildings Refurbishment Grants	£200,000	£200,000				£200,000										
Improving Community Resilience (inc Redhills)	£198,714	£489,954						£150,000	£279,954						£60,000	
Horden Housing Feasibility Plan	£98,840	£98,840							£98,840							
Green Homes - Phase 1b & 2	£950,000	£950,000	£12,825	£176,225	£163,400	£94,145	£110,675	£23,340	£135,565	£21,090	£18,555	£67,735	£21,090	£78,280	£27,075	
AAP Area Improvement Programme II	£1,496,797	£2,138,702	£210,000	£141,685	£210,000	£84,278	£210,000	£170,306	£170,000	£164,431	£187,786	£170,916	£157,300	£50,000	£180,000	£32,000
TOTAL	£6,270,830	£7,308,528	£487,870.00	£514,253.00	£721,977.00	£686,619.00	£412,964.00	£601,674.00	£2,029,855.00	£222,678.00	£276,870.00	£280,090.00	£428,340.00	£223,704.00	£367,131.00	£54,503.00

Total payment split approximately across identified AAP areas

Spend across geographical areas

Committed places in development/designs/fees/publicly announced

Target Outputs 2023/24

- 6 Neighbourhood Retail Improvements to Public Realm
- 50 Targeted Business Improvement Schemes
- 12 Vibrancy Events
- 12 Retail Training Courses
- 6 Improving Community Resilience Projects
- 12 Allotment Improvement Schemes
- 10 Enhanced Environmental Schemes
- 5 Vulnerable Buildings
- 2 Property Reuse and Conversion Loans
- South moor Site side elevation
- 5 Neighbourhood Parking and Circulation Schemes
- Walking and Cycling 3 Schemes to complete on site and 3 feasibility studies

Committed delivery 23/24 and 24/25

Theme	Project	21/22		22/23	23/24	24/25
Strategic Investments	Digital High Street	Bishop Auckland & Stanley Pilots, then Chester-le-Street, Seaham, Barnard Castle		Designed Wi-Fi scheme for installation in Consett Spennymoor and Crook, Durham City Design underway	Continue offer Bishop Auckland, Stanley, Seaham, Chester le Street, Barnard Castle. Investigate new opportunities in emerging technology	Phase 2 of delivery digital offer
	Retail Hub	Digital Media in Business training; Customer Service training; Emergency First Aid at Work; Food Safety in Catering training; 5x drop-in sessions and business support;		14 training courses have been undertaken across the County, covering Digital Media for Business, Customer Service & Sales, Level 2 Food Safety, Level 3 Emergency First Aid at Work	Engagement to Retail Sector offer Re 12 available courses: 2x Digital Media in Business training 2x Customer Service training 2x Emergency First Aid training 2x Food Safety training	Will ascertain Retail needs to develop the offer
	Neighbourhood Retail Improvements	Gilesgate x3 Proudfoot Drive Esh Winning South Stanley New Shildon Willington Silverdale Place Coundon Pelton Wheatley Hill Castleside Tow Law	Annfield Plain Cornforth Lanchester Blackhall Framwellgate x3 Murton Sacriston Easington Colliery Ushaw Moor Blackhill Station Town Haswell South Moor	Newton Hall x3 Belmont Carville Thornley Sherburn Hill New Brancepeth Bearpark Brandon West Rainton Pittington Wolsingham Stanhope, Frosterley	Delivery in: Framwellgate Moor, South Moor Coxhoe, Wheatley Hill, Spennymoor, New Brancepeth, Newton Hall, Tow Law, Seaham, Crook, Sherburn Road, Brandon, Ch Le St, Frosterley, Bearpark, Consett, Ferryhill, Horden	Delivery in: Thornley, Shildon, Cornforth, Annfield Plan, Pelton, Stanley, West Auckland, Framwellgate Moor, Ushaw Moor, Sherburn Road, Consett, Coundon, Eldon, Willington, Wolsingham, Stanhope

Committed delivery 23/24 and 24/25

Theme	Project	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Strategic Investments	Town and Village Vibrancy	Bishop Auckland Food Festival Seaham Food Festival Durham Book Festival S&DR community engagement Digital Library development	Bishop Auckland Food Festival, Seaham Food Festival Creative Economy Dev Digital Library Delivered Activities, Festivals and Events across all main towns "Winter <u>Wonders</u> " <u>Oct</u> – Dec Durham City Christmas Festival	Bishop Auckland & Seaham Food Festivals Programme of Town Centre Events and Activities developed and delivered Linking UKSPF (12 across main towns) plus 75 th Anniversary of New Towns at Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe Spennymoor Family Fun Street Festival	Events and Activities scope to develop following feedback with communities
Housing and Community	Community Housing	Discussions took place with; Durham Action on Single Housing (DASH) Craghead Development Trust Oakenshaw Community Association Canney Communities	East Durham Community Initiatives (EDCI) completed	Canny Hill Bishop Auckland is in development stage Further opportunities for community housing schemes to be considered	Further opportunities for community housing schemes to be considered
	Housing Opportunities Fund	Interventions in Targeted Delivery Plans areas	Shildon Peoples Centre converted to 4 x <u>1 bedroom</u> Flats Coundon Grange 3 bungalows refurbished back into use	/	/
	Improving Community Resilience	Houndsgill Viaduct Scheduled Monument Project feasibility Peterlee & Horden Rugby Club Community Building	P&HRC Planning Approved, funding dev. Lowes Barn New Build Redhills Revealed GOL	Redhills Revealed Delivery Cotherstone Chapel Woodhouse Close X 6 further schemes to be delivered	14 Schemes ref report
	Green Homes Programme (External Wall Insulation Installs)	300 Properties/ EWI's complete	1846 Properties benefitted including solar phot voltaic panels, renewable heating	/	/

Committed delivery 23/24 and 24/25

Theme	Project	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Housing and Community	Horden Regeneration Programme	Identify investment priorities through masterplan Commence acquisition and clearance of targets/problem properties	Undertake site assembly and marketing	Preparation and <u>finalisation</u> of Acquisition and Demolition Strategy and Decant Strategy. Autumn 2023 Cabinet, which will seek approval for the proposed delivery approach, CPO approach and the acquisition and demolition of properties.	Planning application to be prepared and submitted Acquisition of properties by negotiation will commence. Subject to approval, demolition of properties can be expected in Q4 of 24/25.
	Allotment Improvement Programme	/		Identify and implement 12x allotment improvement schemes	Identify and implement 12x allotment improvement schemes
	AAP Small Area Improvement Fund	Engage with 28 AAPs and deliver 28 schemes, identifying Small Area Programme opportunities	Delivery of AAP Small Area improvement schemes	Delivery of AAP Small Area improvement schemes	Delivery of AAP Small Area improvement schemes
Environmental and Health	Enhanced Environmental Maintenance	Deliver environmental improvement programme aligned to neighbourhood retail programme and targeted delivery plan areas	Delivered environmental improvements in 14 Areas	Deliver environmental improvement programme aligned to neighbourhood retail programme and targeted delivery plan areas	
Built Environment	Vulnerable Buildings	Address 3x priority buildings Stanley/Shildon, 2x buildings in Chester-le-Street	20 properties being brought back into use 10 with Action Taken	Address 5 priority properties	Address 5 priority properties
	Property Reuse and Conversion	5 Loans approved	3 Loans approved	Review loan take up and repayment rate Target 2 Loan approvals	Review loan take up and repayment rate Target 3 Loan approvals
	Dean Bank Clearance and Improvement	Conclude landscaping of recent clearance sites.	Demolition of 36 properties, landscape solution completed	/	/

Committed delivery 23/24 and 24/25

Theme	Project	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Built Environment	Easington Colliery Programme	Complete demolition programme at former Colliery School	Completed phased programme of clearance Review End use ref pocket park see report	Develop end use solution	Delivery or facilitate end use solution
	South Moor Improvement Programme	Improve key problem site and vulnerable property	DCC CCS developing design solution. Landowners' permissions now in place.	Costs and delivery	/
	Sacriston Workshop Conversion	Improvements to Sacriston Coop Buildings, Workshops 4,5 & 6 completed to Coop Buildings	2 further units brought back into use creating 5 independent spaces. CLLD Match funding attracted supporting 4 units	Support to CIC to attract external funding to complete empty units remaining potential UKSPF	/
Transport and Connectivity	Walking and Cycling Routes	Audit of opportunities along the Weardale Way Enhanced walking and cycling linked to Stockton and Darlington Railway 200th anniversary	Feasibility and design: Railway Paths to Bishop Auckland, south of Pesspool Wood to Wingate East Durham Rural Corridor at Trimdon link to Coxhoe, Relley Bridge, Houndsgill Viaduct, Belmont Viaduct, Barnard Castle to Bishop Auckland	Feasibility and design continue and Delivery: NCN 1 East Shotton, Wingate, South Hetton Waskerley Way C2C Auckland Walk Spennymoor to Coundon Seaham to Ryhope Murton to Dalton Park link	Delivery continues from programme feasibility outlined in 22/23 and 22/24
	Neighbourhood Parking and Circulation	Easington Village Parking/ Traffic project Identification and design of four parking and circulation schemes Parkside Traffic Improvement scheme	Delivered Willington Car Park, Sherburn Hill Hub, Sacriston, Crook	Ash Crescent Seaham, Framwellgate Moor, Blackhall Colliery, Newton Hall, Shildon x2, Annfield Plain, Gilesgate	To be identified following costs and delivery of 23/24 schemes linking NRP Areas listed.

Case Studies

Strategic Investments

Neighbourhood Retail improvements

Neighbourhood Retail Improvements

The project has continued to scope areas as outlined in the Investment Plan which are used to identify opportunities for potential improvements which link across the programmes themes and also to wider investments and ensure cross service funding and maximising external opportunities.

Projects have included continuing to invest and support the retail sector with grant support via the Targeted Business Improvement Scheme, identifying problem sites, engaging owners, implementing public realm improvements, enhancing the local environmental with new street furniture, identifying issues with parking and circulation in key hubs around schools, doctors, retail parades etc

Key Stats Last Year:

- 50 Areas scoped
- 262 Retail Businesses engaged
- Prior to COVID average yearly engagements were 120
- 73 Businesses supported
- 248 jobs safeguarded/created

Page 91

Planned:

- To Support 50 retail businesses through application process and improve premises to aid growth, development
- To Safeguard/Create 250 Jobs
- To Attract £2.1m private sector investment



Strategic Investments

Enhancing public realm

Enhanced Environmental Maintenance/Public Realm

Environment and public realm schemes complement retail support enhancing our communities environment and place.

- Projects are often cross service funded which adds value and maximises benefits, ensuring a coordinated delivery approach.
- For example: Framwellgate Moor Front Street Neighbourhood Retail Improvement scheme enhancing the public realm, installing traffic calming measures and improved crossing points aligned with delivery of the road resurfacing funded from Strategic Highways and C&G involved in Landscaping works in a true working partnership approach, minimizing disruption to local residents

Key Stats Last Year:

- 4 Public Realm Completed
- 1 Underway
- 14 Enhanced Environmental Schemes completed

Planned:

- 6 Public Realm Planned
- 10 Enhanced Environmental Maintenance Schemes planned



Strategic Investments

Town Centre Vibrancy Events

Town Centre Vibrancy Events

- Building upon established events programmes in place
- Seeking to deliver further events to drive footfall
- A mix of Free Family Fun, Arts, Cultural, Creativity Activities & Events
- Help retailers to attract and encourage dwell time and to boost trade

Key Stats Last Year:

- 35 Events Delivered
- Seaham & Bishop Auckland Food Festivals
- Countywide Winter Wonders Programme all 12 Towns
- Spennymoor Family Fun Day pictured 27 May 2023

Planned:

- Seaham & Bishop Auckland Food Festivals
- Christmas Markets
- Fire and Ice
- Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe 75 Years Activities and Events
- Countywide Winter Wonders Programme
- Countywide Tin Arts Inclusive Dance



Strategic Investments

Digital High Street and Retail Hubs

Page 94

Digital High Street and Retail Hub

- Digital High Street project established to provide free WIFI across main towns as part of the shift to leisure focussed uses in town centres to aid user experience, functionality and extend dwell time and map town centre usage
- Retail Hub has a number of strands
 - To provide bespoke training offer for the retail sector in local venues, premises online and virtual to fit retailers needs
 - Shared retail space, temporary retail offerings and meanwhile uses, helping to tackle long term empty units

Key Stats Last Year:

- 5 Digital high street WIFI installations in 5 Towns
- 14 Training Courses completed
- Training moving back to face to face provision following COVID
- Procurement Awarded as a Call Off Contract to support temporary shop dressing

Planned:

- Engagement with retailers to ensure retail training offer fit for purpose completed in Spennymoor, Chester le Street and Consett (May-June 2023)
- Proposal to continue offer and review – 12 Training Courses target
- Working with owners in Durham City, Bishop Auckland, Peterlee to tackle long term empty properties



Housing and Community

To address long term empty properties in communities most effected by them is a key outcome identified by the Housing Strategy. Support for acquisition, clearance, conversion and improvement of property.

&

Aligned to priorities of Housing Strategy the Green Home Fuel Efficiency Programme is targeted to directly improve poorest performing properties which result in fuel poverty – Levered in match £18,257,422.00

Key Stats Last Year:

- 1846 Properties benefitted from Green Home Fuel Efficiency
- 2000 measures installed (solar, renewable heating and insulation)
- Shildon Peoples Centre full refurbished - Providing 4 x 1 bedroom flats
- Coundon Grange Bungalows - Providing 3 refurbished and back into use

- External works to Shildon Peoples Centre to complete 2023/24
- **All other projects fully complete**



Housing and Community

Improving Community Resilience

Page 96

The project was established to address localised issues of concern which can help maintain the social fabric and improve resilience of local communities.

It has 3 key objectives:-

- Provide targeted investment for communities to save community assets that would otherwise be lost
- Strengthen capacity and capability in communities to support them to shape their places and develop sustainable community businesses, services and spaces
- Empower communities in left behind places to level up

Key Stats this year:

- 6 GOLs issued £983,400.00
- £8.4m Match
- 1 scheme completed Lowes Barn Community Facility featured right

Places Supported:

Peterlee & Horden Rugby Club, Cotherstone Chapel, Redhills Revealed, Woodhouse Close, Fishburn Youth and Community

Planned:

- 1 underway, 4 pending start on site
- 3 Business Cases being prepared
- 5 applications being supported through process



Transport and Connectivity

Walking and Cycling Routes

Walking and Cycling Routes

The walking and cycling programme looks to enhance the investments made through other projects and schemes to add value. Particular priority is given to addressing breaks in the current walking and cycling network and connecting residential areas and employment sites with the walking and cycling infrastructure. During AAP consultations further opportunities for walking and cycling at local level were identified.

Key Stats Last Year:

- £1.5m additional Funding secured Walking and Cycling from Central Government Department for Transport via Sustrans
- Works underway along the Wakerley Way (Consett) and addressing breaks in the network /surface improvements along sections of NCN1 in East Durham

Planned:

- NCN1 continue towards south towards county boundary
- Wakerley Way C2C Surface/drainage improvements
- Auckland Walk Railway Path Spennymoor to Coundon
- Belmont Viaduct, Bishop Auckland to Barnard Castle, Hownsgill viaduct feasibility



Summary

Summary

- **£19m** Towns and Villages spent and committed to date, **£20m** of direct match funding from other funding programmes, and an additional **£94m** of wider funding and investment
- Programme continues to be delivered in line with established themes and approved investment plan
- Focus on delivery in deprived/left behind areas and linking development / investment packages to maximise impact
- Ongoing development of Towns and Villages delivery is based on strategic themes and spend is then aligned at a local level
- Potential further UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Funding for Town Centres, Community Resilience and Green Initiatives through Communities and Place theme
- Focus is now on delivering the £12.9m committed and allocating the remaining £5.9m

Questions?

Economy and Enterprise

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3 July 2023

Business Start Up Support



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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report provides members with an overview of the current business start-up 'ecosystem' in County Durham, including the enterprise and start-up programmes which will conclude in June 2023 as ERDF funding comes to an end. The report also provides an update on the work being undertaken to develop the future provision of business start-up support, enabled by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Enterprising Durham Framework.

Executive Summary

- 2 The County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy highlights the need to strengthen our economy by increasing the number of start-ups as well as encouraging business growth and business investment in the county. One of the four priorities under the Productivity Pillar of the IES is to "Provide excellent support at all stages for businesses to start-up, sustain, thrive and grow in County Durham". As part of the development of the IES Delivery Plan the current start-up 'ecosystem' is being reviewed to meet this priority, learning from the programmes that have been successful in supporting business start-ups to date, and looking at new ways to encourage and support more businesses to start-up in the County.
- 3 Business start-up support has historically been provided across the County by the three enterprise agencies - CDC Enterprise Agency (CDC), East Durham Business Service (EDBS), and South Durham Enterprise Agency (SDEA) - who are members of the North East Enterprise Agencies Ltd (NEEAL) consortium and together deliver an ERDF business start-up programme with a focus on disadvantaged individuals and communities that need the most support, such as the unemployed and residents of rural areas.
- 4 Business Durham supports the start-up ecosystem and has successfully run two ERDF programmes, Durham Ambitious Business Start-ups (DABS) and Durham City Incubator (DCI). In addition to this, Durham University Careers and Enterprise Team run a broad range of enterprise activity at Durham University including Game Changer, Blueprint Challenge, Durham Venture School and Northern Accelerator programme. However, the start-up offer in the County is not always easy to access and can appear fragmented, and

over the last 2 years, partners have been meeting together to address this as an informal County Durham Start-up Provider Network, led by Business Durham.

- 5 Using UK Shared Prosperity Fund resources, Durham County Council, supported by the County Durham Economic Partnership, recently commissioned a piece of work to develop an Enterprising Durham Framework with the aim: *'To create an integrated partnership delivery approach to supporting enterprise and business start-up in County Durham.'*
- 6 Enterprise delivery partners have come together, through facilitated engagement and consultation, to develop The Enterprising Framework, to agree how partner organisations can best deliver integrated, inclusive, quality support for enterprising start-ups, enterprising people, and enterprising places. The design of new support must put the clients' needs at its heart and create a service that builds the capabilities of the client and ensure it is accessible to everyone across all communities.
- 7 The Enterprising Durham Framework process has been very positive, and partner organisations involved in start-up services see a real opportunity to join up start-up support in the County to provide a better offer to business start-ups at all stages, building upon the best practice and lessons learned from current start-up support programmes. While discussions are still ongoing, there is a sense that the Enterprising Durham Framework enables inclusive design and inclusive implementation of support for start-ups in the County.
- 8 UKSPF resources of £2 million have been allocated to take this forward and activities will be developed in line with the principles in the framework over the next two months, with delivery starting from September 2023, subject to approval of the detailed delivery plan.
- 9 The Enterprising Durham Framework sets out the foundation to build a start-up ecosystem in County Durham that will deliver on the County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy priority to ensure the provision of excellent support at all stages for businesses to start-up, sustain, thrive and grow in County Durham.

Recommendations

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

Background

- 11 The rate of business start-ups in County Durham has historically been below the regional and national average. It is important to be aware that the official government statistics on business start-ups only include businesses that register for VAT or PAYE, and therefore micro businesses and the number of people entering self-employment are not accurately reflected in the figures.

- 12 In terms of the increase in the total number of businesses in recent years, the County has seen very similar performance in comparison to the regional figures. The latest data estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show there were 14,725 active enterprises in County Durham in 2022, equivalent to **276** businesses per 10,000 population. This is similar to the North East average (273 per 10,000 population) although still significantly lower than the England & Wales average (426 per 10,000 population).
- 13 Over the last 3 years County Durham has seen growth in the overall number of businesses at a rate comparable to and in some years above, the growth in the number of businesses regionally and nationally. In 2020 the County saw an increase of **310** businesses (**2%** growth) compared with 1% regionally and nationally. In 2021 the County did particularly well with an overall increase of **460** businesses (**3%** growth) compared to 1% in the North East region and Great Britain. In 2022, the County saw a net increase of **160** businesses (**1.1%** growth) higher than regional (1%) and national (0.1%) increases.
- 14 ONS also publish data on the number of new enterprise 'births' per annum which shows that the annual number of business births in the County has been increasing over the last 4 years from **1,565** in 2018 to **1,810** in 2021 (the latest year for which data has been published). The data also indicates that County Durham performs slightly above the regional and national figures for the survival rate of new businesses, with **75.1%** of businesses 'born' in the County in 2018 surviving for at least 2 years post start-up (compared with 74.4% in the North East and 74.3% in England and Wales) and **60.4%** surviving for at least 3 years (compared with 56.8% in the North East and 57.5% in England and Wales).
- 15 Although the above statistics provide a good indication of the levels of business start-up, it is difficult to obtain a full picture of the number of businesses that start-up in the County each year, as many businesses start up without taking any formal advice, or engaging with business start-up support services. There is a wide range of information available on the internet including free start-up guides and business plan templates, and the Government offers a National Business Support Helpline which provides free advice by telephone or via webchat (and is delivered by UMi, a company headquartered in Seaham). This means that potential business founders can 'self-serve' and it is difficult to accurately track total start-up numbers.
- 16 Data on the opening of new business bank accounts can also be used to provide an indication of the number of business start-ups, although these figures also need to be treated with caution, as some businesses will open more than one business account, many self-employed people use a personal rather than business bank account, and start-ups are increasingly using the new online challenger banks which do not currently contribute to the start-up datasets. Figures from BankSearch Information Consultancy, which collates data from the main providers of business banking services indicated that there were 5 start-ups for every 10,000 working age population in County Durham in February 2022, comparable to the business start-up rate of 5.5 for the whole of the North East. County Durham typically accounts for 18-20% of all

business start-ups in the region, a similar level to the County's 20% share of the total number of businesses in the region.

- 17 Although the County's start-up rates in recent years compare reasonably well with the regional performance, the County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) highlights the need to further strengthen our economy by increasing the number of start-ups as well as encouraging business growth and business investment in the county, with one of the four priorities under the Productivity Pillar of the IES being to *"Provide excellent support at all stages for businesses to start-up, sustain, thrive and grow in County Durham"*.
- 18 There are a range of services that support pre-start and start-up businesses in County Durham, which are delivered by Business Durham, key partners including the Enterprise Agencies and Durham University, as well as several smaller locally based initiatives. However, it has been recognised that the start-up offer in the County is not always easy to access and can appear fragmented, and over the last 2 years, partners have been meeting together to address this as an informal 'County Durham Start-up Provider Network' led by Business Durham.
- 19 As part of the development of the IES Delivery Plan the current start-up 'ecosystem' is being reviewed to meet this priority, learning from the programmes that have been successful in supporting business start-ups to date, and looking at new ways to encourage and support more businesses to start-up in the County.

Current Start-up Support – Enterprise Agencies

- 20 Traditionally, enterprise agencies have been the main providers of business start-up services. County Durham benefits from three enterprise agencies that cover specific geographical areas across the County and have a long track record in providing business start-up advice and support in their local communities:
 - CDC Enterprise Agency (CDC) - covers Durham City, Chester-Le-Street, Consett, Stanley and Lanchester area.
 - East Durham Business Service (EDBS) - covers Easington, Peterlee, and Seaham area.
 - South Durham Enterprise Agency (SDEA) - covers Bishop Auckland, Shildon, Newton Aycliffe, Sedgfield, Weardale and Teesdale.
- 21 The three enterprise agencies are members of North East Enterprise Agencies Ltd (NEEAL) and are delivery partners within the ERDF-funded *'Enterprise Support in the North East 2'* project, which operated from July 2018 to June 2023 across Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and County Durham. The aim of the project was to assist potential entrepreneurs to become 'enterprise ready' through providing a combination of one-to-one advice sessions and one-to-many workshops, with at least 12 hours of

support being provided to each beneficiary in order to meet the ERDF targets for the programme.

- 22 Although the project aimed to provide a universal offer, open to any resident with an ambition to start up in business, there was a particular focus on disadvantaged individuals and communities that need the support most, e.g. the unemployed and residents of rural areas. In total the project aimed to support 483 potential entrepreneurs from County Durham to become enterprise ready, and as at the end of December 2022, 97% of this target (451) had been achieved.
- 23 A requirement of all ERDF-funded projects is that an independent evaluation, known as a summative assessment, is carried out to assess the overall performance, effectiveness and impact of the project. The Final Summative Assessment for the '*Enterprise Support in the North East 2*' project was completed in March 2023, with key findings including that:
- The quality of support had been highly rated by beneficiaries, with 70% of beneficiaries surveyed reporting that they had gone on to start a business following support from the project.
 - The project has had a positive impact on beneficiary awareness of enterprise, entrepreneurial skills and confidence and desire to start-up in business, as well as on general self confidence and quality of life, including better work-life balance and increased income.
 - The project had generated a positive return on investment of £2.41 (net additional) GVA for every £1 of public funding invested.

Current Start-up Support – Business Durham

- 24 Business Durham supports the start-up ecosystem by providing small industrial units and local office space through its property portfolio, as well as delivering programmes to encourage the development of potential high growth start-up businesses in the County, complementing the universal start-up offer provided by the enterprise agencies.
- 25 The two main programmes led by Business Durham are the Durham City Incubator (DCI) and Durham Ambitious Business Start-ups (DABS), both of which were part-funded by ERDF, with DCI running from 2019-2023 and DABS from 2020-2023.
- i) Durham Ambitious Business Start-ups (DABS).**
- 26 Durham Ambitious Business Start-ups (DABS) is an ERDF-funded programme that Business Durham designed to pilot new approaches to encouraging more ambitious high-quality start-ups in County Durham, including pre-start support and support during the critical first 12 months in business, which had been identified as a gap in the existing support available in the County.

- 27 A key part of the DABS programme also included a profile-raising campaign, including marketing and events such as the Durham Festival of Enterprise, an annual event to showcase enterprising activities in the County and to help increase the pipeline for all delivery partners in the start-up ecosystem. The DABS programme also provided funding for the development of the Durham Start Ups Portal, to join up and showcase the full enterprise and start-up offer delivered by the various partner organisations that operate in County Durham. The portal provides an online resource for start-ups at all stages, including online access to local support and funding as well as curated resources on topics such as marketing, investment, and legal structures – see <https://www.durhamstartups.co.uk>
- 28 The DABS project was designed to increase the aspirations for high-growth enterprise, instilling confidence in those with entrepreneurial ambitions and innovative ideas to start a new business. Through the DABS programme, 150 potential entrepreneurs with a business idea have been supported to become 'enterprise ready' and 130 new start-ups have been supported during their first 12 months of trading through a range of workshops and support. In addition, 9 Job Grants and 25 DABS Start-up Grants were also offered to the programme's participants, with 16.68 FTE jobs having been created by the start-ups supported and a further 10 jobs estimated to be created by the end of the programme delivery.
- 29 As required by ERDF funding, an independent evaluation of the DABS programme has been undertaken. Key findings from the DABS Summative Assessment report, completed in April 2023, were as follows:
- The project filled a gap in the local and regional business support service, while creating an environment for success, through the focus on servicing and identifying ambitious businesses, and effective project design and delivery comprising a positive blend of online learning coupled with opportunities to network and collaborate.
 - The peer-to-peer engagement and collaboration was cited as one of the key benefits of the programme.
 - Feedback from the beneficiaries highlighted that 48% of the start-ups supported have become more ambitious, 56% can see the financial and growth impact on their business, and 80% agreed participation in the DABS programme will have a positive effect on increasing their future revenue and profitability.
 - The project has generated a positive return on investment of £2.10 (net additional) GVA for every £1 of public funding invested.
- ii) Durham City Incubator (DCI)**
- 30 Business Durham established the Durham City Incubator (DCI) programme in order to increase the number of Durham University graduate start-ups and to help retain them in County Durham, working in collaboration with Durham University and New College Durham. The DCI programme offers a six month

intensive accelerator programme to support high growth potential start-ups that have been trading for less than 12 months and want to establish their business in Durham. The six-month programme of support is offered to small cohorts of 8-10 business founders, and includes workshops run by local experts, one-to-one support, shared workspace at Salvus House, Aykley Heads, a start-up grant of £2,500 and additional consultancy support to the value of £800. DCI businesses also have access to investment and funding opportunities, linking them with the North East business funding eco-system, including access to a convertible loan from the Finance Durham fund of £7,500.

- 31 Durham City Incubator (DCI) is part of an ERDF project led by Durham University, called *Durham Internship and Collaborative Enterprise (DICE)*. The project (DICE) includes four strands of support - Internships for Durham University students into Durham-based SMEs; Enterprise support for students through Durham University Careers and Enterprise Team; workspace and networking opportunities at Orbit (NETPark); and Durham City Incubator.
- 32 The first cohort of entrepreneurs started on DCI in January 2019 and DCI Cohort 9 is completing in June 2023. In total DCI has supported **72** high growth businesses over 9 Cohorts who have collectively raised over £8 million of investment. 30 of these businesses supported are Durham University start-ups with approximately 30% of these continuing to trade and grow in County Durham.
- 33 DCI has supported a broad range of businesses in various sectors including social enterprise, digital technology, professional services, food and drink, and the green economy. Businesses that have made significant impact and growth include:
 - Low Carbon Materials, a climate tech company and Earthshot Prize finalist focusing on low-carbon, next-generation construction material alternatives in the race to Net-Zero;
 - Elvet Recruitment, specialist recruiter within the construction industry, now employing 5 staff;
 - Local Energy Systems, which has secured their first contract to support installation of community energy projects with Spennymoor Parish Council;
 - Adopter, a digital marketing company for green technology adoption, clients include Nature Alpha and Nature Invest, both global organizations recognised by United Nations. Adopter is one of the first businesses to be B Corp certified in Durham.
- 34 An independent evaluation of DCI, as part of the overall DICE Programme, has been undertaken, as required for all ERDF projects. Key findings from the 'DICE project: Summative Assessment: March 2023' are as follows:

- The strong rationale, effective partnership and exemplary project design have all proved to be important features of the project's success, and the project has strengthened and enhanced the partnership between Durham University and Durham County Council.
- 100% of the DCI survey respondents would recommend DCI to others and highlighted the high quality support provided by the DCI Incubation Manager.
- DCI has provided a unique accelerator programme in County Durham for start-ups to test out and develop their ideas, with 44% of DCI beneficiaries stating that the incubation programme had been a deciding factor in locating their business in Durham.
- The project has generated a positive return on investment of £5.10 (net additional) GVA for every £1 of public funding invested.

Current Start-up Support – Durham University

- 35 Durham University Careers and Enterprise Team runs a broad range of enterprise activity at Durham University as part of the DICE ERDF-funded programme. The Summative Assessment highlighted that there has been 165% increase in student enterprise activity with some start-ups created by Durham University students gaining national and international accolades, including Low Carbon Material referred to in paragraph 33 above.
- 36 Durham University Careers and Enterprise Team have developed the 'Gamechanger' programme which is an innovation challenge based around the UN Sustainable Development Goals and has received awards and recognition as best practice from the United Nations. Some students who attended Gamechanger have subsequently applied to join Durham City Incubator to establish a business.
- 37 The University's Blueprint Start-up Challenge is now in its 20th year, and it continues to provide a launchpad for exceptional student start-up businesses, creating a pipeline for Durham City Incubator (DCI). Durham University has also launched Durham Venture School bringing together talented individuals to launch high-potential start-ups.
- 38 The Northern Accelerator (NA) programme is an example of good practice in regional collaboration across the North East Universities. It has made a step change in providing critical mass to support research commercialisation and has resulted in the creation of 45 University spin-outs in the past six years. Northern Accelerator is a collaboration between six diverse North East universities (Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland, Teesside, and York). It offers a menu of support options and has been particularly effective because it integrates with each university's individual approach to spin-out creation. It also enabled the opportunity for sharing of professional knowledge and good practice (between academics and Technology Transfer staff alike). This is particularly important for universities where spin-out propositions are an uncommon occurrence. Specific examples of where

Northern Accelerator resources have been utilised are; training for academics first thinking about starting a business; prototype creation; analysis of business propositions; experienced business people working alongside academics as potential CEOs (Execs into Business). Over £102 million pounds of investment has been raised collectively from 45 spins outs, creating 650 employment opportunities.

Social Enterprise Boost

- 39 Business Durham is working alongside the North East Business & Innovation Centre (NE BIC) to deliver the new Social Enterprise Boost Fund (SEBF) programme across County Durham. The fund aims to kickstart and accelerate social enterprise activity and will be delivered through providing a combination of capacity building support and onward grant funding to local social entrepreneurs within their communities. Delivery of the programme of support aims to commence in June 2023 and will end by March 2025.

Future Business Start-up Support – Enterprising Durham Framework

- 40 Using UK Shared Prosperity Fund resources, Durham County Council, supported by the County Durham Economic Partnership, recently commissioned a piece of work to develop an Enterprising Durham Framework with the aim: *‘To create an integrated partnership delivery approach to supporting enterprise and business start-up in County Durham.’*
- 41 The impetus for establishing a framework for enterprise and start-up provision arose from three factors:
- County Durham’s Inclusive Economic Strategy which sets out the ambition to create more and better jobs in an inclusive green economy;
 - the imminent ending of an era of European Funding Programmes and the gearing up for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund;
 - the knowledge that current start-up provision was a mixed bag of quality with the market sometimes appearing confusing to the client.
- 42 The time felt right to review, reflect, and reshape start-up provision in collaboration with the organisations involved in the informal County Durham Start-up Provider Network, in order to build upon the good practice, lessons learned and recommendations set out in the ERDF Summative Assessment reports.
- 43 Enterprise delivery partners have come together, through facilitated engagement and consultation, to develop The Enterprising Durham Framework. Key principles were that the framework would need to have flexibility, be collaborative with open and transparent communications, build on existing strengths but not be constrained by what has happened in the past, be impact driven with a client focus, and have buy-in from partners.

44 There has been a collective agreement between the partners on the key activities that should be delivered as part of the future enterprise framework for the County, which have been grouped into three inter-connected areas, as follows:

- **Enterprising People:** the vision is for *‘confident people with a can-do attitude spotting opportunities to transform their lives’* –activities may include awareness raising and engagement to reach all part of the county; targeted enterprise campaigns and integrated enterprise in education; problem solving challenges; confidence building and test trading opportunities.
- **Enterprising Start Ups:** the vision is for *‘a rising number of sustainable start-ups, driving economic and social change’* –activities may include tailored specialist support; development of peer to peer networks; building capability; and online delivery of information and advice.
- **Enterprising Places:** the vision is for *‘thriving places with a buzz of enterprising activity within communities’* – activities may include utilising spaces in local places and creating hub and spoke models of enterprise, engaging and empowering communities to make changes, showcasing local entrepreneurs and delivering enterprise animation programmes across the County.

45 Importantly, partners have agreed five operating principles for delivery through the Enterprising Durham Framework, the first three of which are customer facing - putting the client needs at the heart of delivery; building capability; and ensuring the services are easy to access. The final two are focused on the partnership – developing a learning partnership; and being an enterprising partnership.

46 The Enterprising Durham Framework report identifies that there is strong ambition amongst partner organisations to deliver a dynamic and responsive start-up support service, through a fully integrated partnership with client needs at its heart, as well as a stronger appetite for continued and close collaboration, together with considerable knowledge and expertise amongst delivery partners. This puts County Durham in a good position to take this work forward as a key part of the delivery plan for the Inclusive Economic Strategy, and the Enterprising Durham Framework report highlights 10 recommended next steps which are being progressed as follows:

Recommendation	Progress to date
Recommendation 1 - Business Durham and NEEAL should now lead the discussion to formalise the model for an integrated partnership.	Underway - Business Durham and NEEAL are working together to take this forward, two meetings held to date with partners.
Recommendation 2 - The delivery model for the Partnership needs to be designed so it	Enterprising Durham Framework partnership agreement has been drafted and shared with enterprise

does not stand in the way of an 'our client' approach.	delivery partners. This sets out the values and behaviours and a date has been set for 30th June for partners to sign agreements.
Recommendation 3 - Further work is required to develop a set of metrics that will measure success outcomes for the Partnership in a way that meets their needs.	A subgroup of the partners is developing the logic models and metrics.
Recommendation 4 - Delivery partners should work together to identify the skills, capabilities, talents, and expertise that lie within their organisations.	Information is being collated from partners to better understand the range of capabilities, which is to be reviewed and identify any missing gaps.
Recommendation 5 - Delivery partners should identify and understand what the specialisms and interests are within the delivery partnership and which delivery partners are best placed to deliver what.	Underway as above.
Recommendation 6 - Delivery partners should identify both intellectual and physical assets within their organisations, that could be utilised across the Partnership.	Underway as above.
Recommendation 7 - All the proposed activities described in this report should be reviewed and prioritised.	Further meetings are planned with partners to work on this, to conclude in July 2023.
Recommendation 8 - A significant programme of enterprise and animation events is developed and delivered across County Durham.	Further meetings are planned as above, initially to develop activities that can be delivered through UKSPF resources.
Recommendation 9 - Review existing online resources within the delivery partnership, identify gaps where resources could be curated to ensure a 'Durham angle.'	Further meetings are planned with partners to work on this, to conclude in July 2023.
Recommendation 10 - Identify local places across the County that could be utilised as enterprising places, to deliver a host of pre-start and start up services.	Business Durham enterprise team are researching potential venues including Business Durham facilities, partner facilities, community facilities or potential vacant retail space to assess potential enterprising places across the County.

Conclusion

- 47 The Enterprising Durham Framework process has been very positive, and partner organisations involved in start-up services see a real opportunity to join up start-up support in the County to provide a better offer to business start-ups at all stages, building upon the best practice and lessons learned from current start-up support programmes. While discussions are still ongoing, there is a sense that the Enterprising Durham Framework enables inclusive design and inclusive implementation of support for start-ups in the County.
- 48 UKSPF resources of £2 million have been allocated to take this forward and activities will be developed in line with the principles in the framework over the next two months, with delivery starting from September 2023, subject to approval of the detailed delivery plan.
- 49 The Enterprising Durham Framework sets out the foundation to build a start-up ecosystem in County Durham that will deliver on the County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy priority to ensure the provision of excellent support at all stages for businesses to start-up, sustain, thrive and grow in County Durham.

Contact:	Sarah Slaven	Tel: 03000 261258 / 07500 785618
	Leon Howe (DCI)	Tel: 03000 269223 / 07388 858544
	Jenny Halford (DABS)	Tel: 03000 265 505 / 07584 217016
	Gary Chaplin	Tel: 03000 261232 / 07730 541616

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

UKSPF resources of £2 million have been allocated, subject to a formal delivery plan being approved, to take forward the implementation of the Enterprising Durham Framework, led by Business Durham and NEEAL, and fund the delivery of start-up support activity for the period September 2023 to March 2025.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Climate Change

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

This page is intentionally left blank



**Business
Durham** 

Business Start Up Support

Economy and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee

3 July 2023

Sarah Slaven

Managing Director



County Durham Business Start Up Background

Page 116



- Historically, start-up rates in County Durham have been below regional and national averages.
- Improving picture in recent years with growth in number of businesses comparable to regional and national rates.
- Annual number of business 'births' increasing over last 4 years from 1,565 in 2018 to 1,810 in 2021
- Survival rate of new businesses in County Durham above regional and national figures (75.1% survive 2+ years, 60.4% survive 3+ years)
- Increasing the number of start-ups important to strengthen our economy, hence one of four priorities under the Productivity pillar of the County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy is to *"Provide excellent support at all stages for businesses to start-up, sustain, thrive and grow in County Durham"*
- Timely to review the current start-up 'ecosystem' and look at new ways to encourage and support more businesses to start-up in the County.

County Durham Start Up Ecosystem



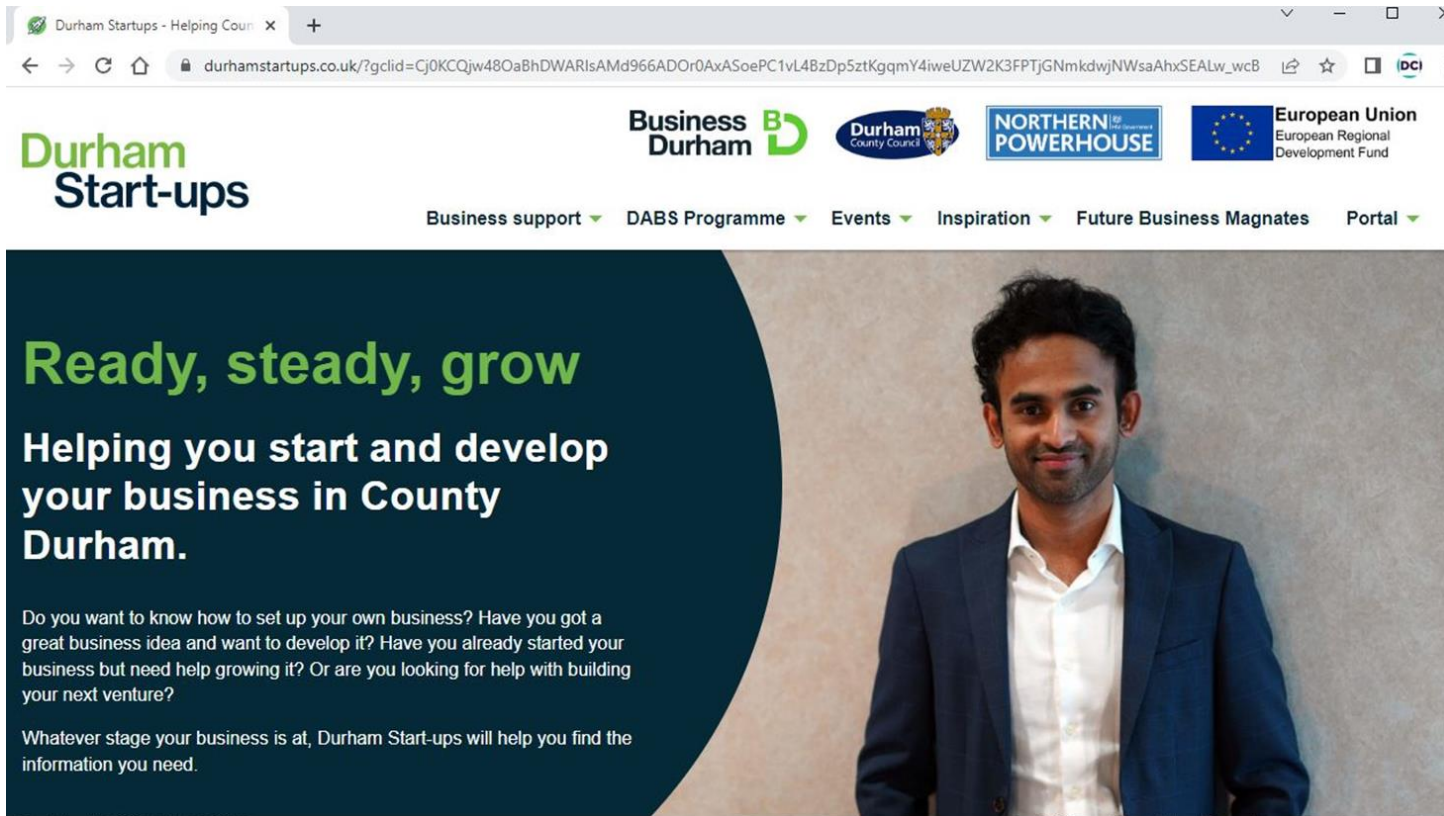
Durham Ambitious Business Start-ups (DABS)

Page 118



- DABS programme has supported:
 - 150 pre-start individuals
 - 130 new start-ups
 - 16.68 FTE jobs created
- Annual Festival of Enterprise held
- Start-up Portal developed

Durham Start Ups Portal



Durham Start-ups

Durham City Incubator (DCI)

Page 120



LOW CARBON MATERIALS
EARTHSHOT FINALISTS
DCI COHORT 1

- DCI has supported:
 - 72 high growth businesses over 9 Cohorts
 - Collectively raised over £8m investment
- Sectors include: social enterprise, digital technology, professional services, food & drink, and the green economy

Enterprising Durham Framework

Aim: *‘To create an integrated partnership delivery approach to supporting enterprise and business start-up in County Durham.’*

- **Enterprising People:** *‘confident people with a can-do attitude spotting opportunities to transform their lives’*
- **Enterprising Start Ups:** *‘a rising number of sustainable start-ups, driving economic and social change’*
- **Enterprising Places:** *‘thriving places with a buzz of enterprising activity within communities’*

Conclusion

Page 122

- Opportunity to join up support in the County to provide a better offer to business start-ups at all stages
- Builds on best practice and lessons learned from current start-up support programmes
- Strong support for partnership approach and appetite for continued and close collaboration
- Considerable knowledge and expertise amongst delivery partners
- UKSPF resources of £2 million allocated to take this forward, with delivery aiming to start from September 2023, subject to approval of the detailed delivery plan.
- Enterprising Durham Framework provides the foundation to build a start-up ecosystem that will deliver on the IES priority to provide excellent support at all stages for businesses to start-up, sustain, thrive and grow in County Durham.

Any Questions?

This page is intentionally left blank

**Economy and Enterprise
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

3 July 2023

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



Report of John Hewitt, Chief Executive

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 four, 2022/23, January to March 2023.

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 2022/23 continues to be a challenging period and this report sets out the council's continued strong performance. COVID-19, the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis have all impacted on our residents, our businesses and the council. The current cost-of-living crisis has steadily worsened over the last 12 months. High inflation, currently at 10.1%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. This 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, with a continuing high volume of applications for Welfare Assistance. Both elements of our scheme increased during 2022/23, although the increase in claims for Daily Living Expenses² was more significant (10,812 this year, compared to 4,875 last year) than the increase in claims for Settlement Grants³ (1,576 claims this year, compared to 1,310 last year). We are continuing to support residents through the crisis with various initiatives and funds, including our Council Tax Reduction Scheme, food and fun initiatives, food surplus activity and 'cutting the cost of the school day' initiative.

- (b) Increased costs for the council. Premises and transport 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 were also affected, and more contracts reflected changes in demand.

We 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 such as leisure centres and theatres. We estimate that during 2022/23 our income will be under budget by £1.858 million.

8 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

¹ UK Consumer Price Index for 12 months to March 2023. 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%.

² helps people whose circumstances change unexpectedly and who do not have access to money. It provides help with daily living expenses (for up to seven days) – includes food, travel and some clothing (restrictions apply).

³ helps people stay in their home, or move back into housing, after living in supported or unsettled accommodation, e.g., when leaving care of having been made homeless. It includes help towards beds and/or bedding, furniture, white goods (for example, cooker, fridge, washing machine), kitchen equipment, floor coverings, curtains, removal costs.

to the England average of £2,360 (+£167), the council would receive an additional £42 million each year.

- 9 Budget pressures of around £79 million are expected during 2023/24. This is due to factors such as the 9.7% uplift in the National Living Wage, energy costs, pay awards, high levels of inflation and higher demand across social care services.
- 10 Pressures will be partly financed by the additional £57 million received from the Local Government Settlement and from council tax and tax base increases, with the remainder split £12 million from savings and by utilising £10 million from the MTFP Support Reserve.
- 11 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 £770 million capital programme, the most ambitious the council has ever agreed.

Recommendation

- 12 That Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes:
 - (a) the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter four performance;
 - (b) the continuing impact of COVID-19 pandemic recovery and the external international factors driving inflation and cost-of-living on the council's performance; and
 - (c) the actions being taken to address areas of underperformance including the significant economic and well-being challenges because of the pandemic and other external factors.

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.

Going Well

- 15 We have an extensive business property rental portfolio, those which are managed by Business Durham continue to operate successfully above target (85%) with occupancy at 90%. During quarter four, an additional 50,000 square feet of floor space was added to the portfolio.
- 16 Engagements with businesses (261) by Business Durham exceeded target this quarter (250). As did the number of jobs created or safeguarded with 647 against a target of 375; bringing the total for 2022/23 to 1,986 against a target of 1,500.
- 17 94% of major planning applications were determined within the 13 week target, and 87% of planning applications within their deadline. This places us in the top quartile nationally.
- 18 75 organisations are signed up to the Better Health at Work Award, the main conduit for supporting workplace health across County Durham. During quarter four, 35 new Health Advocates were trained taking our total to 180, significantly higher than all other regional local authorities.
- 19 Average ticket sales per screening/performance⁴ were higher than the same period last year (61 compared to 56), as were actual ticket sales (+5,204). 95% of survey respondents rated their 'whole experience' at the theatre or cinema as 'good' or 'very good'.

Areas which require attention

- 20 Registrations onto our employability programmes reduced by 43% (-98)⁵ on the previous period due to our delivery partners experiencing staff shortages affecting their delivery capacity. These have now been rectified and we have also realigned additional staff to the project. Reduced registrations has impacted on the number of participants moving into employment (103 which is 19 fewer that quarter three) and those moving into education and/or

⁴ For screenings/performances held during the quarter - Gala and Empire only

⁵ October-December 2022

training (nine which is 20 fewer than last reporting period). Employability programmes provide advice and support to help participants overcome their barriers preventing them from re-entering the labour market.

Our people

- 21 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.

Areas which require attention

- 22 Despite leisure centre visitor numbers increasing this quarter, gym and swim memberships were below target by 17% (-3,084) and 5% (-75), respectively, impacted by the financial climate, increased competition from private sector gyms and continued transformation works at Abbey Leisure Centre, Peterlee and Seaham.

Our communities

- 23 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

- 24 1,250 net homes have been completed during 2022/23. This compares to a target of 1,308 included in the Local Plan and Housing Strategy. A number of large sites have just been recently completed but have yet to be recorded.
- 25 208 empty properties were brought back into use as a result of local authority intervention at the year end, exceeding the annual target of 200.
- 26 28% of properties covered by our selective licensing scheme (launched 1 April 2022) are fully licenced, and a further 5% have submitted applications.
- 27 During 2022/23, regeneration projects supported 95 businesses and created 166 FTEs exceeding the target of 58 and 94, respectively. 1,690m² of business space was brought back into use in Bishop Auckland via the Property Reuse Scheme as part of Future Highstreet Fund.

Risk Management

- 28 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://www.durham.gov.uk/media/34954/Durham-County-Council-Plan-2023-2027/pdf/CouncilPlan2023-2027.pdf?m=638221688616370000>
- Quarter Three, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s171720/Item%205%20Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20Q3%202022-23.pdf>
- 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>

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 Four, 2022/23



1.0 Our Economy: National, Regional & Local Picture

- 1 Latest data (December 2022) shows a decrease in the employment rate to 72.2% from 74.3% but it is not statistically significant. County Durham is statistically similar to the North East rate (70.5%) and the national rate (75.8%).
- 2 We continue to take positive action 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'. The employment rate across County Durham for those with a disability is almost 42%, much lower than the employment rate for those without a disability (83%), and the England average of 57%.
- 3 The unemployment rate remained statistically similar against the previous quarter at 4.6%; and also compared to the regional (4.7%) and national rates (3.87%).
- 4 As at March 2023, of the 15 main visitor attractions⁶ across County Durham, 10 are accessible by public transport⁷. This is in line with the 2019 baseline. Of those which are not accessible, three do not have a Sunday service (Diggerland, Raby Castle and Ushaw Historic House and Gardens), reaching Hardwick Park requires a one mile walk from Sedgefield and Killhope has no public transport service.

1.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Business Durham Floor Space

- 5 90% of floor space is occupied, which is above the target of 85%. During quarter four, an additional 50,000 square feet of floor space was added to the portfolio with the new units at Station Place.

Business Durham: activity during quarter four

- 6 261 businesses were engaged including 130 intensively assisted with the NE Space Conference bringing engagements with businesses particularly involved with innovation. Business engagements were above target (250).
- 7 647 jobs were created / safeguarded during quarter four (488 created and 159 safeguarded), which is more than the period target of 375. Although, the number created / safeguarded is 49% fewer than the same period last year, this is due to

⁶ 15 Main visitor attractions: Auckland Castle, Beamish Museum, Botanic Gardens, Oriental Museum, Palace Green Library, Bowes Museum, Locomotion, Chester-le-Street Cricket Ground, The 'Story', Seaham Sea Front, Diggerland, Raby Castle and Ushaw Historic House and Gardens, Hardwick Park and Killhope

⁷ Including a walk of ≤ 0.5 miles

elevated figures for 2021/22 as a result of COVID Business Recovery Grants. The cumulative figure for 2022/23 is 1,986 which is higher than the annual target of 1,500.

Planning Applications

- 8 During quarter four, 16 of 17 major planning applications were determined within 13 weeks (94%). This places us within the top quartile nationally for this indicator.
- 9 405 of 465 all planning applications were determined within deadline (87%). Although, this is below both the 93% target and the 90% achieved during quarter three, we remain in the top quartile nationally. Performance was impacted by staffing issues across the team which affected all areas of work in the first half of the year.
- 10 The latest benchmarking data (at September 2022) shows our performance to be better than both the North East and England averages.

	September 2022			
	County Durham	England	Statistical Neighbours	North East
major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	89%	86%	90%	81%
planning applications determined within deadline	91%	84%	80%	84%

Better Health at Work Award

- 11 75 County Durham organisations are signatories to the award. The council is both a signatory and a facilitator of the award to external workplaces.
- 12 Recruitment of new organisations remains a priority and quarter four was particularly busy with events and workshops. A recruitment event was held in partnership with the North East England Chamber of Commerce and attended by 45 organisations.
- 13 During quarter four, 35 new Health Advocates were trained taking our total 180, significantly higher than all other regional local authorities.

Theatres: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire⁸

- 14 Average ticket sales per screening/performance⁹ were higher than the same period last year (61 compared to 56), as were actual ticket sales (+5,204). Although ticket sales were down by 45% (-33,238) compared to quarter three (39,934 compared to 73,172). The decrease was expected following a successful Panto season and maintenance work at the Gala halting live performances for two weeks. During quarter four, we trialled a new cinema offer with special events, senior screenings for 60+ and parent and baby screenings.

⁸ Ticket sales are Gala Theatre and Empire Theatre only

⁹ For screenings/performances held during the quarter

15 Across the three venues, respondents rated the following as 'good' or 'very good':

	Overall	Gala	Bishop Auckland	Empire
Ticket booking experience	95%	95%	94%	94%
Staff welcome	94%	94%	97%	94%
Food and drink facilities	69%	66%	87%	79%
Quality of event	95%	95%	94%	96%
Value for money	96%	96%	94%	96%
Whole Experience	95%	95%	97%	95%

16 High levels of satisfaction were experienced in all venues, across all areas except food and drink facilities. This is consistent with previous reports.

17 There are planned improvements to café facilities at Abbey, Peterlee and other transformed leisure centres. These facilities will be the 'Thrive Kitchen' with its own look at feel. The menu, pricing and facilities are being developed as attractive places with affordable, quality, healthy choices in line with our wellbeing values.

18 We have also worked closely with procurement to secure local suppliers The café training will include cooking demonstrations to ensure that each plate is presented in a high quality and consistent way, and operations managers will undergo commercial hospitality training to support the business plan for each site.

Visits to council owned cultural venues during quarter four

19 There were 35,231 visits to our cultural venues during quarter four. There is currently no comparable data for this indicator however work is ongoing to develop more robust mechanism for future monitoring.

1.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Employability Programmes

20 Latest data (October to December 2022) shows registrations onto our employability programmes reduced by 43% compared to July to September 2022 (226 compared to 324). The decrease relates to the LINKCD programme, with staff shortages affecting delivery capacity of our partners. The issue has now been resolved and the position should improve going forward. Fewer registrations impacted participants moving into employment and/or education/training, with 103 (-19) and nine (-20) respectively.

1.3 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

Investments during quarter four

- 21 The County Durham Growth Fund considered eight applications totalling a grant value of £884,000. Now in its final six months of delivery, the £8.9 million grant fund is fully committed. Throughout 2022/23, £1.65 million was awarded in grants to 34 companies.
- 22 The Finance Durham Fund made one investment; a £100,000 investment in iPac, a manufacturer of food packaging, for additional capacity at a factory in Tanfield Lea. Total investment for 2022/23 was £2.5 million into nine businesses.

Funding

- 23 We have met representatives of Cities for Local Growth Unit to discuss Levelling Up Round 2 bid feedback. Further clarity is expected from the government on the process and deadlines for Round 3. Further bids will be considered for submission when funding criteria is published.

2.0 Our People

2.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Housing Solutions

- 24 During quarter four, we helped 3,806 households in relation to housing issues, 95 more than quarter three (+15%) and 148 more than the same period last year (+4%). Just over half of contacts related to housing advice and homelessness following being asked to leave by family and friends (12% of contacts) or the loss of their private rented tenancy (10% of contacts). Other contact included general tenancy advice, empty homes and regeneration and home improvement.
- 25 1,141 households were helped to stay in their home this quarter, 162 more than quarter three (+14%). More early intervention work and more Disabled Facilities Grants have contributed to this.
- 26 226 households were helped to move to alternative accommodation, comparable with last quarter. Of these 34% (76) moved into supported accommodation, 32% (73) into social housing, and 27% (62) moved into the private rented sector; with the remainder into other types of accommodation.

- 27 The time taken to achieve positive outcomes continues to impact on some cases that would ordinarily be prevented from homeless within 56 days moving into relief stage. Move-on options are also limited, and a review is underway to improve access into the private rented and social housing sectors.

Leisure Centres

- 28 Visitor numbers this quarter (812,455) are 17% (139,968) higher than quarter three and on par with the quarterly target of 814,219. Although anticipated as this is one of our busier periods; free swimming during February half term, the return of large events such as dance and gymnastic competitions at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre and the temporary closure of Darlington Dolphin Centre have also contributed.

2.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Gym & Swim Members

- 29 Despite leisure centre visitor numbers increasing this quarter, both gym and swim memberships failed to hit target, with 17,787 (-17%, -3,084) and 1,590 (-5%, -75), respectively. It is proving difficult to hit targets given the financial climate and increased competition from private sector gym providers across the county. Continued transformation works at Abbey Leisure Centre, Peterlee and Seaham have also had an impact on memberships.
- 30 The key performance challenge going forward is to reduce membership churn by minimising cancellations. Simpler pricing structures and amplified marketing campaigns will be implemented to support this.

2.3 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

Rough Sleepers / Vulnerable People Initiatives

- 31 County Durham Lettings Agency (CDLA) has now purchased and repaired 70 properties, 28 of which were in 2022/23. These will be used for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping / homelessness. Those excluded from Durham Key Options (DKO) register are the primary group housed, allowing them to show changes in behaviours to be able to submit successful appeals. In 2022/23 CDLA has supported 10 successful DKO appeals and successfully moved 17 into DKO properties which is higher than anticipated as we were successful in appealing and moving on a number of longer term tenants.
- 32 Work to convert Shildon People's Centre into four self-contained flats, which is aimed at rough sleepers and/or those at risk of homelessness local to the Shildon area, is now complete and tenanted.

- 33 Since commencement of the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AEFO) scheme in August 2021, 86 private rented sector tenancies have been secured, 36 above target (50). Of this, 77% of tenancies have been sustained. AEFO for 2023-25 has now commenced and two additional officers will be recruited.

3.0 Our Communities

3.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Housing Delivery

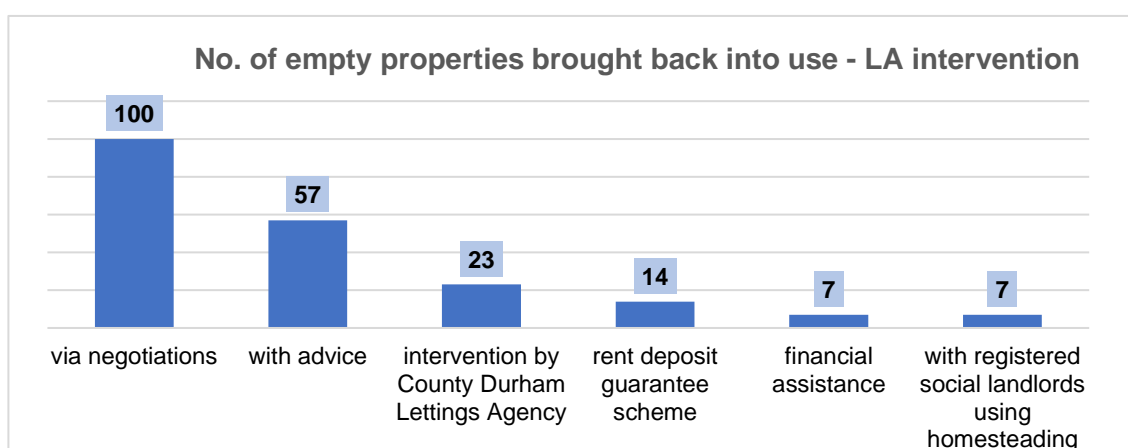
- 34 1,250 net homes have been completed during 2022/23. Although 5% (-58) below target of 1,308, a number of large sites have just completed and yet to be recorded. There was also an unusually high number of demolitions in quarter three of this year. A number of large new sites have recently commenced with completions expected in the first six months of 2023/24.

Housing of Ukrainian refugees

- 35 As part of the national 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme, 507 of the 606 people who had established contact with our residents have arrived in County Durham. Links were made with 299 sponsors and to date 235 sponsors have had guests arrive.

Empty properties

- 36 During 2022/23, 208 empty properties were brought back into use as a result of local authority intervention, exceeding the annual target of 200.



Selective Licensing Scheme

- 37 The scheme was launched in April, and to date, 8,226 (28%) of the 29,000 (approx.) eligible private sector properties are now fully licensed. Applications have been received and are being processed for a further 1,527 properties. Work is underway to

compare 2021 census data against the 2020 modelling data, areas of low compliance will be targeted by the enforcement team.

Businesses supported and jobs created through regeneration projects

- 38 During 2022/23, we engaged with 245 new retail businesses, 166 FTE jobs were created through projects (above target 94), and 95 businesses were supported, above target (58):
- 57 by Towns & Villages Programme
 - 19 businesses were supported by Targeted Business Improvement funding
 - 8 via Property Reuse Scheme
 - 6 from Conservation Area Grant Scheme
 - 5 via Seaham Townscape Heritage Programme.
- 39 Over the last 12 months, by supporting businesses through the Property Reuse Scheme, 1,690m² of business space was brought back into use in Bishop Auckland as part of Future Highstreet Fund. As a result of interest free loans and targeted business improvement grant support, 24 problem commercial and vacant properties were reinstated into productive use.

3.2 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

ASB in Selective Licensing Areas (in effect from 1 April 2022)

- 40 The rate of anti-social behaviour incidents (per 10,000 population) within selective licensing designated areas¹⁰ was 170 for the period October to December 2022. This is 32% below the target of 224 incidents; and is 67% lower (-114 incidents) than the previous reporting period (July-September 2022). The main reason for the decrease is a reclassification of some police reported ASB incidents to crimes. We are reviewing the baseline position to agree a solution for comparable back data.

Council Homes Programme

- 41 The Council Homes Programme remains on hold following the capital review. We are reviewing the financial model as rising inflation is impacting construction costs, and increased interest rates have impacted the financial model due to increased borrowing costs. Additionally, the allocated sites present viability challenges owing to their scale and topography that introduces additional costs. An updated business case, including an updated financial model, is scheduled to go to Cabinet in July, where it will be recommended to recommence the programme.

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 overall reports of ASB contain some housing association data.

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	S	Performance is the same as national or north east	↓	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 (2020)	Tracker -	£46,036 ✓	£46,245 ○	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	No
Increase the employment rate for 16-64-year-olds in line with national levels by 2035 <i>Confidence intervals +/-3.2pp</i>	72.2% (Jan 22-Dec 22)	Tracker -	71.1% ✓	71.1% ✓	S	S	→	→	→	→	Yes
Increase the overall disability employment rate / close the gap <i>Confidence intervals +/-6.9pp</i>	41.9% (Jan 22-Dec 22)	Tracker -	48.5% ✓	47.4% ✓	x	S	→	→	→	→	Yes
FTE jobs created through regeneration schemes	26 (Jan – Mar 23)	39 x	-	-	-	-	n/a	↑	↓	↓	Yes
No. of registrations to employability programmes	226 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	159 ✓	256 x	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↓	Yes
No. of participants on employability programmes progressed into employment / education or training	112 (Oct-Dec 22)	Tracker -	108 ✓	92 ✓	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↓	Yes
Increase the proportion of residents with higher level skills in line with national levels by 2035	32.4% (2021)	Tracker -	31.6% ✓	31.6% ✓			→	↓	↑	→	No
Narrow the gap between no. of private sector employments per 10,000 pop'n within County Durham and England	2,877 (2021)	Tracker -	2,651 ✓	2,651 ✓	x	x	↓	↑	↓	↑	No
Narrow the gap between no. of private sector business per 10,000 pop'n within County Durham and England	274 (2022)	Tracker -	271 ✓	263 ✓			→	↑	↑	↑	No
Gross jobs created / safeguarded as a result of Business Durham activity	647 (Jan-Mar 23)	375 ✓	1,269 x	1,001 x	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↑	Yes
No. of businesses supported by Business Durham (engagements)	261 (Jan-Mar 23)	250 ✓	571 x	204 ✓	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↑	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					
Page 142 % of Business Durham floor space that is occupied	90.07%	85%	98.5%	86.4%	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
	(Jan-Mar 23)	✓	x	✓							
No. of new businesses supported by CED Team	85	30	67	41	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes
	(Jan-Mar 23)	✓	✓	✓							
No. of inward investments secured	7	6	7	4	-	-	→	→	↑	↑	Yes
	(Jan-Mar 23)	✓	○	✓							
Amount of investments secured for companies	£915,409	£1,250,000	£3,584,705	-	-	-	↓	↓	↑	↓	Yes
	(Jan-Mar 23)	x	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	75	Tracker	87	75	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↓	Yes
	(March 23)	-	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)	✓	✓	✓							
Increase the proportion of visitor attractions which are served by public transport (against 2019 baseline)	67%	Tracker	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	Yes
	(Dec 2022)	-									
No of tourism businesses actively engaged with Visit County Durham	230	Tracker	236	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
	(2022)	-	x								

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 people attending cultural events / programme events	96,745 (2022)	Tracker -	185,132 ² x	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	↓	Yes
No. of people attending council owned cultural venues (Killhope, DLI & town halls)	35,231 (Jan-Mar 23)	Tracker -	-	-	-	-	new PI	↓	↓	↓	Yes
Average number of tickets sold per cinema and theatre screening/performance during the quarter	61 (Jan-Mar 23)	TBC	56 ✓	74 x	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↓	Yes
No. of library members ¹¹	215,398 (Apr-Jun 22)	Tracker -	229,793 x	233,904 x	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	No
Number of council owned/managed heritage assets classed as 'at risk'	3 (2022)	Tracker -	3 ○	2 x	-	-	→	→	↓	→	No
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 ✓	-	-	→	→	↑	↑	No
No. of households receiving energy advice from Managing Money Better (MMB) Initiative	70 (Jan-Mar 23)	Tracker -	154 x	209 x	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes

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					
No. of people attending Leisure Centres	812,455 (Jan-Mar 23)	814,219 ○	812,154 ○	814,219 ○	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	Yes

Page 143

¹¹ PI on hold

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 gym & swim members	19,377 (Jan-Mar 23)	22,387 x	18,784 ✓	18,013 ✓	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
No. of Care Connect customers	11,021 (Jan-Mar 23)	Tracker -	11,315 x	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	0 (Jan-Mar 23)	TBC	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	↓	→	↓	Yes
No. of Chapter Homes houses built which meet M4(2) standard	0 (Jan-Mar 23)	TBC	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	↓	→	↓	Yes
No. of Council houses built which are for Older Persons ¹²	0 (Oct-Dec 22)	TBC	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	↓	→	No
No. of Council houses built which meet M4(2) standard ²⁶	0 (Oct-Dec 22)	TBC	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	↓	→	No
No. of households accessing the Housing Solutions Service	3,806 (Jan-Mar 23)	Tracker -	3,594 ✓	3,361 ✓	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
No. of households helped to stay in their home	1,141 (Jan-Mar 23)	Tracker -	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	↑	↑	↑	Yes
No. of households helped to move to alternative accommodation	226 (Jan-Mar 23)	Tracker -	239 x	243 x	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↑	Yes

¹² PI on hold

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						
No. of business supported through regeneration projects	19 (Jan-Mar 23)	20 ○	new PI	new PI	-	-	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 <i>(confidence intervals +/-4pp)</i>	73% (2022)	Tracker -	77% ✓	-	-	-	→	→	→			No
Maintain levels of satisfaction with bus operators at a minimum of 92% <i>(confidence intervals +/-4pp)</i>	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
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	3.7% (2022)	Tracker -	3.0% ✓	3.0% ✓			↓	↑	↑	↑		Yes
% of B roads where maintenance is recommended	3.3% (2022)	Tracker -	3.1% ✓	3.3% ○			↓	→	↓	↓		Yes
% of C roads where maintenance is recommended	3.5% (2022)	Tracker -	2.3% ✓	2.3% ✓			↓	→	↓	↑		Yes
% of unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended	25.0% (2022)	Tracker -	22.8% ✓	21.3% ✓			→	↑	↑	↑		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					
Bridge Stock Condition – Principal Roads	82.0% (2020)	Tracker -	81.1% ✓	81.1% ✓	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	No
% of recorded Category 1 highway defects repaired within 24 hours	88% (Jan-Mar 22)	90% x	98% x	98% x	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	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. (confidence intervals +/-4pp)	47% (2022)	Tracker -	50% ✓	46% ✓	-	-	-	→	→	→	No
No. of people KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of fatalities	6 (Jan-Mar 23)	Tracker -	4 x	5 x	-	-	→	→	→	↑	Yes
No. of people KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of seriously injured	26 (Jan-Mar 23)	Tracker -	51 ✓	41 ✓	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↓	Yes
No. of children KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of fatalities	0 (Jan-Mar 23)	Tracker -	1 ✓	0 ○	-	-	↓	→	→	→	Yes
No. of children KSI in road traffic accidents - No. of seriously injured	2 (Jan-Mar 23)	Tracker -	7 ✓	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 ¹³	0 (Oct-Dec 22)	TBC	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	↓	→	No

¹³ PI on hold

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 Chapter Homes properties sold	8 (Jan-March 23)	Tracker -	5 ✓	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↓	Yes
Increase net delivery of new housing by 19,620 units by 2035	202 (Jan-Mar 23)	327 x	353 x	431 x	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes
Bring 200 empty homes back into use per year as a result of local authority intervention	31 (Jan-Mar 23)	50 x	37 x	48 x	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes
Achieve 100% licensing of private rented sector properties covered by the Selective Licensing Scheme by 2027	28% (Jan-Mar 23)	Tracker -	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
No. of fully licensed private rented sector properties in the selective licensed areas	8,226 (Jan-Mar)	Tracker -	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
Reduce ASB rates (per 10,000 population) within the Selective Licensing Scheme areas by 10% (against the 2021 baseline)	170 (Oct-Dec 22)	224.27 x	249.19 x	new PI	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes

This page is intentionally left blank

**Economy and Enterprise
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



3 July 2023

**Refresh of the Work Programme
2023/24 for Economy and
Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (E&E OSC) with an updated draft work programme for 2023/24.

Executive summary

- 2 E&E OSC review their work programme each year to reflect the objectives and associated outcomes and actions identified within the Council Plan and in the context of the County Durham Vision 2035.
- 3 The proposed E&E OSC work programme has been framed around the shared County Durham Vision 2035 based on the three strategic ambitions of 'more and better jobs', 'long and independent lives' and 'connected communities'.
- 4 Overview and Scrutiny work programmes are designed to be flexible to accommodate items which may arise throughout the year. This flexibility is particularly important as we have an extensive work programme and we must ensure we are able to accommodate issues that may arise during the term of the work programme.

Recommendations

- 5 The E&E OSC is recommended to:

- a) Receive and comment on the proposed draft work programme for 2023/24 (copy attached at appendix 2).
- b) Agree the E&E OSC work programme for 2023/24 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues.
- c) Consider identifying a topic for future light touch review activity.

Background

- 6 Scrutiny Committees adapted to the change during the pandemic and some of these adaptations have become a part of business as usual for the committee such as briefing reports being used to provide information to members of the committee and the more recent addition of informal information sessions. The E&E OSC work programme is refreshed annually and takes into consideration the priorities of the Committee and areas identified by the service.
- 7 The current overview and scrutiny committees work programmes are informed by:
 - County Durham Vision 2035
 - Council Plan
 - Cabinet's Notice of Key Decisions
 - Partnership plans and strategies
 - Performance and budgetary control data
 - Changes in government legislation
 - Key questions for improving performance
 - Local priorities.
- 8 The County Durham Partnership agreed a Vision for County Durham 2035 which sets out strategic direction and what we would like to achieve over the next 15 years and is written around three broad ambitions for the people of County Durham.
 - More and better jobs
 - People live long and independent lives
 - Connected communities
- 9 Each ambition contains a number of objectives together with some council specific objectives. The Council Plan is structured around five objectives which capture the three ambitions:
 - Our Economy
 - Our People
 - Our Communities

- Our Environment
- Our Council

Council Plan 2023/24-2026/27

- 10 The Council Plan is the primary corporate planning document for the County Council and details Durham County Council's contribution towards achieving the objectives set out in the Vision for County Durham 2035 together with its own change agenda. It aims to provide a readable and accessible summary for members, partners and the public of our priorities for the county and the main programmes of work that we will undertake over the coming three years to help achieve these priorities.
- 11 Both the Vision for County Durham and the Council Plan are structured around the three ambitions which are mentioned above and below are the relevant objectives which apply to the E&E OSC.

More and Better Jobs

- Delivery of a range of accessible employment sites across the County
- A strong, competitive economy where County Durham is a premier place in the North East to do business
- A broader experience for residents and visitors to the county
- Young people will have access to good quality education, training and employment
- Helping all people into rewarding work
- Fewer people will be affected by poverty and deprivation in the county

Connected Communities

- People will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities
- Standards will be maintained or improved across County Durham's housing stock
- Delivery of new high-quality housing which is accessible and meets the needs and aspirations of our residents

- d) Our town and village will be vibrant, well-used, clean, attractive and safe
- 12 The Council Plan has been structured around five objectives: Our Economy; Our People; Our Communities; Our Environment and Our Council. The key Council Plan objectives for E&E OSC is Our Economy and Our Communities.

Current Work Programme

- 13 During 2022/23 the E&E OSC prioritised items to be considered at formal meetings of the committee due to the size of the work programme. Reports on other items were circulated via email to members. The committee has undertaken budgetary and performance monitoring, responded to consultations, hosted an informal information session, questioned the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders and considered overview and progress monitoring reports and presentations in relation to the following:
- **Consultations**
 - Draft Inclusive Economic Strategy
 - **Areas of overview and monitoring activity**
 - Inclusive Economic Strategy – Econ-versation Feedback
 - County Durham Employment Land and Strategic sites Update
 - Questioned relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders
 - Skills Delivery and supporting the Inclusive Economic Strategy
 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund and County Durham’s UKSPF Investment Plan
 - Regeneration of Towns and Villages
 - Business Support
 - Inclusive Economic Strategy Delivery Plan – Update development of plan and role of County Durham Economic Partnership
 - Housing update covering:
 - DCC’s housing function and how it engages with Registered providers.
 - Update on the progress of the Selective Licensing Scheme
 - An update on progress and approach to tackling empty homes

- **Budgetary and performance monitoring:**

- Quarterly budgetary monitoring for the Regeneration, Economy and Growth Service Grouping.
- Quarterly corporate performance monitoring for the Regeneration, Economy and Growth Service Grouping.

14 In addition, the E&E OSC has also considered the following areas which cut across objectives in the Council Plan or cut across the remit of other Overview and Scrutiny Committees including:

- County Durham Visitor Economy
- Regional and local transport policy and delivery
- Empty Homes
- Empty properties
- Fuel Poverty

Areas for Consideration in the E&E OSC Work Programme

15 Members of the E&E OSC are asked to agree the proposed work programme for 2023/24 that has been prepared and is attached at appendix 2. The work programme is very comprehensive drawing on topical areas across the remit of the committee and it should be noted that it is also flexible.

16 Paragraphs 13 and 14 of the report identifies the activity undertaken by the committee during 2022/23. The committee is asked to consider areas for inclusion in the work programme for 2023/24 in light of the current Council Plan and the Vision for County Durham 2035. Appendix 2 of this report sets out a draft work programme for consideration.

17 Members are encouraged to consider identifying areas of scrutiny investigation (for light touch review) from the work programme.

Conclusion

18 The work programme identifies areas of work that fall within the remit of E&E OSC and is flexible in its delivery.

Background papers

- [Council Plan](#)
- [County Durham Vision 2035](#)

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Climate Change

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

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

Procurement

Not applicable

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 2

<p>Overview and Scrutiny Draft Work Programme 2023/24</p> <p>Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Lead Officer: Stephen Gwilym</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Officer: Diane Close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and Better Jobs • Connected Communities 	<p>Note:</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Review – A systematic six-monthly review of progress against recommendations/action plan</p> <p>Scrutiny/Working Group – In-depth review/light touch review</p> <p>Overview/progress – Information on an issue; opportunity to comment, shape, influence, progress with a scrutiny review</p> <p>Informal Information Sessions - Presentation via Teams on areas that fall within the remit of the committee</p> <p>Briefing Reports – Reports for information on areas within the remit of the work programme</p> <p>Performance/Budget – Ongoing quarterly monitoring performance reports/budgets</p>
--	---

Item	When	How Considered	Who	Outcome	Comment
O/S Review		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to E&E • Informal Information Sessions • Briefing report to E&E Members via email 			
Scrutiny/Working Group (light touch/in-depth review)					

Item	When	How Considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to E&E • Informal Information Sessions • Briefing report to E&E Members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
To be confirmed	TBC	To be discussed at committee on 3 July 2023			
Overview/Progress					
Housing Strategy	10 July 2023	Workshop hosted by E&E OSC for all O&S members	Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG) Mike Kelleher Head of Planning and Housing (REG) Mike Allum Spatial Policy Manager (REG)	Members will undertake focused group work in relation to the 'Principles and Priorities Paper' which will be used to develop the draft housing strategy. The comments made by members during the workshop will be formulated into an Overview and Scrutiny response which will be used to inform the	The Committee will have hosted a workshop with the resulting response used to inform the development of the Housing Strategy.

Item	When	How Considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to E&E Informal Information Sessions Briefing report to E&E Members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
	Date TBC	Draft Strategy to E&E OSC		development of the draft Housing Strategy.	The committee will then consider during the formal consultation period the draft Housing Strategy for further comment.
Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) – emerging draft plan	20 July 2023	E&E OSC workshop	Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG) Andy Kerr Head of Economic Development (REG) Claire Williams	Members will have the opportunity to comment on and inform the development of the emerging draft delivery plan.	The Committee will have commented on the emerging draft delivery plan with those comments used to develop the resulting draft IES Delivery Plan which will be considered by members at the E&E OSC on the 18 September.

Item	When	How Considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to E&E • Informal Information Sessions • Briefing report to E&E Members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
	<p>E&E OSC 18 September 2023</p> <p>Special E&E OSC Date TBC May/June 2024</p>	<p>Report to E&E OSC with draft IES Delivery Plan</p> <p>Report to E&E OSC together with Delivery Plan</p>	<p>Funding and Programmes Manager (REG)</p>	<p>Members will consider the draft IES Delivery Plan and provide final comments before the plan is considered by Cabinet in November.</p> <p>Members will receive detail of progress made in relation to the implementation of the IES Delivery Plan.</p>	<p>Members will have the opportunity to comment on the draft Delivery Plan with those comments used to develop the Delivery Plan for consideration by Cabinet.</p> <p>The committee will continue to monitor the progress in delivery of the actions in the IES Delivery Plan.</p>

Item	When	How Considered	Who	Outcome	Comment
Selective Licensing Scheme	September 2023 Date TBC	Informal Information session (Invite to members of the ESC OSC and the S&S OSC)	Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG) Michael Kelleher Head of Planning and Housing (REG) John Kelly Housing Manager (REG) Alan Hunter Housing Manager (REG)	The Committee will receive further detail on the progress of the scheme including detail of the number of properties fully licenced by the scheme, the resourcing of the scheme including staffing levels to carry out inspections and enforcement action, the advertising of the scheme and work undertaken to reduce anti-social behaviour.	Members will be aware of how the scheme is progressing with a further update to members scheduled later in the work programme.
	April 2024 Date TBC	Report to E&E OSC		Members will receive a further progress update on the scheme including detail of number of properties fully licenced,	The Committee will continue to monitor the progress of the scheme.

Item	When	How Considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to E&E • Informal Information Sessions • Briefing report to E&E Members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
				number in the system, inspections, and enforcement.	
Council New Homes Building Programme	February/March 2024 Date TBC	Report to E&E OSC	Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG) Michael Kelleher Head of Planning and Housing (REG)	Members will receive information on the proposals for the Council's New Homes Building Programme.	The Committee will be aware of the proposals for the Council's New Homes Building Programme.
Review of Durham Key Options	February 2024 Date TBC	Informal information session (Invite to all O&S members)	Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG) Michael Kelleher Head of Planning and Housing (REG)	The Committee will be aware of and have the opportunity to comment the proposed changes to the Choice Based Lettings system.	Members will be aware of the process for the review of the Choice Based Lettings System and will have had an opportunity to comment on the proposed changes.

Item	When	How Considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to E&E • Informal Information Sessions • Briefing report to E&E Members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Masterplans	Date TBC	Report to E&E OSC	<p>Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG)</p> <p>Michael Kelleher Head of Planning and Housing (REG)</p> <p>Mike Allum Spatial Policy Manager (REG)</p>	The Committee will receive an overview of the development of the Masterplan programme across the county including detail of how the respective plans align with the Towns and Villages Programme and the engagement of members in the process.	Members will be aware of the progress of the Masterplan programme across the county.
Funding	Date TBC	Report to E&E OSC	<p>Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG)</p> <p>Andy Kerr Head of Economic Development (REG)</p>	Members will receive detail of further funding via the UKSPF and progress in relation to County Durham UKSPF Investment Plan and delivery of the available funds.	Members will be aware of current funding, the application of the County Durham Investment Plan and the delivery of funding in the county.

Item	When	How Considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to E&E • Informal Information Sessions • Briefing report to E&E Members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
			Claire Williams Funding and Programmes Manager (REG)		
Strategic Sites within the county	Date TBC	Report to E&E OSC	Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG) Andy Kerr Head of Economic Development (REG) Sarah Slaven Managing Director of Business Durham (REG)	Members will receive detail of the progress made in relation to the development of strategic sites within the county. In addition, detail will be provided of land identified for future development and how DCC is encouraging investment/development in the county.	The Committee will be aware of the further development of strategic sites throughout the county and will scrutinise land available for future development and the approach used by DCC to encourage investment/development in the county.
Skills development in County Durham	Date TBC	Report to E&E OSC	Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG)	The Committee will be made aware of work undertaken by DCC in	Members of the committee will be aware of the work undertaken

Item	When	How Considered	Who	Outcome	Comment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to E&E • Informal Information Sessions • Briefing report to E&E Members via email 	<p>Andy Kerr Head of Economic Development (REG)</p> <p>Graham Wood Economic Development Manager (REG)</p>	<p>working with Partners in the county to ensure that skills training in the county meets the requirements of employers and in relation to identified skill gaps.</p>	<p>by DCC working in partnership to develop training which meets the need of local employers including in relation to identified skill gaps.</p>
Transport Management	<p>Joint Special meeting with ESC OSC members</p> <p>Date TBC</p>	Report to E&E OSC and ESC OSC	<p>Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG)</p> <p>Mark Jackson Head of Transport and Contract Services (REG)</p>	<p>Members will receive information on the progress of various plans and strategies regionally and locally including progress with the BSIP, detail of public transport provision locally, plans to reduce car usage, the impact of the Devolution</p>	<p>The Committee will scrutinise transport management regionally and locally.</p>

Item	When	How Considered	Who	Outcome	Comment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to E&E • Informal Information Sessions • Briefing report to E&E Members via email 		Deal and the development of the ULEV charging network.	
Tourism and County Durham's Visitor Economy	<p>October 2023 Date TBC</p> <p>Joint Special meeting with ESC OSC members</p>	<p>Workshop jointly hosted by E&E OSC and ESC OSC for all O&S members</p> <p>Report to E&E OSC and ESC OSC</p>	<p>Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG)</p> <p>Alison Clark Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism (REG)</p> <p>Michelle Gorman Managing Director (VCD) (REG)</p>	<p>Members will undertake focused group work with colleagues from Visit County Durham looking at how the tourism offer is currently promoted providing an opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny members to put forward ideas on how the offer is promoted in the future.</p> <p>Members will consider the Destination Management Plan (DMP) for County</p>	<p>The Committee together with additional Overview and Scrutiny members will have the opportunity to contribute and influence the promotion of County Durham's tourism offer in the future.</p> <p>The Committee will be aware of what is included in the new Destination</p>

Item	When	How Considered	Who	Outcome	Comment
	<p>October 2023 Date TBC</p> <p>Joint special meeting with ESC OSC members (April/May) Date TBC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to E&E • Informal Information Sessions • Briefing report to E&E Members via email <p>Report to E&E OSC and ESC OSC</p>		<p>Durham and will have the opportunity to provide comment.</p> <p>Members will receive detail of ongoing work undertake to promote the tourism offer, how we are comparing in relation to visitor numbers, stays and contribution to the economy compared to other areas of the country, future performance targets and projects to develop the tourism offer.</p>	<p>Management Plan for County Durham.</p> <p>The Committee will be aware of changes/additions as to how we promote the tourism offer, current performance and future performance targets and projects to develop the tourism offer.</p>

Item	When	How Considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to E&E Informal Information Sessions Briefing report to E&E Members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Leisure Centre Transformation Programme	Special Joint Meeting with ESC OSC (Dec) TBC	Report to E&E OSC and ESC OSC	Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG) Alison Clark Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism (REG)	Members will receive a progress update on the Leisure Transformation Programme, having previously fed comments into the various consultation stages.	The Committee will continue to monitor the progress and development of this programme.
Performance/Budget					
Performance Quarterly reporting	Sept 2023 Dec 2023 April 2024	Report to E&E OSC	Gemma Wilkinson Strategy Team Leader (Resources)	To provide Members with progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework	Summary information to Members
Budget Outturn Report Quarterly reporting -	Sept 2023 Dec 2023 April 2024	Report to E&E OSC	Ed Thompson Finance Manager (Resources)	Detail of budget	Summary information to Members

Item	When	How Considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to E&E • Informal Information Sessions • Briefing report to E&E Members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
CDEP Minutes					
Minutes of the CDEP	TBC	Minutes to be circulated to members for information	Partnership Team	Members will be kept updated on the activity of the partnership	The Committee will be aware of activity undertaken by the partnership