



Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Monday 18 December 2023

Time 9.30 am

Venue Committee Room 1A/1B , 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 meeting held on 6 October, Special Joint meeting held on 3 November and meeting held on 6 November 2023 (Pages 3 - 32)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties, if any
6. Draft County Durham Housing Strategy
 - (i) Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 33 - 118)
 - (ii) Presentation by the Housing Development Manager (Pages 119 - 138)
7. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029
 - (i) Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 139 - 166)
 - (ii) Presentation by the Housing Manager (Pages 167 - 186)

8. Supported Housing Improvement Programme / Non-Commissioned Supported Accommodation
 - (i) Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 187 - 200)
 - (ii) Presentation by the Housing Team Leader (Pages 201 - 218)
9. Quarter Two Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 - Joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 219 - 230)
10. Quarter Two 2023/24 Performance Management Report - Report of the Chief Executive Officer (Pages 231 - 286)
11. Minutes from the County Durham Economic Partnership Board held on the 26 October 2023 (Pages 287 - 298)
12. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Bradley
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
8 December 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

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

**SPECIAL ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

At a Special Meeting of the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Committee Room 1A , County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 6 October 2023** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Moist (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors A Surtees (Vice-Chair), G Binney, R Crute, P Heaviside, G Hutchinson, C Lines, L Maddison, R Manchester, J Miller, R Ormerod, I Roberts, K Robson, M Stead and A Sterling

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris and Mr E Simons

Also Present

Councillor E Adam

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Reed and K Shaw.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

5 Inclusive Economic Strategy Delivery Plan

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and presentation which sought feedback on the draft

Inclusive Economic Strategy Delivery Plan and performance management framework to help shape the final Delivery Plan for consideration by Cabinet in November 2023 (for copy of report and presentation slides, see file of minutes).

The Head of Economic Development, Funding and Programmes Manager, Regeneration Policy Team Leader, Economic Development Manager and Vice-Chair of the County Durham Economic Partnership provided a detailed presentation focusing on the main elements of the Inclusive Economic Strategy Delivery Plan:-

- Development, Adoption and Implementation;
- IES Logic Chain;
- Delivery and Review;
- Thematic Working Groups;
- Development Timescales;
- Scrutiny Engagement;
- Delivery Framework: The 5 P's: People, Productivity, Places, Promotion and Planet;
- Delivery Plan Approach;
- Investment Plan;
- Performance Management Framework;
- Opportunities;
- Governance and Implementation;
- Next Steps.

The Head of Economic Development commenced the presentation by explaining the process for the development of the delivery plan highlighting that in relation to the IES this had been underpinned by evidence resulting from the economic review and the Big Econ-versation which included feedback from a number of stakeholder events. The IES had been adopted in December and following the adoption of this strategy the draft delivery plan had been developed together with a performance framework and the preparation of the investment plan. He continued that there was a need to recognise that DCC does not have control of all of the levers to deliver the plan and it required buy-in by other stakeholders/partners in the county. He commented on the need to ensure that the IES strategy was joined up with local, regional and national strategies and that there was a need for a long-term approach. He highlighted that there were actions within the plan to achieve the County Durham Vision.

In relation to the delivery plan, it was the County Durham Economic Partnership that would monitor and hold delivery plans to account. In addition, the plan was a live document that would be updated and would will be responsive to change, capturing the big items that DCC is to deliver over the next 2-3 years, including significant projects and new activities that fill a gap and leads to transformative action. The plan provided a long-term direction of travel that could be revised as necessary.

In relation to the development of the plan he highlighted the various stakeholders and partners who had been involved in the development of the delivery plan and the various thematic working groups. He confirmed that the thematic groups had met regularly between March and July to identify and assess current activities, assess any gaps in provision, identify solutions and transformative actions, develop a commitment with partners to implement the plans and identify activities that would have positive impacts on the 'Planet' including reducing energy use and carbon emissions with more than 40 external partners involved in this process. He highlighted that it was important to keep the momentum of partners to drive the plan forward.

He continued by highlighting Overview and Scrutiny's involvement in consideration and development of the strategy and in the development of the draft delivery plan with this meeting providing an opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny members to comment on the draft strategy before the delivery plan was considered by Cabinet in November 2023.

The Funding and Programmes Manager informed members as to how comments made, at the bespoke workshop held for members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July and focused on the initial draft delivery plan, had been taken forward in the draft delivery plan under the people and productivity and the places and promotion themes, resulting in identified related delivery plan activities within the plan. It was highlighted that in relation to the promotion theme a new Place brand was being developed for the county.

The Economic Development Manager then took members through a slide in relation to the People theme of the plan identifying actions/activities under key priorities of: increase in-work progression and upskilling; overcome barriers to employment with a view to aiding the progression of residents within the county; raise skills levels to meet our employment specialisms and needs of business. In relation to the needs of business this included building on existing programmes to be delivered at a community level and improved personal well-being and life chances, working with residents with poor mental health to engage them in the labour market and provide support to ensure that they stay in the labour market.

The Vice-Chair of the County Durham Economic Partnership Board continued in relation to the Productivity theme of the plan. She explained that the group had looked at how they could grow productivity, where are the opportunities and how do we capitalise on them, keeping the business we have and growing them. She highlighted the importance of the involvement of employers and employees as they had the knowledge on how best to run the business, what needs to be done and their ideas/thoughts need to be captured. She continued that the group had looked at the smaller businesses in the county, how they were supported as the county had three times more of this type of business than larger businesses and highlighted that money would need to be used differently to support this type of business.

The Head of Economic Development commented that in relation to the Place theme, the group responsible for developing this theme within the plan had included representatives from housing and community groups. He continued that there was a focus in the county on the Town and Villages Programme with a £25m spend. In addition, they were also looking at how they develop masterplans going forward.

In relation to the theme of Promotion, the Head of Economic Development identified various actions/activities under the key priorities in the plan of: develop a clear brand and place marketing about County Durham to engage and attract investors, business and visitors; enhance cultural and creative infrastructure; grow a year round visitor economy and attract more inward investment.

He then informed members that alongside the delivery plan an investment plan had been developed identifying funding gaps and where funding could come from either public or private funding and confirmed that the plan would be ready in March.

He then continued that a performance management framework had been developed around the IES under the themes of People, Productivity, Places, Promotion and Planet and confirmed that performance would be tracked.

The Regeneration Policy Team Leader then explained to members a slide showing a snapshot of County Durham's performance in relation to employment, unemployment and skills with regional and national comparisons and highlighted that long-term sickness was an issue in the county. He then explained a further slide providing a snapshot of inclusive growth at a parliamentary constituency level again looking at employment, unemployment and skills. The snapshot showed that East Durham was underperforming on all headline issues.

In relation to governance, he confirmed that the delivery plan would be going to Corporate Management Team on the 18 October 2023, the County Durham Economic Partnership Board on 26 October 2023 and to Cabinet on 15 November 2023. He continued that in relation to next steps, there would be delivery of actions, performance management updates, completion of the investment plan, live updates to the delivery plan and the establishment of a post to manage the delivery of the IES with a formal review and update of the delivery plan in 2025/26.

Councillor R Crute left the meeting at 9.55am.

Councillor R Ormerod was mindful of the wording in the document and felt that the document needed to reflect the importance of both higher and lower skilled jobs to ensure the right balance. The Head of Economic Development explained that the low-level jobs supported higher-level jobs and all skill levels were vital to the economy. He highlighted that the strategy focused on bridging the gaps in productivity to improve economic opportunities for all skill levels.

Responding to a query from Councillor A Sterling regarding the work undertaken by the Local LEP in relation to career support, the Economic Development Manager advised that the Gatsby benchmark was reflected in the plan and input from universities and colleges was an added element to reflect all age groups and ensure the system was robust.

Councillor C Lines was pleased to note the Delivery Plan was a live document and had the agility to respond to change which was extremely important. Going forward, he would be interested to see how well it worked and adapted to change. He highlighted the importance of 'Place Branding' and the amount of work that was required to gain support prior to launching the brand. He added that he would like to see how the brand had been developed and the plans for promotion. The Head of Economic Development advised that the Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism was the lead for 'Place Branding' and agreed that timing was important. Branding would have to be aligned, yet distinctive from the North East Devolution branding and capture what County Durham had to offer in terms of growth and inward investment. He added that the delivery process would be reviewed, and the live approach allows them to adapt and respond to change as and when it happened.

The Chair requested that Overview and Scrutiny Members have sight of the 'Place Branding' prior to the launch.

Councillor E Adam questioned the language used in terms of promoting the 'Durham Living Wage' to employers. He felt we should aim higher for residents in County Durham and suggested that the wording be changed to promote a Durham 'Decent Wage'. He referred to the Health and Wellbeing aspect and felt there was a need to ensure that the infrastructure was in place to support businesses and communities in terms of health care provision, GP surgeries and dentists. The Head of Economic Development confirmed the plan links in with other key strategies including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Housing Strategy which focused on individual actions. The Economic Strategy looks at how the economy can benefit from those key strategies and help to drive Health and Wellbeing within the economy. The Economic Development Manager added that the County Durham Plan included policies that provided funding to help support community growth and needs assessment development to link health opportunities with physical growth was shared with health partners and community organisations. Long term planning at community level would provide support to help reduce the challenges and pressures on health care services.

The Vice-Chair of the County Durham Economic Partnership Board agreed with the points raised in relation to the language used and referred to the assumption that better jobs would be higher level jobs and higher wages. She highlighted the different perceptions and felt that better jobs would be a balance of the right mix of jobs for the labour market.

Mrs R Morris referred to the 'Ambitions' column in the plan and felt that it would be better to have specific targets to monitor progress particularly in relation to the Planet theme as this would provide clarity for both the reader and user. In addition, she suggested that a review be undertaken annually and queried why the investment plan was a separate document and not part of the delivery plan. The Head of Economic Development explained that the delivery plan and investment plan worked to a slightly different timescale which would be made clearer going forward and clarified that statistics and measures would be reviewed annually and early warning systems and monitoring would be built into the plan. The Funding and Programmes Manager added that for every action identified in the plan there was justification as to why it was included and the rationale on what was expected to be achieved. She clarified that moving forward there would be more specific outcomes and confirmed that the format of the plan was a 'work in progress'.

Councillor J Miller referred to the assessment of sustainable travel routes and public transport connectivity between the county's main settlements and employment sites, and asked for clarification on the definition of sustainable travel routes and main settlements. He was concerned that further bus services could be removed if the number of passengers using the service was low. He highlighted that these services, especially in rural areas needed to be maintained as they were vital for people who relied on public transport to travel to work and attend hospital appointments. The Head of Economic Development advised that he would feedback these comments and concerns to the Head of Transport and Contract Services.

Councillor L Maddison referred to the 'People' aspect of the plan and the assumption that people would engage in various upskilling opportunities. She queried whether there were plans or provision in place to support those who would not engage. She added that provision was also required to provide support for existing businesses to develop and grow within their local community and not have to move outside the area because they were unable to extend existing premises. The Head of Economic Development advised that local plans identified land for growth and Durham County Council worked with business owners to identify future expansion needs and would intervene if the market was not delivering what businesses required. He added that a holistic approach was taken in relation to business support looking at the needs of business and growth plans and provide wraparound support to capture those needs. The Economic Development Manager acknowledged the challenges in engaging young people and noted the statutory responsibility up to the age of 18 years. He confirmed that Durham County Council work with partners to identify barriers, promote and encourage engagement so young people were aware of opportunities and had the ability to access wraparound support to help build confidence and employment skills.

Councillor A Surtees referred to the snapshot information and highlighted that it reflected performance of six parliamentary constituencies and suggested the plan be updated or additional information be provided alongside the plan to reflect the move to five parliamentary constituencies. She requested that real time figures be

used in relation to the Inclusive Growth Scorecard as Easington figures were disproportionate when the percentage method was used. In addition, she commented that the plan needed to reflect whether jobs were full time or part time, highlighted the need for the County Durham pound to be one of indicators within the plan and queried the work that had been undertaken with employers to help remove barriers in relation to childcare, shift patterns and transport issues. The Head of Economic Development advised that current data was a challenge and there would be a transition period in relation to parliamentary constituency changes where both boundaries would be mapped and referenced in future reports. In terms of childcare barriers, he agreed there were challenges and confirmed work was being done to tackle childcare barriers and added that jobs that accommodated childcare provision and people's circumstances was vital in providing security and was a key factor in providing 'better jobs'. The Economic Development Manager confirmed that some employers within the county were tackling issues in relation to the provision of childcare.

The Chair requested that final plan presented to Cabinet in November clearly identify officers and lead partners who were responsible for delivering actions within the plan and who had overall responsibility and accountability for the plan delivery. He asked for timescales in relation to Overview and Scrutiny Members having sight of the 'Place Branding' and when the plan would be available. Referring to allocated funding of £1.8m to provide advice to businesses and suggested that this funding should be used to provide a range of support to the business sector. He queried which areas had been selected for specific regeneration plans. He concluded by highlighting the need for specific targets within the plan to monitor performance going forward.

The Head of Economic Development confirmed that the lead partners were identified in the plan and would be responsible for taking actions forward. It was noted that Appendix 2 of the report provided Members with the draft plan that would be presented to Cabinet in November 2024 with the addition of minor tweaks.

Councillor A Surtees asked that employers be encouraged to self-recruit in future, rather than use recruitment agencies which would provide more opportunities for individuals.

Resolved:

That the comments made by Members during the meeting be captured and formulated into an Overview and Scrutiny response, which would be shared with the Service Grouping to further develop the final Inclusive Economic Strategy Delivery Plan.

6 Any Other Business

The Chair reminded Members that an informal information session had been arranged on the 30 October 2023 to discuss the Selective Licensing Scheme. In

addition, there was also a special meeting on the 3 November where Visit County Durham would present the Destination Management Plan, followed by a workshop where Members would work with colleagues from Visit County Durham and provide suggestions on promoting the Tourism offer in County Durham.

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

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

At a Special Joint Meeting of the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Committee Room 1A , County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 3 November 2023** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Moist (Chair)

Members of the Joint Committee:

Councillors G Binney, B Coult, R Crute, J Elmer, P Heaviside, G Hutchinson, C Lines, R Manchester, I Roberts, K Robson, K Shaw, A Simpson and D Sutton-Lloyd

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris and Mr P Walton

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Adam, L Brown, M Currah, D Nicholls, D Oliver, A Reed, M Stead and S Townsend.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

5 Overview of County Durham's Visitor Economy

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth and presentation which set out the purpose and process of the draft Destination Management Plan 2023-2030 (DMP) and sought feedback and endorsement from Economy and Enterprise, and Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees (for copy of report, draft DMP and presentation slides, see file of minutes).

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy provided a detailed presentation that focused on:-

- Refresh and timing of the Destination Management Plan 2016-2020;
- Development of the draft plan and consultation undertaken;
- Five priority pillars used to build the plan;
- Visitor focused outcomes;
- Commitment to Sustainability;
- Logic model used in the development of the plan;
- Inclusive Economic Strategy Delivery Plan and the Destination Management Plan aims and objectives;
- Global Destination Sustainability Index 2023;
- Future monitoring and evaluation plan.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy provided details of the DMP and explained that the plan was the equivalent to a strategy and action plan for sustainable tourism development in a destination and was a shared statement of intent to manage the visitor economy in the county for 2023-2030. The plan articulated the roles of the different stakeholders and identified clear actions to take with the apportionment resources. County Durham has had a DMP since 2006 which was compiled by Visit County Durham (VCD) in collaboration with the county's tourism industry and a broad range of stakeholders and partners at national and local level. The plan was a blueprint for the growth and development of the visitor economy in the county.

The policy context and strategic framework for the DMP was set at the national level by Government, VisitEngland, VisitBritain and regionally via the pilot Destination Development Partnership and North East Devolution Deal. At a local level, the plan was aligned with the County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy and County Durham Plan and was monitored by the Visit County Durham Board and reviewed annually and refreshed as needed in collaboration with key stakeholders and partners.

The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy highlighted that it was appropriate for the plan to be refreshed as the political, funding and stakeholder environment had changed, some of the ambitions in the 2016 plan had been

realised, stakeholders had changed and more were now supporting the visitor economy and the national framework had been refreshed.

Members were informed that the plan had been developed using the VERB model (Visitor, Environment, Resident and Business) and that the process to refresh the plan had engaged a wide range of partners and stakeholders including one to one sessions and working group events. To ensure that residents voices were included within the refresh process surveys were used including the Big Econ-versation. In addition, the draft DMP reflected the 8 priorities from the 2016-2020 DMP including: lengthen the amount of time that visitors spend in the county; improve the quality of the visitor experience post arrival; differentiate Durham for external audiences; attract new staying visitors; retain existing visitors; address seasonality, develop new product and support existing products strengths and improve SME and micro business performance. It was also confirmed that an extensive document review was undertaken to ensure that the draft plan aligned with the aims and objectives of various key documents and strategies such as the Inclusive Economic Strategy.

The Strategic Manager for Tourism and the Visitor Economy confirmed that the draft plan had been built on five key pillars or direct outcomes so that County Durham: provides an end-to end experience which is high quality, welcoming and inclusive; is better promoted with a compelling narrative for external audiences; offers extended season products and experiences; offers eye-catching authentic product that meets the needs of consumers and businesses are supported to develop performance, resilience and profit.

In relation to the approach undertaken in developing the draft plan, Members were informed that this included a logic model to articulate the logic that underpins the intervention: how the proposed inputs and activities and outputs will lead to the intended stakeholder benefits with target outcomes derived from the consultation exercises and the previous 8 priorities from the 2016-2020 plan.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy highlighted that in developing the draft plan it was recognised that a visitor may be a local or regional resident, travelling from another part of the UK or an international traveller therefore the outcomes are visitor focused with the intermediate outcomes focusing on: Visitor retention, visitor attraction and visitor acquisition.

In relation to sustainability, the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy confirmed that a commitment to sustainability now comes as standard for all places that wish to attract tourism. It was confirmed that sustainability influences everything we do currently, working with partners to ensure that assets are managed correctly, supporting and promoting responsible transport and travel choices, promoting authentic products and services, supporting local talent; supporting entrepreneurship and involving communities in decision making and delivery.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy confirmed that work had been undertaken with DCC's Sustainability and Climate Change officer and the Low Carbon Economy Team on an appraisal of the 2016-2020 DMP and the recommendations from the appraisal report have been used to develop the draft plan. In addition, as part of the government's Destination Development Partnership Pilot the Global Destination Sustainability Movement (GDS Movement) were commissioned to support the region with a strategy for sustainable development. As part of this work the regions larger destinations are participating in the global Destination Sustainability Index with Durham, Newcastle/Gateshead signing up for three years for 2023 with Sunderland joining next year. The GDS movement works with 100 plus municipalities, national and regional destination management organisations and convention bureaux to create tourism and event strategies, benchmark and improve sustainability performance. It was confirmed that Durham had participated in the benchmarking index for the first time this year with an overall score of 42% across the four categories and a full report had been received that identifies where we are performing well and where we need to improve with work already being undertaken with partners and businesses to improve the score for 2024.

Concerning monitoring and evaluation, the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy confirmed that VCD has an established system to monitor tourism performance indicators and that the plan once approved would be monitored by VCD Board in collaboration with key partners and stakeholders. An annual evaluation of the plan will be undertaken to review the progress against the objectives with adjustments undertaken based on feedback and data. In addition, as part of VCD's national recognition and accreditation as a local visitor Economy partnership progress will be monitored through Visit England's Growth Plan process. It was confirmed that work is being undertaken to develop a measure for environmental sustainability.

Mrs Morris referred to the structure and development of the draft plan and questioned whether there was a need for eight groups to be involved and whether they were effective. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that the groups were necessary and an important part of the role as a destination management organisation was to ensure that VCD was a convenor of different elements that made up the visitor economy. She added that designated members of the team focused on collaboration with regional groups and engagement with business partnerships.

Responding to a further query from Mrs Morris regarding devolution, the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy confirmed that the number of groups would decrease and would be absorbed into the Combined Authority.

It was noted that Councillor L Brown was unable to attend the meeting, however Councillor L Brown had requested that Councillor B Coult raise suggestions on her behalf. Councillor L Brown suggested there was a need for a Tourism Information

Centre in Durham City, and to capitalise on the success of films and TV shows that showcase the county. She also suggested the Cathedral bus service be extended to include other major tourism and visitor attractions within Durham City including The Story, DLI, the Oriental Museum, Crook Hall and gardens and Ushaw College.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy responded that County Durham Tourism Information Centres underwent a comprehensive review in 2011 and it found that less than 3% of visitors to the county had meaningful interaction with the centres and they were costly to run. It was decided to modernise visitor information provision and established an award winning information network with digital and face to face provisions located at eighteen points around the county in key locations which would be supported by VCD.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy confirmed that the team were exploring options for a tourist bus around the city and other attractions linking the city with rural areas of the county. In relation to capitalising on films and TV programmes showcasing the county, it was confirmed that VCD promoted the county link to Harry Potter films on the VCD and Visit England and Visit Britain websites and the team worked with Durham Cathedral to promote their Harry Potter experience. In addition, the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that Durham County Council had signed an agreement to develop film tourism within the county.

Councillor B Coult was pleased to see that VCD had signed up to the Global Destination Sustainability Movement. She requested that the draft Sustainability Plan be brought back to Committee for consideration and comment together with the second draft of the DMP. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that they were in the process of writing the draft Sustainability Plan and she would be updating the draft DMP to reflect the consultation feedback, with the revised draft being presented to the Visit County Durham Board in January 2024 for approval.

Councillor K Robson asked if VCD worked with national travel companies to promote holidays in the county and whether they had developed offers for visitors based on themes such as castles and railways in the county. He added that the Locomotion was part of County Durham's history and felt there would be worldwide interest in the story. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy confirmed that VCD worked with group travel on a national and international level and encouraged the Group Travel Forum to include Durham in itineraries and provided a list of visitor attractions and hotels that could accommodate groups. She confirmed that themed itineraries were provided, however she would review and include the castle theme. In relation to railways, it was noted that promotion of the bicentennial celebrations in 2025 was ongoing and would increase next year. It was confirmed that Locomotion 1 was open at the National Railway Museum and it would spend time in Darlington and Shildon. As part of the levelling up bid, it was

mentioned that a major walking and cycling development from Shildon to Stockton would progress over the next couple of years.

Councillor K Robson added that he had contacted the local MP regarding the Locomotion Pub which was for sale and highlighted that the story of the pub's connection to Locomotion 1 was important. The Head of Culture Sport and Tourism commented that the cost of bringing the pub back into use and the ongoing revenue cost was substantial and was not found to be viable proposition. She confirmed that the story of Locomotion 1 and the link to the pub would be told as part of the interpretation along the route for the bicentennial celebrations.

Councillor J Elmer commented that the action plans were a key part of the DMP, however they were currently hidden in small print at the back of the document. He suggested that the action plans be made more prominent within the draft plan and that more detail be provided. He highlighted the disconnect of the public transport network across the county and felt that engagement with transport providers should be included to ensure a joined up public transport network. In addition, he suggested there was a need to consider the proper signposting of public transport and other options for sustainable travel within the county. He highlighted that the Global Destination Sustainability Index was a key action and guided decision making, therefore felt it was imperative that the necessary skills to develop the Sustainability Plan were within the Visit County Durham Team or that the skills be accessed by working with Durham County Council's Ecologists to minimise the impact of increased tourism in the county. He referred to carbon emissions and noted that transport was the hardest sector to reduce emissions. With increased tourism there was a risk of attracting more vehicles to the area and he suggested that they contact colleagues in the Carbon Reduction Team who produced the Climate Emergency Response Plan for their expertise regarding options to reduce car usage and engaging public transport providers. He concluded by commenting on the need to consider countryside resources and the nature offer and suggested that countryside walks, Northern Saints Trails and the Heritage 100 walks be promoted as a story providing detail of the history of the area.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy agreed that the layout of the plan would need to change and advised that the action plans in the next draft would be more prominent and that the draft plan would be updated following the consultation feedback. It was confirmed that in relation to the development of the DMP, the team were reliant on colleagues from Durham County Council including the Carbon Reduction Team and would be collaborating more going forward with regards to the Global Destination Sustainability Index and development of the Sustainability Plan to address challenges. In relation to carbon emissions and car dependency, the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that the challenge faced the whole sector, worldwide down to local level and required a collective approach to manage the impact and look at new solutions to influence alternative modes of transport, with the team working with both national and regional groups and forums to focus on the issue. She concluded by confirming that

walking and cycling was a core offer and long distance walking routes were being developed within the county with the Northern Saints Trail aimed at encouraging visitors to the county to stay longer and contribute to the local economy.

Councillor D Sutton-Lloyd highlighted that in order to encourage people to stay longer, there was a need to establish links to towns and rural communities in the county. In relation to the bicentenary celebrations route, it was noted that the route would go through a number of villages in the county and he suggested that they link in the history of the villages and involve local organisations. He then queried if Central Government had provided extra funding to promote tourism. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that there was no extra funding for promotion, however she confirmed that the North East Region was piloting a strategic Destination Development Partnership as part of new structures which comes with recognition and provided a platform to network with various groups and organisations. She added that government had allocated £750,000 per year for a three-year period for the pilot with the aim of demonstrating that you can make a change to the sector with any initiatives having to align to government's agenda including sustainability, accessibility, inclusion and rural conferencing.

Councillor B Moist was pleased to see the good work that had been undertaken, however commented that the DMP was a strategic plan and therefore he wanted to see more actions included rather than a vision of priorities to be achieved. He continued that the preamble needs to be moved to later in the draft plan with an emphasis on the future of the county rather than the county's history. In addition, the plan concentrated on priorities and should focus on actions and what was being done to develop and improve the tourism offer and achieve the priorities in both the short term and long term. He was pleased to see customer focused outcomes however there needed to be more detail included on the various attractions in the county and activity to pursue more sporting events. He highlighted that more actions needed to be included in the draft plan and more detail in relation to monitoring, together with clarity as to who would be responsible for delivering those actions and for the plan to be reordered so that priorities and actions sit next to each other for easier reference. He concluded by asking that the points raised in the Chairs and Vice-Chairs briefing meeting be included in the response to the Service Grouping.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy agreed that the plan needed more work and confirmed that priorities together with the related actions were identified in the plan. In relation to priority delivery, she explained that some priority areas were in the remit of VCD however other areas were in the remit of partners. She advised that they were currently refreshing the business plan and would provide details on who would be responsible for each priority and agreed that there was a need to reorder the plan so that priorities and actions sit next to each other for easier reference and confirmed that collated evidence data relating to the visitor economy and partner evidence and intelligence would also be reflected in the plan. She advised that attracting events to the county was not a role for VCD, however they supported events in ensuring that the county was represented at those events.

She added that in relation to monitoring and evaluation, specific groups would be established through the Visit County Durham Board to take a lead on progressing key priorities within the plan.

Councillor C Lines commented on the need to differentiate County Durham to the external audiences which was important and challenging to align regionally as well as keeping County Durham distinct. He noted there was a new 'Place' brand being developed and highlighted the need to ensure that the new 'Place' brand wins the 'hearts and minds' of County Durham residents and businesses, this was crucial to its success and suggested extensive market testing to provide local views and feedback before the launch. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that the Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism was leading on developing the 'Place' brand and confirmed that the external perception research process had just been completed which gathered thoughts about the county from various groups including businesses, potential and existing visitors, students and investors and confirmed that VCD was awaiting the final report which would be presented to stakeholders. In addition, she advised that a design agency would be commissioned to produce a range of branding narratives which would be tested with Durham County Council service areas, residents and stakeholders.

Resolved:

- (i) That the comments made by Members during the meeting be captured and formulated into an Overview and Scrutiny response, which would be shared with the Service Grouping to further develop the draft Destination Management Plan;
- (ii) That arrangements be made for a Joint meeting to be held for members to consider the second draft of the Destination Management Plan and the Sustainability Plan once they have been developed.

6 Any Other Business

The Chair reminded Members that the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee was hosting an informal information session on the 27 November 2023 at 1.30pm focusing on Fuel Poverty, the session would be held via Teams and Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be invited.

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 6 November 2023** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Moist (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors A Surtees, A Batey, G Binney, R Crute, D Freeman, P Heaviside, G Hutchinson, C Lines, J Miller, I Roberts, K Robson, K Shaw, M Stead and A Sterling

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Currah, R Omerod and Mrs R Morris.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 18 September 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.

6 Major Programmes and Projects:

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth and presentation that set out the approach to the management, monitoring and performance of Major Programmes and Projects

delivered by the Regeneration, Economy and Growth Directorate. The report also provided an update on some programmes and projects as requested by Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (EEOOSC) (for copy of report and presentation slides, see file of minutes).

The Committee were provided with a detailed presentation that focused on:-

- REG Major Programme Portfolio and Capital Programme;
- Major Programmes Board and Portfolio Office Approach;
- Project Reporting Timeline;
- Controls and Guidance;
- Case Studies requested by EEOOSC.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth highlighted that the major programmes was an ambitious programme and in the process of pulling the report and presentation together for members, it was felt important that members were provided with detail of the approach to the management of the major programmes and projects, how they are monitored and the performance.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth advised that the key aim was to provide assurance that appropriate standards and controls were in place to ensure programmes and projects were managed successfully within the delivery framework with appropriate levels of controls, challenge and intervention. In addition, the Corporate Director of regeneration, Economy and Growth continued by confirming that the report and presentation focused on the major programmes and projects of the REG Service Grouping and that detail had been provided in the form of case studies for some of the REG major programmes and projects which had been requested by members of the committee prior to the meeting. She highlighted that in relation to these case studies specific high-level overviews had been provided with budget information where commercially not sensitive.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth continued that in relation to the REG Major Programmes Portfolio it totals £878m with £628m committed or secured and a further £250m at different phases of development however this does not include where we have oversight of a project such as a joint venture with the private sector. It was highlighted that there was significant private sector investment in relation to the major programmes and projects of £1.4 billion with examples including Milburngate £130m, Aykley Heads £250m, Jade Business Park Phase 2 £100m and Forrest Park £120m. In addition, 70 major programmes and projects for the REG Service Grouping, the Service was also managing 103 non-REG schemes for other services totalling over £100m.

In relation to the REG Capital Programme it was confirmed that for 2023/24 there are 149 schemes totalling over £136m and it was highlighted that this will change throughout the year to reflect the receipt of windfall grants etc with the figures in the

table provided from 2018 to 2025 showing a significant increase in the value of the programme, highlighting the need for robust management.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth then passed across to Funding and Programmes Manager and the Strategic Programme Manager.

The Funding and Programmes Manager explained that she was responsible for the Portfolio Office (PO) and that the Strategic Programme Manager leads the Major Programmes Team managing projects across the county. It was confirmed that the Major Programmes Board (MPB) this was established in P2021 to oversee the REG portfolio and that it was chaired by the Corporate Director of REG. It was highlighted that the Board had an increasing portfolio to oversee and that it had developed a Portfolio Office (PO) which had devised the relevant documentation for the management of the programmes. The PO was a virtual information hub and centre of excellence for all programmes and projects receiving various information and collecting data for all the portfolio including detail of risks in relation to any project.

The members were then provided with a slide showing the Major Programme Board, project reporting timetable.

In relation to controls and guidance it was confirmed that in addition to the Process Flow Diagram followed by the MPB, there was a guidance framework to help sponsors, programme and project managers understand the requirements and outputs needed to set projects up and ensure delivery of activities in accordance with REG's Portfolio Office (PO). This guidance will facilitate consistent and effective project setup, development and delivery and will allow the MPB to track and assure the programme mandates and objectives and that the projects are achieving the expected outcomes.

The Strategic Programme Manager commented that the MPB had established and agreed a programmes and projects business process which provides an agreed framework through which all REG programmes and projects both capital and revenue are delivered. Each stage of the process covers a prescribed set of activities, including expected deliverables required to navigate assurance Gateway checkpoints. Each Gateway will seek to revalidate programme and project assumptions, viability and progress against plan. It was highlighted that all projects have to go through four Gateway changes during the cycle and that the PO will support project and programme sponsors and those responsible for project delivery in navigating the business process.

Members then considered a slide showing the breakdown of the 70 projects by business unit and the project health indicators in relation to the various projects showing the status of the projects by cost, time, quality, scope, benefits and overall risk.

It was noted that EEOC had requested an update regarding a number of specific key projects including Durham Innovation District Aykley Heads, Jade Phase 2, The Story, DLI Museum and Art Gallery, Leisure Transformation Programme and Durham City Bus Station.

The Head of Corporate Property and Land provided an update on the Durham Innovation District Aykley Heads project, noting that the project was in the defining stages and was undergoing the procurement process which was an important milestone. She advised that the project was developing as expected in terms of timeline and costs and they would be in a position early 2025 to report to Cabinet the preferred partner for the development. As part of the process a business plan would be developed setting out detail on the Aykley Heads development and something that Overview and Scrutiny would like sight of going forward as the process progressed.

The Head of Economic Development provided an update on the Jade project and advised that indicators were rated green on all aspects apart from the timeline as the council were not in direct control of the timescales. Overall the project was provided with an amber rating due to inflation pressures, however the project was in a strong place. He advised that Phase 1 was a council funded project to deliver industrial space which was completed in 2021 and provided seven new industrial units which would provide approximately 200 jobs. Phase 2 was a private developer lead project and the team were focused on inward investment along with Business Durham and working with the market. It was noted that outline planning permission to develop Phase 2 had been agreed with the capacity to provide 1,000 new jobs. The project was in the defined stages and the developer was in negotiations to secure private investment funding and work was being done to secure LEP funding. It was noted that construction would start in the summer 2024 and tenants would occupy units by spring 2025.

The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism provided an update on The Story and advised that the project was handover on the 26 October 2023. The original construction programme was extended due to various factors in relation to the historic building. She advised that completion had been rejected several times since April 2023 for not meeting DCC completion requirements. The fit out would be a long process to transfer 11 kilometre of archives and would be undertaken when rooms were at the correct environmental conditions. The building would house five services including archives and the registration service.

With regards to the DLI Museum and Art Gallery, the Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism advised that the project was currently at stage 4 of the process and indicators were rated green at this stage with an overall amber rating as they were still awaiting costing from the contractor. The programme started in February 2022 with a target completion of Q4 2024/25. It was highlighted that to get to stage 4 at this point was a remarkable achievement by the team.

Moving onto the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism advised of the different stages for each programme, Abbey was complete and at the handover stage, Peterlee was almost complete, Bishop Auckland was at the planning stage, Louisa Centre was on track, Spennymoor and Teesdale was almost complete. She advised that a comprehensive Cabinet report covering the whole Leisure Transformation Programme would be presented in due course. She highlighted the challenges and complexities of the project which included market changes, cost of living crisis, construction inflation, staff recruitment, market forces/procurement, operational impacts and unforeseen major repairs.

The Head of Transport and Contract Services provided an update on Durham City Bus Station and advised that they were in the final stages of handover. He highlighted that there were still some risks in relation to external works. It was noted that they were able to apply for a £3.6m grant which contributed to the overall funding of the project. In terms of timeline, the opening was delayed by 12 months with a revised opening date of November 2023.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth summarised that the major programmes have a value of £878m with £628m delivered, pipeline committed and secured. In addition, there was a further active pipeline development unsecured of £250m with 152 live schemes totalling £153m together with strong programme governance across all schemes in line with best practice.

Councillor A Batey noted there was a regular reporting mechanism in place and various information data produced, however she would like to see more regular updates communicated to Overview and Scrutiny and residents on how projects were progressing. She queried the definition of the DLI project as it was still being referred to as the DLI building and highlighted that there was a need to communicate the name and scope of the project with residents. In relation to the Leisure Transformation Programme, she was disappointed that there was no reference to proposals for Chester-Le-Street and Seaham Leisure Centres, even though a consultation process had been undertaken requesting Chester-Le-Street resident's views on the proposals. In addition, the Louisa Centre was falling behind on timescales and she felt that residents in North Durham and other communities within the county were being disadvantaged by missing out on improved leisure provision. She highlighted that neighbouring authorities were cutting their leisure offer such as Gateshead and suggested that this would provide an opportunity for Durham County Council to attract clients from outside the county with an improved leisure offer.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth commented that the Service was not involved with setting the Overview and Scrutiny forward plan, however she would discuss with the Chair and Vice-Chair regarding providing more regular updates on the major programmes and projects. In relation to the Leisure Transformation Programme, she advised that a comprehensive Leisure

Transformation Programme report would be presented to Cabinet later in the year which would include updates on Chester-Le-Street and Seaham Leisure Centres.

In relation to the DLI Museum and Art Gallery project, the Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism commented that branding was a long process which involved research teams, branding experts and stakeholders. She agreed that this was the appropriate time for branding and further work on the project name would be undertaken in the coming months.

Councillor Batey asked for clarification as to when the Leisure Transformation Report would be going to Cabinet. The Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth responded that the report would be going to Cabinet by the end of the year.

Councillor K Robson asked whether there was a service link from the railway station to Durham City bus station. The Head of Transport and Contract Services commented that there was no service link as people tended to walk or make their own way to the bus station due to the close proximity, however he was currently looking at linking services from the City Centre and universities to the railway station.

Councillor K Robson then queried as to whether the authority when developing new buildings looked at recouping some of the costs via staffing levels, lighting etc and asked for more detail as to the police having accommodation within the police station.

The Head of Transport and Contract Services commented that with regards to efficiencies, the authority would look to reducing costs where possible and added that the new bus station had sustainable and improved lighting, including a mezzanine floor for improved surveillance and an open area which would hopefully deter antisocial behaviour and be more efficient and cost effective to clean. He also confirmed that the bus station provided office space for police presence, however this would not be occupied 24 hours a day.

Councillor J Miller agreed that it was the appropriate time to define the DLI Museum and Art Gallery project and that clarity needed to be provided on what would be available to residents of the county as soon as possible. He referred to the bus station and was pleased to note that there would be some police presence and highlighted his concern and the importance of discussions to resolve the current industrial action by bus drivers as many residents of County Durham rely heavily on public transport. The Head of Transport and Contract Services could not comment on the industrial action, however explained that work was ongoing to promote bus travel with the introduction of reduced fares across the whole of the North East to encourage a more desirable form of transport. He added that infrastructure improvements and work with bus operators would continue to monitor usage and

bus provision and advised that feedback would be reported to the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee in due course.

Councillor C Lines was reassured that robust control processes and governance structures were in place and referred to the £628m public sector investment that leveraged the £1.4b private sector investment and asked for clarification as to how Durham were performing in relation to other local authorities. The Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth advised that the £1.4billion private investment was a cautious estimate and was a big challenge for County Durham, however overall it was a good return.

Councillor K Shaw commented that in relation to the Leisure Transformation Programme he was more comfortable in relation to the progress of the programme now that it had been confirmed that a report would be going to Cabinet in either November or December.

In response to a question from Councillor A Surtees regarding how the new power station would affect the development planned at the Jade site, the Head of Economic Development advised that the infrastructure support was ongoing to improve the junction with the challenge being ensuring that the energy supply to the sites was in place. He advised that he would provide further detail in relation to the impact on the development, however he confirmed that there was nothing to suggest that this would be a risk to the Phase 2 development on the Jade site. The Head of Transport and Contract Services added that there was pressure on the A19 junctions, however work was ongoing to improve capacity together with work on the cycle bridge to encourage sustainable travel.

Councillor Surtees referred to the DLI Museum and Art Gallery project and suggested a possible name for the new building could be the Durham Innovation Centre Coffee Shop and Art Gallery. She highlighted concerns in relation to the £600,000 revenue pressure for running the building and commented that in the current financial climate, the money could be used for other local infrastructure work needed within the county. The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism advised that the running costs were consistent with the size of the building and highlighted that County Durham was about pride of place. She added that currently there was no art gallery or culture space within Durham City and referred to the development of the Aykley Heads site and the potential vibrancy of the location which would be more attractive to organisations and provide economic and social gains.

Councillor B Moist noted the comprehensive report and presentation and had total confidence in Officers and the processes undertaken to manage the programmes. He asked whether the establishment of a Major Programmes Board had improved the efficiencies and effective delivery of the programmes and felt that the report focused more on processes and was unclear on actions taken. He referred to the bus station project and noted there were degrees of success, however the project had been delayed by 63 weeks, therefore questioned whether the project had been

successful. In relation to The Story, he asked that details of cost in relation to the project be presented to Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee following completion of the project. He also asked if there were any estimates in relation to the DLI Museum and Art Gallery construction costs and suggested it be categorised as an amber rating bearing in mind construction inflation costs. With regards to the Leisure Transformation Programme, he highlighted that the delivery completion date had not been provided and he was unclear what the reference to the cost-of-living crisis was in relation to. He then asked whether there were any other projects scheduled to be included in the Leisure Transformation Programme. He noted the amber ratings in relation to the bus station costs and timeframe and felt that both ratings should show red. He queried what could have been done to provide an amber rating and asked that a cost analysis be undertaken. He concluded by saying that he had benefitted from the recent training by the Service Grouping in relation to major programmes and was happy to meet with the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth, with Councillor A Surtees to discuss further updates and data in relation to the major programmes and projects.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth confirmed that the systems in place do help in the management and delivery of programmes and projects and that it was considered national best practice. She highlighted that the programme was bigger than in previous years and continued to grow, with better delivery and processes in place which provided accountability and clarity with regards to who was responsible for progressing projects. It was noted that costs were set out in the Cabinet report and were the forecasts to which the Service worked towards, and any changes would result in further reporting to Cabinet. With regards to The Story and the DLI MAG projects, she was happy to provide further information to a future Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Councillor E Scott reminded Members that the DLI had always been the DLI Museum and Art Gallery and would not be helpful to re-write history. She agreed that further clarity was required which they were currently working on and commented that it would not be wise to make announcements before they had been agreed.

Councillor R Crute highlighted the need to separate from what the building was in the 1970's and provide a new identity for this century. He made reference to The Story which was built to house the DLI collection in its entirety along with the written records. He added that focus needed to be on promoting what it was going to be and to get that message out to the residents of County Durham sooner rather than later.

Councillor M Stead commented that the colour system used was clear and was easily understood as to the various project stages and added that the colours would change as the projects progressed. He was delighted that the Major Programmes

Board had been developed and noted it was a blueprint for other authorities. He referred to the DLI and highlighted the importance of branding correctly and it was his understanding that 11 kilometres of the DLI collection had never been seen and queried whether it was possible for both buildings to house the collection. With regards to the bus station, he asked whether lessons had been learned from the development which could be taken forward. The Corporate Director advised that as part of the Major Projects Board there were failsafe's in place with regards to complex projects and a lesson's learnt report would be prepared to improve awareness and increase expertise for future projects.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report and presentation be noted.
- (i) That the Chair and Vice-chair meet with the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth to discuss regular reports on the progress of major programmes/projects coming to future meetings of the Economy and Enterprise OSC.

7 UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth which provided an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme and the Rural England Prosperity Fund for County Durham, including governance and performance management arrangements and an update on programme implementation (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Economic Development introduced the report, highlighting that the report provides members with an update on the Shared Prosperity Fund Programme, the Rural England Prosperity Fund for County Durham including governance and performance management arrangements, an update on programme implementation and progress of the Levelling Up Fund. In relation to the UK SPF, members were reminded that this was Government's replacement for multiple strands of EU funding. He continued that DCC was the lead local authority for the UK SPF, Multiply and REPF programmes in County Durham and was responsible for the funding received from Government, allocating the funding, managing calls for projects, commissioning activities and delivering activities together with partners.

The Funding and Programmes Manager commented that DCC was the accountable body for the UK SPF. The funding was allocated across a three-year period and it was highlighted that this was not along funding period. She reminded members that County Durham had a UK SPF allocation of £30.8 m which was predominantly a revenue grant scheme, with an element of capital funding. She continued that the UKSPF Investment Plan had been developed and was used to guide investment decisions. Since the investment plan was submitted, the IES had been approved

and a Delivery Plan for the strategy had been developed setting out the actions to be taken. This process and the timing of the strategy and plan had allowed the UKSPF to be flexed to deliver a number of actions within the IES Delivery Plan. She continued that paragraph 18 of the report shows that just over £29m of the fund had been committed leaving just over £1m to be committed and it was confirmed that proposals are in development to ensure the take up in full of the remaining balance.

In relation to the investment priority of Supporting Local Business, the funding and Programmes Manager commented that the year 1 allocation of funding focused on preparing for the delivery for the delivery of activities in Years 2 and 3 and to prepare this groundwork for future years delivery, two research and facilitation projects were commissioned. The first piece of research was Understanding Rural Durham and the second piece of work was to prepare the ground for creating an integrated partnership delivery approach to supporting enterprise and business start-up, the Enterprising Durham Framework. Concerning business productivity and growth an open call was sent out for a partner to deliver a grant scheme to micro and small rural enterprises (The Durham Productivity and Growth Programme). A joint call was issued with the North of Tyne Combined Authority in February 2023 to deliver innovation and R&D activity, the In-Tune project which was led by Durham University. Finally in relation to this priority members were made aware of the establishment of Enterprising Durham a programme of enterprise and animation across County Durham to be delivered with a wide range of partners.

In relation to the investment priority of Communities and Places it was confirmed that a project had been developed in relation to community infrastructure, focusing on investment in and access to community assets and buildings. It was highlighted that the project aims to increase community resilience and sustainability through a co-design process with communities. Concerning Place Branding it was confirmed that investment had been made into a Place Branding project which was being led by VCD which will enable the development of a brand for County Durham. A project had also been developed and approved focusing on town centre vitality which will deliver a series of cultural engagement events across the county for the next two years.

Concerning the People and Skills investment priority, members were informed that provision was made within the County Durham Investment Plan for the continuation of existing EU funded Voluntary and Community Service activity 'at risk' in years 1 and 2 of UK SPF, supporting those furthest from the labour market. An employment support project had also been developed and had been designed to ensure that residents' opportunities in the labour market are improved and to support the ongoing growth of the county's economy. The Skills Support project in County Durham will form part of a co-ordinated approach to improve skills across the county. Finally, under this priority a project developing new careers offer in direct response to identified gaps in current provision.

The Funding and Programmes Manager continued that in relation to the Rural England Prosperity Fund an open call was launched in July 2023 for projects to deliver capital investments to develop, extend, restore or refurbish local tourist assets and infrastructure to improve the visitor experience. A total budget of £600k had been allocated to this call. The decision in relation to successful applications was expected in the next month or so.

In relation to governance arrangements, the Funding and Programmes Manager confirmed that the CDEP + board, advise, support, challenge and influence the delivery of the UK SPF and the REPF within the county. The Board advise on the design, commissioning, and performance management of both the UKSPF and the REPF, specifically it was responsible for advising on the strategic fit and deliverability of UK SPF and REPF investment activities during the programme period. The Funding and Programmes Manager confirmed that it had been agreed that this function was delegated to the Partnership's Technical Funding Group which meets on a monthly basis to advise on projects being brought forward and reports to the Board on a six-monthly basis.

In relation to the update on the Levelling Up Fund, The Funding and Programmes Manager reminded members that in 2021, Central government announced £4.8 billion LUF to provide investment in infrastructure, town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects and cultural and heritage assets. The first round of bidding was launched in March 2021 and DCC was awarded £20m with further guidance for Round 2 levelling Up bids released in March 2022 with the deadline for bid submissions the 6 July 2022. A number of proposals were developed and the council submitted five bids however the bidding criteria was changed resulting in funding only awarded to lead local authorities which had been unsuccessful in Round 1. In relation to Round 3, it was confirmed that there was £1billion to be allocated however the Service Grouping was awaiting guidance on the criteria for the allocation of funding.

In response to a query from Councillor A Sterling regarding the Levelling Up Fund and if the council intended to re-submit the five bids that had been unsuccessful in Round 2, the Head of Economic Development hoped that clearer guidance would be provided in Round 3 and advised that colleagues would focus on the guidance to shape and submit the bids.

Councillor A Surtees made reference to a project in Easington in relation to Community Assets and Woodland Area which had been submitted for Levelling Up Funding. Funding had already been allocated to the Horden bid and queried why the council had not back filled the funding gap as a result of the unsuccessful Levelling Up Funding bid. The Head of Economic Development responded that £6m of funding had been available to Horden through the Towns and Villages programme and that when the LUF bid was unsuccessful the council was still committed to the £6m for Horden. He continued that there was still safeguarded funding available in the Towns and Villages programme for match funding, however

he was unsure as to where the funding was committed to and that it may be needed for match funding for LUF Round 3.

Councillor C Lines expressed concern regarding funding availability via the REPF stating that it would not make much of a difference to rural communities. He highlighted the physical and digital remoteness of the rural communities and the delays with regards to Project Gigabit and asked whether Government could be lobbied for more funding. The Head of Economic Development advised that the REPF was a small pot of money and only one of the funds available. He added that in relation to the UK SPF there was more flexibility in how it was used. The Funding and Programmes Manager added that the REPF was a means of allocating to areas that have not benefitted from the UK SPF and advised that she would look at the Delivery Plan to address the points raised.

Councillor B Moist commented that Members understood that there was not enough funding however, he felt that the issue was with the governance of the funding. Local authorities were told where funding had to be provided rather than being able to direct where it was needed most. In relation to the investment priority Business Productivity and Growth and the partnership project with Umi, he asked whether Umi were on a fee basis and asked for further detail in relation to the town centre Vitality project and who would manage the project. The Head of Economic Development advised that Umi had submitted an expression of interest and were successful working with business Durham and RTC North as delivery partners for the Durham Productivity and Growth Programme. The Funding and Programmes Manager added that an open call had been issued for one integrated partnership to deliver the project and confirmed that the project would be led by Business Durham. Umi had been used by Tees Valley and had a lot of experience in delivering this type of project. The Funding and Programmes Manager commented that the Vitality project was a wayfinding pilot directing to places within towns and will be managed by the Regeneration/Economic Development Team.

In response to a question from Councillor J Miller regarding investment in front streets, the Funding and Programmes Manager advised that she could provide the events programme and made reference to the Town and Villages Programme that complimented the Events Programme. She added that there would also be the Community Infrastructure Project which targeted rural isolated communities and the Place Lab Programme which still needed to identify settlements. The Head of Economic Development added that it was mainly revenue activity that was funded via the £25m Town and Villages Programme and confirmed that there was still funding to be allocated in the final tranche. He confirmed that this could be looked at when considering future areas for funding.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 Any Other Business

The Chair reminded Members that the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee was hosting an informal information session on the 27 November focusing on Fuel Poverty, the session would be held via Teams and Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be invited.

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**Economy and Enterprise
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

18 December 2023



Draft County Durham Housing Strategy

Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth

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

Electoral divisions affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the consultation on the Housing Strategy Principles and Priorities Paper (please refer to Appendix 3) and to set out the content of the draft County Durham Housing Strategy (please refer to Appendix 2).

Executive summary

- 2 The County Durham Housing Strategy is being developed to consider housing issues across County Durham. The strategy will provide a strategic framework to inform the actions and investment of the council and its partners and has been developed to ensure the council is well positioned to maximise future opportunities for funding support. The new Housing Strategy 2024 will replace the current housing strategy adopted in 2019.
- 3 A consultation was undertaken on the Principles and Priorities paper, the first stage in the preparation of the housing strategy, between 26 June 2023 and 18 August 2023. This was presented as 'the Housing Conversation' and the council engaged with residents and interested parties through its partnership structure, online engagement events, tailored surveys and a workshop with Scrutiny Members.
- 4 The consultation determined that there was overwhelming support for the proposed vision, principles and priorities. Amongst other things, the importance of meeting housing needs, issues with concentrations of private rented sector housing stock and the importance of energy efficient housing came through the consultation.

- 5 The Housing Conversation has informed the development of the draft County Durham Housing Strategy. The draft County Durham Housing Strategy sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in County Durham and a vision to provide good quality housing that meets everyone's needs, is affordable for local people and supports the creation of great places to live. The draft strategy contains seven principles, which establish the foundation and rationale underpinning decisions and five priorities for action.
- 6 Consultation is being undertaken on the draft County Durham Housing Strategy between 30 October 2023 and 18 December 2023. The consultation is being undertaken with residents of County Durham and other stakeholders with a potential interest in the content of the document.
- 7 Following the consultation, the housing strategy will be modified as necessary and presented to Cabinet and Full Council for adoption in Spring/Summer 2024.

Recommendation

- 8 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the draft County Durham Housing Strategy.

Background

- 9 The County Durham Housing Strategy is being developed to consider housing issues across County Durham. The housing strategy will be delivered in partnership through the Housing Forum and in discussion with the county's residents, the private sector and other agencies as appropriate. It will also provide a strategic framework to inform the actions and investment of the council and its partners.
- 10 The housing strategy will ensure Durham County Council is well positioned to maximise future opportunities for funding support. In this context, the housing strategy provides the evidence to identify issues within a housing context and a clear approach to address these issues.
- 11 The housing strategy will be a comprehensive document that aligns with existing or emerging strategies including the County Durham Vision, County Durham Plan and the new homelessness strategy. Together with the homelessness strategy, the housing strategy will also set out the council's approach to Housing First as a way of tackling street homelessness. It will also support the council's Climate Emergency Response Plan and Inclusive Economic Strategy.

Principles and Priorities Paper Consultation Overview

- 12 The Principles and Priorities paper was the first stage in the preparation of the housing strategy. As part of the County Durham Housing Conversation, the council sought views on a draft vision, seven principles and five priorities.
- 13 The Housing Conversation took place between 26 June 2023 and 18 August 2023. The Housing Conversation included:
 - a) presentations to 13 Area Action Partnerships;
 - b) attendance at nine County Durham Partnership groups including the County Durham Together Partnership, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Place and the Health and Communities Board;
 - c) a workshop for all Members of Scrutiny;
 - d) presentations to the County Durham Association of Local Councils;
 - e) a Rural Housing Event; and
 - f) online consultation events.
- 14 The Housing Conversation was also supported by a social media and communications campaign which included:
 - a) a dedicated webpage that had 1,039 pages views and 789 unique page views during the Housing Conversation;

- b) a Facebook advert that started on 28 July and had a total reach of 22,248 and an engagement of 953 (859 link clicks);
 - c) six Facebook posts that had a total reach of 16,924 people and an engagement of 166 (51 link clicks);
 - d) Facebook and Instagram stories with a total reach of 8,099 and 3,471 respectively; and
 - e) Twenty two tweets on Twitter with a total of 23,102 impressions and a total engagement of 205 (70 link clicks).
- 15 The Housing Conversation was supported by three specialist surveys. A survey for residents, a survey for young people and a survey for industry. The following numbers of surveys were returned as part of the Housing Conversation:
- a) residents: 368;
 - b) young people: 257; and
 - c) industry: 15.
- 16 Whilst a range of views came through the consultation and those detailed points have informed the development of the draft housing strategy, the main messages from the consultation can be summarised as follows:
- a) overwhelming support for the vision, principles and priorities;
 - b) concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime as illustrated by 34% of respondents to the resident survey disagreeing that they thought that their area was safe;
 - c) support for the delivery of homes to meet needs including homes for older people, families and affordable homes;
 - d) the importance of adaptation of houses to meet changing needs over a lifetime, illustrated by one in three respondents to the resident's survey stating that they did not think their home would meet their needs in the future;
 - e) energy efficiency improvements to the existing housing stock and high standards in new housing that both help the environment and reduce bills was seen as very important shown by 91% of respondents to the resident survey stating that they wanted to live in an energy efficient house in the future;

- f) financial pressures were clearly expressed, for example; 27% of respondents disagreed that they thought they would be able to afford to keep their home warm in the future;
 - g) concerns raised about the impact of concentrations of private rented properties that can be associated with anti-social behaviour, empty homes and absent landlords;
 - h) support for regulation of landlords, including through selective licensing, but also an ask for more recognition of good landlords;
 - i) local schemes to improve our towns and villages was recognised as an important future priority;
 - j) whilst recognising that meeting the needs of all groups is important the impact of student housing on mixed and balanced communities was raised by many respondents;
 - k) recognition of the rising issue of homelessness in the county expressed by one in 10 young people agreeing that they or their family was homeless or at risk of homelessness;
 - l) 48% of those with a disability disagreed that their home allowed them to live independently;
 - m) importance of bringing empty homes back into use but also recognition that some properties are beyond their useful life and demolition may be appropriate;
 - n) agreement that good quality housing is a significant factor in supporting health and wellbeing outcomes; and
 - o) a recognition that new housing needs to be provided alongside sufficient infrastructure to accommodate the impact of the development including schools, doctors and parking etc.
- 17 A full overview of the Housing Conversation is set out within the Feedback Report (please refer to Appendix 3).
- 18 A workshop for all Members of Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held on 10 July 2023. The comments made have fed into the draft housing strategy and a summary of points raised and where they have been addressed in the draft as set out at Appendix 4.

Draft County Durham Housing Strategy

- 19 The draft County Durham Housing Strategy sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in County Durham and a vision to provide good quality housing that meets everyone's needs, is affordable for

local people and supports the creation of great places to live. The proposed vision is as follows:

'By 2035 County Durham will be a place that has good quality homes that meet the needs of existing and future residents that they can afford. The provision and quality of housing will support economic growth, contribute to improved health, community safety and create and maintain sustainable, mixed and balanced communities. People will live long and independent lives within connected and safer communities.'

20 The draft County Durham Housing Strategy contains seven principles. The principles establish the foundation and rationale underpinning decisions and actions to deliver the vision. The principles are as follows:

- a) principle 1: everyone has a right to a warm, safe and decent home;
- b) principle 2: everyone should have access to a home that is affordable to them;
- c) principle 3: housing is the cornerstone of communities and should support improved health, community safety, educational attainment, and the local economy;
- d) principle 4: the strategy will be for the county, not the council, and will promote local solutions underpinned by community engagement;
- e) principle 5: all new homes should be accessible, tenure blind and provide flexible living for different stages in a person's life, always aiming to allow people to be independent, including remaining in their home for as long as they desire;
- f) principle 6: existing and new communities should be physically, digitally, culturally and economically connected to support the creation of sustainable, safe, mixed and balanced communities including bringing empty homes back into use; and
- g) principle 7: the strategy will support energy efficiency and carbon reduction in existing and new housing and contribute towards the council's Climate Emergency Response Plan.

21 The purpose of the County Durham Housing Strategy is to set the context as to how the council and its partners will meet the housing challenges faced. The draft County Durham Housing Strategy includes the following priorities for action that are not in order of importance:

- a) priority 1: increase the delivery of new homes including secure, affordable housing to meet housing needs together with the infrastructure required;

- b) priority 2: ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that support health and wellbeing;
 - c) priority 3: ensure high quality, energy efficient homes and effective landlord services;
 - d) priority 4: ensure a comprehensive range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, disabled people and children and young people including specialist accommodation and support; and
 - e) priority 5: ensure high quality placemaking, creating safe, accessible, prosperous and sustainable places to live.
- 22 The draft County Durham Housing Strategy recognises the importance of placemaking and how housing needs to complement and integrate with the spaces around it so that people feel part of a community and can easily access the services and amenities they need. Providing the right infrastructure is of vital importance to good placemaking. The strategy recognises the importance of increasing the delivery of new homes including secure, affordable housing and new council owned housing.
- 23 The strategy sets out that everyone in County Durham should have fair and equal access to safe and secure housing that meets their needs. This includes addressing the specific needs of groups including children in care, children leaving care, people with disabilities, those with complex health issues and older people.
- 24 The strategy seeks to support people to prevent them becoming homeless and enable them to secure and maintain and sustain living in good quality, permanent accommodation with support in place where it is needed. It also seeks ensure that a comprehensive range of supported and specialist housing is available for those who need it.
- 25 The strategy reflects a commitment to providing high quality homes and to work with local communities and put them at the heart of the decision making process in a way that meets their needs and priorities. The strategy seeks to strive to drive up standards in the private rented sector.
- 26 The delivery of the County Durham Housing Strategy will complement activities in the following plans and strategies:
- a) the County Durham Plan, the council's Local Plan (2021- 2035);
 - b) the County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy;
 - c) the County Durham Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2020-25); and

- d) the Climate Emergency Response Plan 2 (2022-24).

Timescales and Next Steps

- 27 Consultation on the draft housing strategy is being undertaken between 30 October 2023 and 18 December 2023.
- 28 The consultation is being undertaken with residents of County Durham and other stakeholders with a potential interest in the content of the document. As part of the consultation, the council are using a wide range of approaches including:
- a) presentations / information dissemination to Area Action Partnerships;
 - b) presentations to the County Durham Partnership groups;
 - c) online consultation events;
 - d) a social media and communications campaign; and
 - e) a presentation to Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny.
- 29 The consultation is seeking comments on the draft housing strategy. The draft strategy will then be modified as necessary and presented to Cabinet for adoption in Spring/Summer 2024.
- 30 Following the adoption of the County Durham Housing Strategy, the council will work with partners to develop a detailed delivery plan and associated monitoring framework to deliver the Strategy.

Background Papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 requires local housing authorities to consider housing conditions in their area and the needs of the area with respect to the provision of further housing accommodation.

Finance

The housing strategy is not associated with a specific budget. The final housing strategy will identify a series of actions. Each action will be associated with a project that may require a funding bid once the scope of the project is determined. The housing strategy does not guarantee funding for projects listed.

Consultation and Engagement

The Housing Strategy Principles and Priorities Paper was subject to public consultation for eight weeks between 26 June 2023 to 18 August 2023. Consultation was undertaken with residents of County Durham and other stakeholders with a potential interest in the content of the document. Through the consultation the council made use of its partnership structure to assist in disseminating information about the housing strategy.

The consultation on the Principles and Priorities Paper has informed the Draft County Durham Housing Strategy.

Consultation is being undertaken on the draft housing strategy between 30 October 2023 and 18 December 2023.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

A full equalities impact assessment is being undertaken for the draft housing strategy alongside the current consultation process.

Climate Change

Addressing the cause of climate change is a key thread through the draft housing strategy including Principle 8 which states that the strategy will support energy efficiency and carbon reduction in existing and new housing.

Human Rights

Protocol 1 Article 1: Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions, including their property. The housing strategy will provide a framework to deliver housing to meet housing needs. Article 8: provides a right to respect for private and family life. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. There

shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. The council will ensure the housing strategy will be consistent with the council's human rights obligations.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

Resource is required to progress the production, monitoring, review and implementation of the housing strategy.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

Detailed risk assessments will be undertaken at the project level and as part of delivering against the housing strategy.

Procurement

None.

Appendix 2: Draft County Durham Housing Strategy

Please refer to the attached draft County Durham Housing Strategy.

Appendix 3: Housing Conversation Feedback Report

Please refer to the attached Housing Conversation Feedback report.

Appendix 4: Overview and Scrutiny Workshop Summary of Comments and Reponses

Comment	Where it's been addressed in the Draft Housing Strategy
Prevention of homelessness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on access to early advice, support and assistance which is vital to ensure that homelessness is prevented as far as possible. 	<p>A focus on early advice has been included in Priority 2 that incorporates homelessness prevention through the Homelessness strategy. (5.19/ 5.21/ 5.24/ 5.47).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the use of empty homes to meet needs of vulnerable groups and those at risk of homelessness. 	<p>Emphasis on bringing empty homes back into use where possible incorporated as part of Principle 2 (para 4.3) and Principle 6 (Para 4.9)</p> <p>The use of empty homes to meet need of those at risk of homelessness is further addressed in the Homelessness Strategy (para 5.16), the Housing Strategy has also identified, as an action, preparing a Temporary Accommodation Strategy that would consider the option of empty homes, where appropriate (para 5.23).</p>
Delivering a comprehensive range of housing options	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A need to have the right mix of housing to meet housing demand. It was considered that there are few housing options for single people, single young people, older people, vulnerable and disabled people, 	<p>Sustainable, mixed and balanced communities are part of the Housing Strategy Vision.</p> <p>Greater detail is included in Priority 1 regarding meeting</p>

<p>although these are all groups who have increasing housing demand. New homes should be adaptable over time to meet changing needs and existing stock should be adapted.</p>	<p>specific housing needs through housing delivery (Para 5.5/ 5.7).</p> <p>Greater emphasis on a range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, children and young people, disabled people has been included (Para 5.38/ 5.39/ 5.40 – 47). This includes implementing the County Durham Plan policies regarding adaptation and M42 standards.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported housing is essential for those people with multiple and complex needs. Supported housing requires wrap around services for vulnerable residents and families, including health services, education, welfare benefits and transport connectivity. 	<p>Support for people with multiple and complex needs is highlighted as a priority in the Homelessness Strategy that is identified as part of Priority 1 and actions for delivery (Para 5.21/ 5.24).</p> <p>The link between housing and support and care and wrap around services are emphasised in the supporting text of Priority 4 (Para 5.38- 47).</p>
<p>Climate emergency</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing should be built to the best possible standard with new technologies but, consider that the traditional view of ‘sustainable locations’ may have been overcome by new technologies supporting a reduction in travel to some extent. 	<p>Further detail and emphasis regarding climate change is outlined in the alignment of the Housing Strategy with the CERP vision for new technologies to be used on new developments (Para 3.5).</p> <p>Addressing climate change is Principle 7 of the strategy. Greater detail has been added around the maximising of opportunities for new developments to contribute to energy efficiency targets</p>

	including using new technologies (Para 4.10).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern that insulation and newer heating technologies are not as affordable as gas. Retrofitting existing stock is key but is also expensive. Upskill the sector lined to IES to support provision and maintenance of new technologies. 	<p>The Housing Strategy sets out that it will compliment activities of other plans and strategies, including the CERP and the IES (Para 3.5).</p> <p>As part of Principle 7, detail in the supporting text has been included to address maximising opportunities to address fuel poverty, heating improvements and carbon reduction (Para 4.10).</p>
Housing and its relationship with the economy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure developers are employing people with the correct skills to build the new homes we need. Including in relation to greener technologies and capitalising on local supply chains. 	<p>The Housing Strategy sets out that it will compliment activities of other plans and strategies, including the CERP and the IES (Para 3.5).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise Council House Programme to create housing for communities and reuse derelict buildings and empty homes to support renewal also support the provision of executive housing to attract entrepreneurs in suitable locations 	<p>Priority 1 includes detail around the delivery of Council Housing. This includes both new build schemes and a programme of targeted acquisitions.</p> <p>Bringing Empty Homes back into use, where appropriate, is reflected as a key aim of the strategy and detailed in Principle 2 (Para 4.3) and Principle 6 (Para 4.9).</p>
Ensuring a warm, safe and decent homes to support improved education, health and wellbeing	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note issues with mould through lack of ventilation/insulation, which can be an issue with the design of buildings and older properties. 	<p>Greater detail has been added to Priority 3 regarding housing stock standards and conditions. It is acknowledged that the county has a large percentage of older housing stock. Priority 3 sets out a requirement that new stock is delivered to the highest standard with a focus on sustainability and energy efficiency.</p> <p>There is further detail given regarding the continuous review of housing conditions, inspections and working with landlords to ensure that decent homes standards from the Social Housing Act 2023 are met. (Para 5.27- 5.32).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need effective complaints / escalation procedure for tenants or a prevention procedure (such as regular inspections). 	<p>The Housing Strategy will be delivered in the context of new legislation, including The Social Housing Act 2023 (Para 2.6). In Priority 3 the supporting text outlines that the Act gives more rights for tenants (Para 5.27).</p> <p>Further detail is given regarding how we will ensure high quality landlord services and high-quality homes. This includes continuous housing condition reviews, inspections, powers under the selective licensing scheme and HMO licensing requirements (Para 5.31- 5.37).</p>
<p>Meeting the need for affordable homes</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needing to make sure people can afford housing and have sufficient disposable income to enjoy lives as well. 	<p>The impact of affordability and the cost of living is a key theme of the Housing Strategy.</p> <p>Measures to address poverty through the Housing Strategy are laid out in Priority 5 (Para 5.51-59) Addressing Fuel Poverty is detailed in Principle 7 (Para 4.10) regarding energy efficiency and Priority 3 regarding high quality homes in the rented sector (Para 5.28).</p> <p>Issues regarding the cost of living and the impact of this on affordability of homes and keeping a home warm are identified as part of the Homelessness Prevention in Priority 1 (Para 5.16).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate affordable homes into developments in a ‘tenure blind’ manner 	<p>Ensuring affordable homes are tenure blind on developments is part of Principle 5 (Para 4.8).</p>
<p>Housing issues in communities</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a high standard of maintenance in housing, gardens and open spaces, use of S.215 notices where appropriate. 	<p>Further text regarding the standard of housing in the rental sector is included in Priority 3 (Para 5.30/ 5.31).</p> <p>Greater emphasis has been added to green and open space as part of quality placemaking in Priority 5 (Para 5.48/ 5.49, 5.51-58).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about property investors / developers acquiring properties. A concern especially in former mining communities but also in 	<p>The Housing Strategy incorporates how the CDP will be utilised to meet housing needs and ensure mixed and balanced</p>

<p>Durham City in the context of student HMOs and the impact on communities. Important to work to prevent ASB.</p>	<p>communities. This includes student accommodation (Para 5.7).</p> <p>The licensing of HMOs and enforcement for non-compliance are detailed in Priority 3 (Para 5.32/ 5.33/ 5.35/ 5.56).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure that existing stock is maintained and kept up to required standards. 	<p>This is addressed in Priority 3 regarding housing stock standards and condition (Para 5.30/ 5.31/ 5.38).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that infrastructure is in place to support new housing, and ensure affordable housing is affordable, including Durham City. 	<p>Additional supporting text has been included under Priority 1 to ensure the provision of infrastructure that supports new housing (Para 5.4/ 5.6/ 5.13).</p> <p>The importance of Infrastructure in high quality place making is emphasised under Priority 5 (Para5.51/ 5.53).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second homes are an issue in some parts of the county such as Weardale. 	<p>It is recognised in the Housing Strategy that rural areas have issues that are unique to them. The provision of housing in rural areas is incorporated in the supporting text of Priority 1 to deliver housing to meet housing needs. (Para 5.4/ 5.7).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An emphasis on actions and local level actions required, with a timeline for delivery communicated to members and the community. 	<p>The steps for the delivery and monitoring of the strategy are detailed in the final section of the strategy (Para 6.1-6.4).</p>

Draft County Durham Housing Strategy 2024

Foreword

We believe that housing is more than just bricks and mortar. It is at the heart of families, communities and our local economy. Whether renting or buying, there is clear evidence that having access to good quality, suitable, secure and well-maintained housing has a profound impact on health and wellbeing and, therefore, quality of life. A sufficient supply of housing, including affordable housing, is a key component of achieving inclusive economic growth, and the role it plays in supporting good health and wellbeing and supporting people into work is recognised by Public Health England¹.

For many years, the number of new affordable houses built in County Durham has fallen below the number needed, whilst the quality of much of our older stock needs significant investment to bring it up to modern standards.

The Housing Strategy aims to support people, to live independently with support where required, and remain in their home for as long as they desire by ensuring homes are flexible to differing needs over a lifetime, including supporting family living and adaptability for older age.

To achieve this aim, we need to see a step change in the number of affordable houses being built in all parts of the county, including the rural west. We also need to do much more to drive up the quality and standard of homes, whether newly built houses coming through the planning system or existing houses in the private rented, market or affordable sectors, so that everyone has access to a warm, safe and decent home that they can afford. Bringing back into use empty homes, wherever possible, is a key aim of the strategy as this both helps deliver much needed housing and tackles what can otherwise be a blight on the community.

The Housing Strategy is a strategy for County Durham and reflects the diversity of communities across County Durham and differing issues and opportunities. We believe that all stakeholders – residents, developers, investors, builders, housing associations and the local authority – have a part to play in delivering it and support sustainable, mixed, and balanced and connected communities. We also believe that the best solutions are delivered locally, which is why we will encourage local solutions to local problems by engaging with local people, recognising that what is needed in one part of the county might be different to what is needed elsewhere.

Finally, the strategy will support energy efficiency and carbon reduction in existing and new housing and contribute towards achieving the Council's Climate Emergency Response Plan. We will also maximise the opportunities available to address fuel poverty through combining advice schemes and heating improvements and targeting interventions at those most in need, whilst new homes will be designed in line with current energy efficiency standards.

¹ Public Health England was subsequently replaced by UK Health Security Agency and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

We are confident that with effective partnership working, determination, creativity and innovation, we can deliver this new approach to housing in a way that makes a real difference in our communities.



Councillor James Rowlandson

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investment and Assets

Executive Summary

The County Durham Housing Strategy sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in County Durham and a vision to provide good quality housing that meets everyone's needs, is affordable for local people and supports the creation of great places to live. Its purpose is to set the context as to how we will meet the housing challenges we face, setting out the following priorities for action, which are not in order of importance:

- **Priority 1:** Increase the delivery of new homes, including secure, affordable housing to meet housing needs together with the infrastructure required.
- **Priority 2:** Ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that support health and wellbeing.
- **Priority 3:** Ensure high quality, energy efficient homes and effective landlord services.
- **Priority 4:** Ensure a comprehensive range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, disabled people and children and young people, including specialist accommodation and support.
- **Priority 5:** Ensure high quality placemaking, creating safe, accessible, prosperous and sustainable places to live.

The strategy recognises the importance of placemaking and how housing needs to complement and integrate with the spaces around it so that people feel part of a community and can easily access the services and amenities they need. Providing the right infrastructure is of vital importance to good placemaking. We must increase the delivery of new homes, including secure, affordable housing and new council owned housing.

Everyone in County Durham should have fair and equal access to safe and secure housing that meets their needs. This includes addressing the specific needs of groups including children in care, children leaving care, people with disabilities, those with complex health issues and older people.

We will help and support people to prevent them becoming homeless and enable them to secure and maintain, and sustain living in, good quality, permanent accommodation, with support in place where it is needed. We must also ensure that a comprehensive range of supported and specialist housing is available for those who need it.

We are committed to providing high quality homes and will work with local communities and put them at the heart of the decision-making process in a way that meets their needs and priorities. We will also strive to drive up standards in the private rented sector.

1. Introduction

1.1. This Strategy identifies the key housing opportunities and challenges facing County Durham in the next five years. Our vision is:

‘By 2035 County Durham will be a place that has good quality homes that meet the needs of existing and future residents that they can afford. The provision and quality of housing will support economic growth, contribute to improved health, community safety and create and maintain sustainable, mixed and balanced communities. People will live long and independent lives within connected and safer communities.’

1.2. The Housing Strategy provides the strategic framework to deliver our housing priorities and supports the delivery of the Council Plan and the County Durham Vision.

- The Council Plan sets out the council’s vision and overall priorities and programme of work for the period 2019-2035.
- The County Durham Vision 2035, which was developed together with partner organisations and the public, sets out what we would want the county to look like in 15 years’ time. This vision is structured around three ambitions which are:
 - More and better jobs;
 - People live long and independent lives; and
 - Connected communities.

The Housing Strategy is a strategy for the county not just the council, therefore, throughout the document any reference to ‘we’ or ‘our’ refers to Durham County Council, its partners and relevant agencies such as, registered providers, NHS, Durham Police, Durham Fire and safety services.

2. National Context

- 2.1. The UK has some of the oldest housing stock in Europe and a history of failing to meet the number of new homes, and new affordable social housing, to meet demand. The combination of housing stock in need of regeneration and a lack of supply of new homes, and new affordable homes, has resulted in a long-term increase in house prices, as well as increasing rents in the private rented sector. This means that owning a home is beyond the reach of many in the UK and private rented accommodation is becoming increasingly expensive for households as demand increases. When people are unable to access suitable housing it can result in overcrowding, more young people living with their parents for longer, impaired labour mobility, which makes it harder for businesses to recruit staff, and increased levels of homelessness.
- 2.2. Older housing stock can also bring with it issues around energy efficiency, adaptability, maintenance, repair and general suitability for housing demands and needs today, and in the future, as some housing stock reaches the end of its useable life.
- 2.3. The average home in England in June 2023 was £286,000 an increase of 5% from November 2022. The 2021 Census record 61.3% of people owning their own homes in England, a decrease from 63.6% in 2011, it also shows an increase in those in private rented accommodation since 2011, at 20.5% and a decrease for those in social rented housing, at 17.1 %.
- 2.4. The National Housing Federation estimates that around 340,000 new homes need to be supplied in England each year, of which 145,000 should be affordable. The legacy of Covid and the present cost of living crisis have also had real impact on people being able to afford a home, to live in their homes and a stall on the delivery of new houses to meet demand and need.
- 2.5. The government has set a national target for 300,000 new homes to be built each year to tackle the acute shortage of housing across the country. To help meet this target it has also introduced a new, larger, £11.5bn Affordable Homes Programme between 2021-2026 to deliver 180,000 affordable new homes. The government identifies the provision of affordable housing as key to ending the housing crisis, tackle homelessness and provide aspiring homeowners with a step onto the housing ladder.
- 2.6. The government has recently passed new legislation and has published white papers and reports that will impact the housing market. The Housing Strategy will be delivered in the context of the following:
 - **Social Housing Act 2023** forms a new era of regulation for the social housing sector and will enact the reforms outlines in the Social Housing White Paper, which are aimed at improving the regulation of social housing, strengthening tenants' rights, and ensuring better quality and safer homes for residents. This will be done through stronger powers for the Regulator of Social Housing to carry out inspections, additional Housing Ombudsman powers to publish landlord best practice, 'Awaab's Law' which sets strict time limits for social landlords to address hazards such as damp and mould, new qualification requirements for registered providers.
 - **Renters Reform Bill**, introduced to Parliament (17 May 2023), delivers the government's 2019 manifesto commitment to abolish Section 21 'no fault' evictions

which will empower renters to challenge poor landlords without fear of losing their home.

- **Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill**- sets out a policy regime to tackle geographical disparities across the UK based on the government setting medium term missions, with a 2030 timeframe, to boost productivity and living standards, spread opportunities and improve opportunities, restore a sense of community and local pride and belonging and empower local leaders and communities. Housing is a key component of this. The Levelling Up paper seeks to work with places in a more joined up way to tackle housing and regeneration issues.
 - **Homes England Strategic Plan 2023-2028**- has been developed collaboratively with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The strategy sets out how Homes England will play its part in delivering the government's Levelling up and housing agendas. Its mission is to "drive regeneration and housing delivery to create high-quality homes and thriving places. This will support greater social justice, the levelling up of communities across England and the creation of places people are proud to call home". The strategy has five interconnected objectives to deliver on the mission: create vibrant and successful places, build a housing and regeneration sector that works for everyone, enable sustainable homes and places, promote creation of high-quality homes in well designed places, facilitate the creation of homes people need.
- 2.7. Homes England pledge to use the strategy to work closely with local authorities, registered providers, government departments and the private sector as partners to deliver change, and intervene directly, exercising the use of their statutory powers to champion both national and local interests.
- 2.8. The Renters Reform Bill also protects over two million landlords, making it easier for them to recover properties when they need to – so they can sell their property if they want to, move in a close family member, or when tenants wilfully do not pay rent. Notice periods will also be reduced where tenants have been irresponsible – for example breaching their tenancy agreement or causing damage to the property.

3. Local context

- 3.1. All the following data and much more can be found on the Durham insights webpage² and are up to date at time of publication. County Durham is a largely rural county with almost half the population living in rural areas. In 2021 the County contained 249,520 dwellings, projected to rise to 258,374 by 2043.

Dwelling Stock

- 3.2. In County Durham 62.5% of properties are owner-occupied, 20% are social rented and 17.1% are private rented. Most dwellings in the county are terraced houses, which at 36% of the stock, is higher than for the Northeast region and for England. The mix of dwelling types in the county is changing with the proportion of bungalows in the county rising to 14%, higher than the region and England percentages. Detached dwellings have risen to 15%, again above the Northeast region of 12%. Of all dwellings, 5.9% have one bedroom/bedsit, 35.2% have two bedrooms, 44.9% have three bedrooms and 16.7% have four or more bedrooms.

Housing Market context

- 3.3. Median prices in County Durham have consistently been slightly lower than median prices for the North East, which are well below those for England as a whole. Overall, prices have increased from £100,000 in 2015 to £123,000 in 2022. Prices peaked at £128,000 in between April 2020 – March 2021 but have since fallen slightly.

Social Context

- 3.4. Indicators of deprivation have seen improvements in some areas, but not all have experienced the same benefits. The county is ranked 48th for deprivation out of 151 Upper Tier Local Authorities, with 1 being the most deprived authority. Child poverty in the county is 27.3% which is slightly lower than the Northeast as a region but still higher than England which is 22.5%. As a county it is also ranked 148th out of 151 Upper Tier Local Authorities for living environment. This rank considers the quality of the local environment including the quality of housing and outdoor environment.
- 3.5. The delivery of the Housing Strategy will complement activities in the following plans and strategies.
- The County Durham Plan is the Council's Local Plan. It sets out our growth ambitions between now and 2035 and the level of new homes, jobs and infrastructure needed to support this. The plan presents a vision for potential housing, jobs and the environment until 2035.
 - The County Durham Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2020-25) places our community at the heart of our wish to improve health and wellbeing, and to reduce health inequalities. It recognises the impact that housing quality can have on people's physical and mental health and sets out priorities to tackle the number of rough sleepers and the rise of households in temporary accommodation and reduce low quality housing.
 - The Climate Emergency Response Plan 2 (2022-24) sets out the long-term vision for County Durham, Durham County Council to reach net zero in its emissions by 2030, with the target for the County to become carbon neutral being brought forward to 2045 It

² <https://www.durhaminsight.info/#/view-report/5f6e69673588409bae5d58e537a1c5bf/E06000047>

sets out green energy aims including all new developments to have green energy generation schemes, and energy efficient, carbon passive technology to be used on new and existing buildings.

- The County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy sets a clear, long-term vision for the area's economy up to 2035, with an overarching aim to create more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy. It seeks to overcome barriers in order to transform levels of growth and harness the county's potential. It recognises that housing is a major enabler to achieving economic growth and better social outcomes for our communities.

Devolution

3.6. On 28 December 2022 the Government announced a devolution deal with the seven councils across the North East, including Durham. To implement the deal, a new Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) will be established. The new Mayor, when elected, will have significant powers including relating to housing. We therefore recognise that the Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan are being developed in the context of emerging devolution work, including place partnerships and potential mayoral strategies.

4. Principles

4.1. The following principles establish the foundation and rationale underpinning our vision.

Principle 1: Everyone has a right to a warm, safe and decent home.

4.2. Homes should be well maintained, free of damp and mould. People should feel safe in their homes from domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour. A home should support positive health outcomes.

Principle 2: Everyone should have access to a home that is affordable to them.

4.3. We will support the delivery of a range and choice of homes to meet housing need and demand, including market housing for those who can afford it, affordable housing products for those who cannot afford to have their needs met through the market. Alongside the provision of new homes, we will work to bring empty homes back in to use, where appropriate, to meet housing needs. By ensuring a sufficient supply of all types of housing we can help prevent homelessness and reduce reliance on temporary accommodation. We will also seek to make sure there is sufficient housing for everyone, including Gypsy and Roma Travellers, children in care and students.

Principle 3: Housing is the cornerstone of communities and should support improved health, community safety, educational attainment, and the local economy.

4.4. Health and wellbeing and life opportunities should be the same for all residents of County Durham. Housing plays a vital role in creating and sustaining strong communities, from providing a safe and secure place to live, to providing outdoor space to play and socialise. The blend of good quality homes, outdoor space, good infrastructure, with access to services, good schools and employment opportunities are key to thriving communities.

4.5. The Housing Strategy will align with a number of other strategies and plans to ensure that communities are safer, healthier and more prosperous. These include the Inclusive Economic Strategy, the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Growing Up in County Durham Strategy and the principles of the Anti-Social Behaviour pledge in supporting safe neighbourhoods.

Principle 4: The strategy will be for the county, not the council, and will promote local solutions underpinned by community engagement.

4.6. The Housing Strategy will be a strategy for County Durham that will be developed and delivered in partnership across the county and for the benefit of all of our residents. We will make use of the County Durham Partnership and other relevant groups in developing and delivering the Strategy.

4.7. The Housing Strategy will promote community consultation and engagement as part of the delivery of its priorities. It will also jointly develop local solutions with partners, residents and relevant agencies.

Principle 5: All new homes should be accessible, tenure blind and provide flexible living for different stages in a person's life, always aiming to allow people to be independent, including remaining in their home for as long as they desire.

4.8. It is important that the homes that are delivered to meet needs are accessible and flexible. We will support people to live independently and remain in their home for as long as they desire by ensuring homes are flexible and can adapt to differing accommodation needs over a

lifetime, including supporting family living and adaptability for older age. The tenure of an affordable new build should not be distinguishable from market housing in the quality of its external finishings.

Principle 6: Existing and new communities should be physically, digitally, culturally and economically connected to support the creation of sustainable, safe, mixed and balanced communities, including bringing empty homes back into use.

4.9. The Housing Strategy recognises the diversity of communities across County Durham and the differing issues and opportunities they face. It has a role to coordinate activity of the council, its partners and wider investment opportunities to support sustainable, safe, mixed, and balanced and connected communities. We will support regeneration and renewal in our communities, including improving access to outdoor greenspace, bringing empty homes back into use or demolition where appropriate.

Principle 7: The strategy will support energy efficiency and carbon reduction in existing and new housing and contribute towards the council's Climate Emergency Response Plan

4.10. In line with the council's Climate Emergency Response Plan, we will maximise the opportunities available to address fuel poverty through combining advice schemes and heating improvements and targeting interventions at those most in need to improve the energy efficiency of housing and reduce bills. We recognise the importance of the contribution of housing to energy efficiency targets and will actively explore new technologies as they emerge. As a minimum new homes will be designed in line with current and future energy efficiency standards. In addition, we will continue to explore opportunities to deliver measures above and beyond standards including, utilising new and emerging technologies.

5. Priorities.

- 5.1. These priorities take forward the strategic direction of the Housing Strategy to deliver the vision. They set out the key areas where we will focus activity and how we will meet the housing challenges of the county.

Priority 1: Increase the delivery of new homes, including secure, affordable housing to meet housing needs together with the infrastructure required.

- 5.2. An additional 24,852 new homes are needed in the county between 2016 and 2035 to meet housing need with a significant proportion of these already committed either on sites under construction or sites not started with planning permission.
- 5.3. We recognise the different housing needs of households and groups across the county. The Housing Strategy supports a range and choice of housing which is accessible and well designed to meet future needs and contribute to the sustainability of our communities.
- 5.4. Housing can shape and influence health and wellbeing of occupants, educational outcomes for children, economic opportunities as well as providing a feeling of security for occupants. Access to physical, social and green infrastructure, such as health services, employment, education, transport and outdoor greenspace, can play a positive role in creating and maintaining connected, mixed, balanced and sustainable communities and improving social mobility. Therefore, we will seek to ensure that new housing is delivered in locations in proximity to existing services and facilities, however recognising that in some rural areas there is not the existing infrastructure, but these communities would benefit from development for local people so that they can continue to live in rural areas and contribute to the sustainability of rural communities. New housing should also utilise brownfield land wherever possible.
- 5.5. Whilst meeting the housing needs of all groups is important, there are some specific needs which require intervention.
 - In order to meet existing and emerging housing need, 836 affordable houses are required every year for the County Durham Plan period. This is for people who lack their own housing or who live in unsuitable housing and cannot afford to meet their housing needs in the market, but historically delivery has fallen short of this. Registered providers will play a role in the delivery of affordable housing products;
 - The population of the county is ageing and over the next few decades, there will be a 'demographic shift' with the number (and proportion) of older people increasing. 2014 based population projections for County Durham indicate that from 2016 to 2035 the number of people aged over 65 will increase from 105,200 to 146,300 (a 39% increase) and those aged 75 and over will increase from 45,700 to 75,700 (a 65.6% increase). As most older people usually live in small households, usually as couples and single people, a minimum of 90% of household growth over the 19-year County Durham Plan period will be in households aged over 65; and

- There is an increase in the number of people presenting as homeless or at risk of homelessness in County Durham, which includes a rise in the complexity of cases that are being presented. The Homelessness Strategy sets out its vision to eradicate homelessness and ensure everyone has a safe place to live and supports the Housing Strategy.

What we will do

- 5.6. We are committed to supporting the ambitions as set out in the County Durham Plan, by ensuring enough new homes are provided that are energy efficient and meet the needs and affordability levels of local residents.

We will:

- Increase the supply of affordable homes, including new council housing;
- Ensure that affordable housing products are affordable for local people; and
- Deliver infrastructure as set out in the County Durham Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and via s106 contributions.

We will do this by:

- 5.7. Continuing to shape and direct investment through the County Durham Plan to ensure housing needs are met. This includes:
- Allocate sites for housing – the current County Durham Plan allocates sites for the delivery of homes to meet the housing need of 1,308 dwellings per annum over the plan period up to 2035. Further allocations will be considered as part of the next County Durham Plan;
 - Support the delivery of strategic housing sites within the County Durham Plan to ensure sufficient and suitable housing land is available to support economic growth and provide quality housing for the residents of the county;
 - Work with partners in the identification and management of a brownfield sites programme;
 - Deliver affordable housing, including the following products: discount market sale, First Homes, shared ownership, rent-to-buy, affordable rent, help to buy, starter homes, council homes new build programme, and supporting registered providers with their development– the County Durham Plan requires that on eligible sites, a portion of housing is delivered as affordable housing to meet affordable needs;
 - Enable housing in rural areas, including through the use of rural exception sites, to meet identified local needs for affordable or specialist housing;
 - Deliver homes to meet the needs of older people – the County Durham Plan requires that homes are required of a standard, design and type to meet the needs of older people; and
 - Deliver student accommodation – the County Durham Plan allocates sites for purpose-built student accommodation and supports the delivery of non-allocated purpose-built student accommodation where it can be demonstrated that there is an identified need, alongside other considerations. The County Durham Plan enables homes in multiple

occupation to be permitted in line with a policy approach, recognising the concerns of some residents, and promoting, creating and preserving inclusive, mixed and balanced communities.

- 5.8. Deliver affordable housing by:
- Delivering 500 council houses as part of the Council Housing Delivery Programme. This includes both new build schemes and a programme of targeted acquisitions. The original intention was to deliver these 500 houses by 2026, however, the impact of covid 19 and wider economic conditions including inflationary pressures and rising interest rates have presented delivery challenges for the programme. As a result, we are intending to roll the programme forward commencing from the approval of the cabinet report in July 2023 with a six year delivery plan.
 - Registered providers will continue to play a significant role in the delivery of affordable housing products in County Durham through their investment plans.
- 5.9. Secure additional inward investment in the provision of new homes, including s106 delivery, to meet the target of the provision of an 836 of affordable homes per year between 2016-2035, by working closely with Homes England and registered providers (registered social landlords) to enable the provision of homes that meet needs.
- 5.10. Provide support for alternative delivery models including Community Led Housing. Community Led Housing is a valuable route of supply for affordable homes and other forms of specialist accommodation to meet localised needs.
- 5.11. Work with landlords to bring empty properties back into use, where appropriate, in order to meet local needs, by working with landlords, acquiring properties and delivering Targeted Delivery Plans (TDPs).
- 5.12. Commission a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment to identify housing demand and need to support a future review of the CDP.
- 5.13. Secure contributions for infrastructure, including through s106 agreements. The IDP has been developed in partnership with providers to identify infrastructure needs. It highlights some of the key development aspirations of the County Durham Plan including where future housing and jobs will be located and identifies those places where additional infrastructure or capacity is needed in the future.

Priority 2: Ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that support health and wellbeing.

- 5.14. Even though house prices in County Durham are below the national average, so are wages. New builds are still unaffordable for many on lower wages, particularly in areas that are considered high viability areas. Housing stock in the second hand market may not be available in some areas, for example in the city centre, and in parts of the county where there is stock available, it may be unsuitable for people's housing needs or not in a suitable location.
- 5.15. Whilst the NPPF definition of affordable housing is recognised, we are committed to delivering affordable housing products that are available in a variety of tenures and types and linked to local income. Homes should be affordable for local people with a choice of products that households can afford without falling into debt. Home ownership should be accessible to all. Those on lower wages should also be able to aspire to home ownership with a range of options available to assist them.

- 5.16. There has been an increase in homelessness in County Durham. This can be attributed to several factors including:
- The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which placed a legal duty upon local authorities to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need;
 - The impact of policy approaches introduced in response to Covid 19, which have since been rescinded, and have led to an increase in the number of evictions;
 - That homelessness cases presenting are becoming more complex with a range of acute housing needs; and
 - The cost-of-living crisis, which puts additional financial pressures on households and their ability to sustain a tenancy.
- 5.17. The 2017 Act introduced a requirement to both prevent and relieve homelessness through the provision of interim or short-term temporary accommodation where necessary. As a result, the council has faced increasing costs for the provision of temporary accommodation, with households living in temporary accommodation longer.
- 5.18. We are working hard to reduce the number of households being placed in temporary accommodation and to minimise the impact that homelessness has on individuals and families.

What we will do

- 5.19. We want to ensure that everyone has fair and equal access to housing that is safe, secure, affordable and meets their needs.

We will:

- Help and support people onto the housing ladder and own their own home through a variety of products;
- Help and support people to prevent themselves becoming homeless; and
- Enable people to secure and maintain good quality, permanent accommodation.

We will do this by:

- 5.20. Work together to maximise the delivery of affordable housing through the housing enabling function including accessing Homes England grant.
- 5.21. Focus on homelessness prevention by developing a new Homelessness Strategy aligned to the Homelessness Reduction Act, setting out how we and our partners will help people address their housing needs to avoid homelessness.
- 5.22. Prepare a Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document, including a First Homes cap, which will enable people to get on the housing market ladder. Continue to deliver affordable housing products including Social Rent, Affordable Rent, First Homes, Discount Market Sale, Shared Ownership, Rent-To-Buy.
- 5.23. Prepare and implement a Temporary Accommodation Strategy.

- 5.24. Review the choice based letting system, Durham Key Options (DKO) and work collaboratively with partners to deliver homes through DKO, to ensure that those who need housing, including those who have complex needs, have fair and equal access to it.

Priority 3: Ensure high quality, energy efficient homes and effective landlord services.

- 5.25. County Durham has seen a significant rise in the size of the privately rented sector (PRS) stock, with growth of nearly 78% to over 28,000 dwellings (12.6% of all occupied dwellings) between 2001 and 2011. The census of 2021 and modelled data suggest that this has increased again. Much of the private rented housing stock is older terraced housing and is often in poor condition.
- 5.26. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) takes into account housing safety hazards in order to assist the council in identifying and protecting against potential risks from deficiencies identified in dwellings. This research has shown that 12% of PRS properties have at last one category 1 hazard as determined by HHSRS as opposed to 10% in owner occupied homes and 5% in the social rented sector.
- 5.27. As the largest social landlords in the county, registered providers will continue to improve their stock including as part of their decarbonisation programmes. In addition, the recent Social Housing Act (2023) includes stronger powers for the regulator of Social Housing, social housing reform such as 'Awaab's Law', changes to the Decent Homes Standards, more rights for tenants and new qualifications and training standards for registered providers.
- 5.28. County Durham has many areas and communities that are experiencing a mix of housing and wider residential environment issues. This includes issues such as: improving standards in the private rented sector; long-term empty homes; the provision of sufficient affordable housing; meeting the housing needs of older people; and addressing fuel poverty. We are committed to working with local communities and landlords to ensure that regeneration is shaped and delivered in a way that meets their needs.
- 5.29. The council approved a selective licensing scheme for County Durham on 16 September 2020 which was subsequently agreed by the Secretary of State on 30 November 2021. The scheme runs until 2027 and aims to improve management standards increasing compliance rates, provide safe and healthy homes by reducing housing hazards and disrepair and reduce anti-social behaviour by 10% from baseline figures. Enforcement action will also be carried out where appropriate to do so.

What we will do

- 5.30. We are committed to ensuring that all homes are of high quality and that landlords that do not meet this quality are held to account.

We will:

- Ensure continuing and improved housing standards and conditions; and
- Deliver our new stock to the highest standards, with a focus on sustainability and energy efficiency.

We will do this by:

- 5.31. Continuously reviewing housing conditions in the private sector, identifying any action, including further licensing, that needs to be taken to improve conditions.

- 5.32. Continue to build and maintain positive relationships with private rented sector providers and make the new Private Landlords Accreditation Scheme, The Durham Rental Standard, an effective mechanism for engaging with the sector and a catalyst for change.
- 5.33. Continue to effectively implement our Selective Licensing Scheme.
- 5.34. Inspect properties as part of ongoing projects such as the Supported Housing Improvement Programme, Asylum Widening Dispersal Scheme and Homes for Ukraine, to ensure these properties offer safe accommodation.
- 5.35. Work to identify new HMOs that require a licence and take robust action against landlords who fail to comply with legislative requirements and HMO management regulations.
- 5.36. Continue partnership working through our formal partnership arrangements, including the Housing Forum, and as part of the council's wider housing enabling role.
- 5.37. Regenerate our estates and communities by working with residents to develop and deliver solutions that meet local needs and priorities, generate new investment, create safe, mixed, balanced, and sustainable communities, and provide homes that are affordable.

Priority 4: Ensure a comprehensive range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, disabled people and children and young people, including specialist accommodation and support.

- 5.38. As our population of older people continues to grow, sometimes with complex health conditions, the demand for appropriate housing and support is increasing. One of our key issues will be how we continue to plan for an ageing population, including new provision, accessible and adaptable homes, specialist accommodation and bungalows in the right locations with the infrastructure and amenities to support them.
- 5.39. People with additional needs require safe, secure and affordable homes with the support required to remain independent and have a good quality of life. The join up between housing and social care is really important to assist many residents live independently and to plan for future housing stock provision. For many people the care and support required can be delivered in general needs housing, but independent living and supported housing models are required where people need additional safety and security and/or a substantial level of support. This includes through a Housing First Approach which prioritises getting people quickly into stable homes. Others that may need support are victims of crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse and people involved in the Criminal Justice System and prison releases.

What we will do

- 5.40. We want to ensure that everyone has fair and equal access to the supported and specialist housing that meets their specific needs.

We will:

- Support a range of housing options that enable people to live safely and independently for as long as possible;
- Develop a Housing First programme that focuses on first giving someone immediate access to a settled and secure home, with access to appropriate support, where

requested by the client, including services to cater for those who may be alcohol or drug dependant; and

- Continue joint working between housing, health, social care services and external providers and partners.

We will do this by:

- 5.41. Promote and sustain independent living, by planning for the provision of specialist and supported housing and housing related support for a variety of client groups, such as people with physical and mental health needs and those with learning disabilities in line with Adults and Childrens Services commissioning strategies.
- 5.42. Provide temporary accommodation which gives tenancy support to tenants who are excluded from the Housing Register for various reasons or present with complex needs.
- 5.43. Ensure the provision of adaptations together with flexible, personalised care and support to enable people to live independently for as long as possible as their care needs develop with age.
- 5.44. Undertake a Needs Led Accommodation Review (NLAR) to consider longer term specialist accommodation needs – the NLAR is considering the longer term needs of specific groups including children and young people, older people, people with mental health or learning difficulties and homelessness. The join up between housing and social care is important to assist many residents live independently and to plan for future housing stock provision.
- 5.45. Implement the polices of the County Durham Plan including:
 - Ensure that new housing meets the Nationally Described Space Standards;
 - build 66% of new housing to M4(2) accessible and adaptable standards on developments of 5 units or more;
 - Require 100% of specialist housing for older people will meet M4(2) accessible and adaptable standards, and a minimum of 25% of accommodation to meet M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings); and
 - Require new development to provide an attractive range of housing options for older people with a minimum of 10% of dwellings to be of a design and type that will increase the housing options of older people, such as bungalows.
- 5.46. Continue engagement and joint working with HMPPS and other Criminal Justice Agencies to prioritise and maintain housing pathways in the Justice System.
- 5.47. As part of the review of DKO we will ensure the housing needs of our care leavers are prioritised, securing accommodation that mirrors the options available for young people who have not been in care.

Priority 5: Ensure high quality placemaking, creating safe, accessible, prosperous and sustainable places to live.

- 5.48. The quality of the environment in which homes are built is as important to our health, wellbeing and prosperity as the buildings themselves. We are committed to ensuring that in future it will be of a high standard in terms of architecture, urban design, sustainability, and innovation. This ensures that new development enhances and complements existing high-quality areas and raises the design standards and quality of areas in need of regeneration.

New development should provide local people with civic pride, make them feel safe and secure and help improve the overall image of the county and reflect local distinctiveness. Development needs to be carefully planned to ensure important features and characteristics are protected and enhanced.

- 5.49. Creating accessible and permeable public realm through connecting places and spaces, will help to ensure that many daily needs can be met using walking, cycling or public transport. A high-quality built environment should consider the amenity of both existing and future residents and consideration should be given to matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, as well as local climatic conditions. Indoor and outdoor space, including private and communal gardens, should be provided as appropriate to support a reduction in health inequality and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Spaces should be designed to be accessible to all users, including people with sensory and cognitive issues as well as reduced physical mobility. They must also seek to minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour and make people feel that they can use them safely.
- 5.50. Addressing only the physical aspects of housing in County Durham will not in itself improve the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of our communities, or reduce inequalities. Poverty in the form of material deprivation (inability to afford basic resources and services such as sufficient food and heating) is a persistent issue within certain localities and communities. If we wish to address this, then the location of our housing must take into account easy access to health and social care, education, employment, transport and healthy food. It must also support the viability and vitality of our communities including those in rural areas.

What we will do

- 5.51. We want to ensure our communities are places where people want to live.

We will:

- Aim to ensure that all housing, in particular affordable housing, is developed alongside the provision of sustainable infrastructure and community-based services; and
- Ensure that the wider environment of communities is of a high quality, including raising the quality of the wider environment in communities in need of regeneration.

We will do this by:

- 5.52. Continue to develop and implement a programme of Targeted Delivery Plans (TDPs) to improve the quality of the existing housing stock and the wider residential environment to focus regeneration activities for communities most in need and support the creation and maintenance of mixed and balanced communities.
- 5.53. Ensure that new housing is accompanied by the delivery of the infrastructure that is needed to support it.
- 5.54. Create sustainable communities by locating new development in areas which offer the best opportunity for sustainable development patterns or support the vitality and viability of our towns and villages.
- 5.55. Create safer living environments through careful neighbourhood design, proactively tackling anti-social behaviour in our communities.
- 5.56. Create healthier places to live which are fully accessible to people with disabilities, by supporting the design and layout of open and amenity spaces that are flexible and explore

opportunities for community food growing space where appropriate to support the creation of healthy communities and improve wellbeing.

- 5.57. Promote well designed places and buildings that reflect local distinctiveness, promote sustainability and support the transition to a low carbon future.
- 5.58. Support the housing related element of the development and delivery of a new employment support offer which provides key worker support to vulnerable groups, those excluded from the labour market and those in insecure and low paid employment.

6. Delivery and Monitoring

- 6.1. The Housing Strategy sets out an ambitious set of priorities which can be achieved through the collective commitment of the council and its key partners and stakeholders. It is recognised there is a whole range of activities currently being undertaken across the county. Will also be preparing a Delivery Plan to accompany the Housing Strategy, in conjunction with internal and external partners, which will identify further activity and actions that will ensure delivery.
- 6.2. Through delivering the Strategy, we will respond to the specific needs of localities and address local issues. This will be recognised in developing the Delivery Plan, which will reflect the geography of the area.
- 6.3. It is important that progress against this Strategy and the subsequent Delivery Plan is monitored robustly and transparently, we will therefore:
 - Monitor progress annually against a monitoring framework so that we are responsive to emerging needs, policy, and legislative changes; and
 - Report progress against the strategic priorities and actions in the Delivery Plan annually and publish details of our progress on the council's website.
- 6.4. The delivery of the Housing Strategy will be supported by a number of other policies and strategies including: The Towns and Villages Investment Plan, Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) 2, Inclusive Economic Strategy, Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, County Durham Plan, Homelessness Strategy, Poverty Action Plan, Growing up in County Durham Strategy, Tenancy Strategy, Affordable Warmth Strategy, Allocations Policy.

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County Durham
**Housing Strategy Principles and Priorities
Paper**

Feedback Report for the Housing Conversation
October 2023



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Introduction

Introduction

- This Feedback Report is an overarching summary of the findings and messages from the comprehensive engagement carried out through the Housing Conversation as an input to the County Durham Housing Strategy
- It includes analysis of the findings from the three surveys (residents, young people and industry) and insights from the conversations (meetings and events, presentations with Q&A, and workshops)
- It includes a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis with facts and figures, diagrams, charts, tables and text
- It sets out the process, summary of the engagement, and key messages and areas of focus. The following sections then summarise the findings of the Housing Conversation with detailed sections for the residents, young people and industry surveys and the key themes from the consultation events. Finally, it sets out what this means for the Strategy

Timescales and next steps



Housing Conversation



The Housing Conversation

Webpage statistics

- Page Views – 1039
- Unique Page Views – 789
- Average time on the page 253.72
- Entrance to page – 551
- Bounce rate – 42.06%
- % Exit – 66.22%

Twitter

- Number of tweets: 22
- Total impressions: 23,102
- Total engagement: 205 (70 link clicks)

Facebook Ad

- FB advert started 28 July
- Total reach: 22,248
- Total engagement: 953 (859 link clicks)

Facebook

- Number of posts: 6
- Total reach: 16,924
- Total engagement: 166 (51 link clicks)

Surveys Returned

- Residents: 368
- Young People: 257
- Industry: 15

Internal Promotion

- Intranet News item 7 Aug
- Buzz weekly 11 Aug

Facebook/Instagram stories

- Total reach on FB stories: 8099
- Total reach on Insta stories: 3471

Events

- 13 AAPs Attended
- 9 Partnerships Attended
- 2 Online Events
- Rural Housing Event
- Scrutiny Workshop
- CDALC

Main messages

- Overwhelming support for the vision, principles and priorities
- Concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime is illustrated by 34% of respondents to the resident survey disagreeing that they thought that their area was safe
- Support for the delivery of homes to meet needs, including homes for older people, families and affordable homes
- The importance of adaptation of houses to meet changing needs over a lifetime illustrated by 1 in 3 respondents to the residents survey stating that they did not think their home would meet their needs in the future
- Energy efficiency improvements to the existing housing stock and high standards in new housing that both help the environment and reduce bills was seen as very important shown by 91% of respondents to the resident survey stating that they wanted to live in an energy efficient house in the future
- Financial pressures were clearly expressed, for example 27% of respondents disagreed that they thought they would be able to afford to keep their home warm in the future
- Concerns raised about the impact of concentrations of private rented properties, which can be associated with anti-social behaviour, empty homes and absent landlords

Main messages (cont..)

- Support for regulation of landlords, including through selective licensing, but also an ask for more recognition of good landlords
- Local schemes to improve our towns and villages was recognised as an important future priority
- Whilst recognising that meeting the needs of all groups is important the impact of student housing on mixed and balanced communities was raised by many respondents
- Recognition of the rising issue of homelessness in the county expressed by 1 in 10 young people agreeing that they or their family was homeless or at risk of homelessness
- 48% of those with a disability disagreed that their home allowed them to live independently
- Importance of bringing empty homes back into use but also recognition that some properties are beyond their useful life and demolition may be appropriate
- Agreement that good quality housing is a significant factor in supporting health and wellbeing outcomes
- A recognition that new housing needs to be provided alongside sufficient infrastructure to accommodate the impact of the development including schools, doctors, parking etc.

Surveys

Residents survey

Overview of Respondents

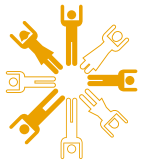


368

residents responded

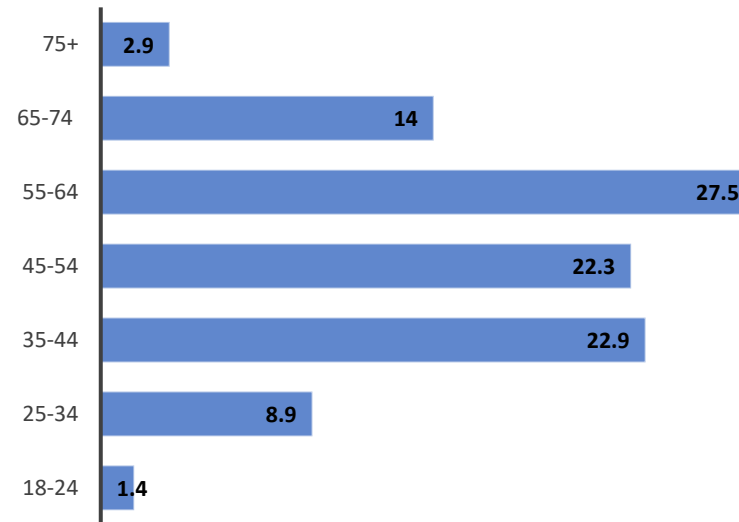


70% Female
28% Male
2% Non-binary/other

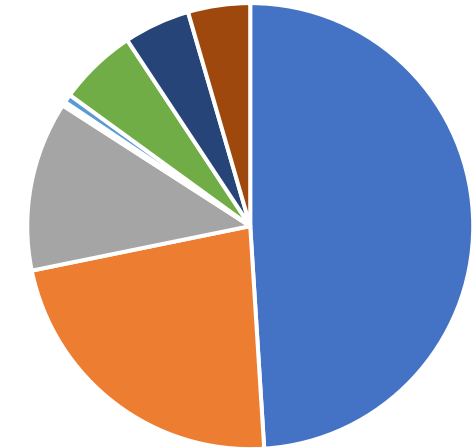


22% of respondents identified as disabled

The majority of respondents were aged over 45



Most respondents were in full time employment



- In full time employment
- Retired
- In part time work
- Unemployed
- Full time student
- Self Employed
- Long term sick
- Other

Housing Condition

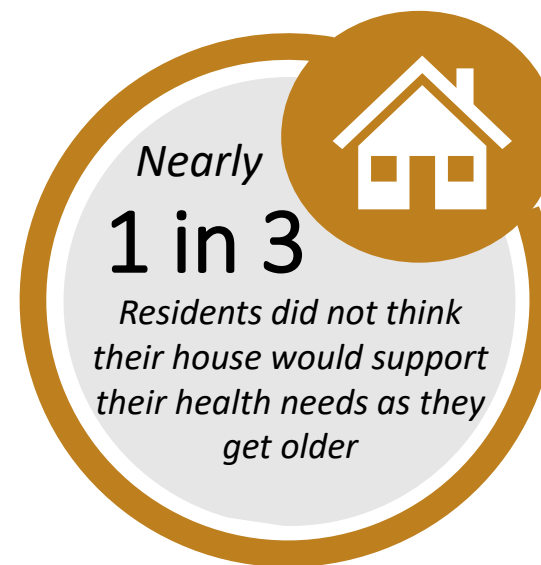
“My house is not fit for aging people. It needs too many repairs that I can’t afford.”

“We have damp and mould in multiple rooms.”

“I was very disappointed that my new home didn't automatically come with a heat pump and solar PV as standard.”

Over 4 in 5 respondents felt that the home they lived in currently met their needs

48% of those with a disability disagreed that their home allowed them to live independently



Housing safe to live in

Over 80% thought their home was well maintained and safe to live in



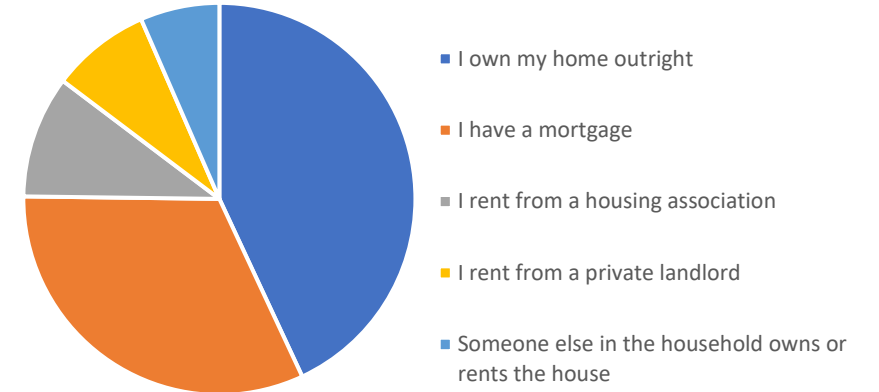
Energy Efficiency

Nearly 60% disagreed that their home was energy efficient

Tenure and Affordability

Three quarters of tenants agreed that their landlord is fair and ensures the terms of their tenancy are met

“I have a good landlord but he’s looking to sell and our future is uncertain.”



In the future I will be able to:	Agree or strongly agree	Disagree or strongly disagree
afford to pay my mortgage or rent	67%	13%
afford to keep my house warm	56%	27%
afford to pay all my monthly household bills	61%	20%

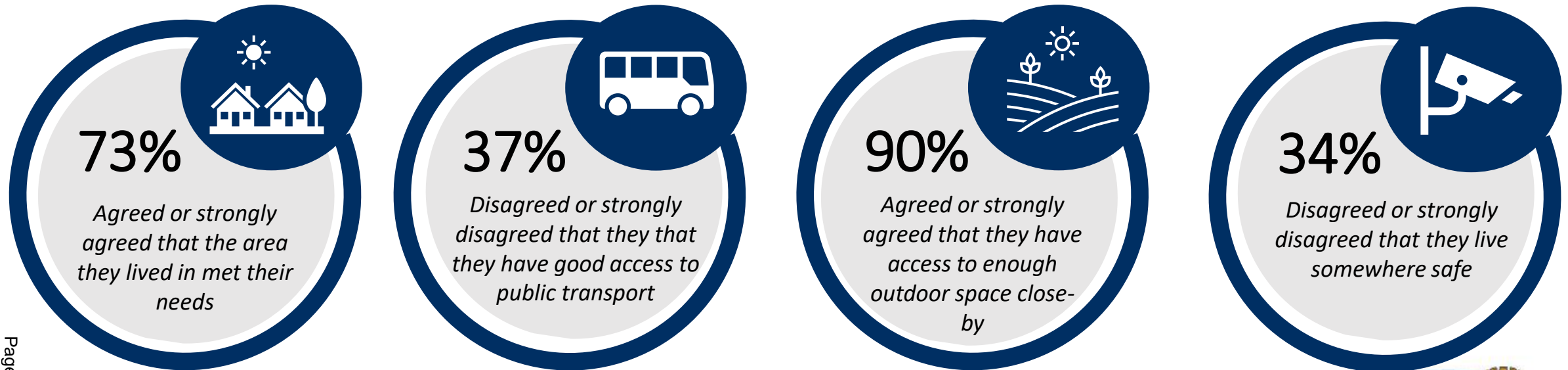
“My house is poorly insulated and needs a new boiler but I need help to pay for it.”

“Mortgages, heating and all other expenses have increased dramatically in the last few years, very worrying times for anyone with a mortgage.”

Place, the local community and services

Residents were generally positive about the area where they live with 73% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the place they live in meets their needs. Comments on why included, a good environment, had good access to schools and other facilities or was close to family. Access to enough outdoor space close by was particularly valued with 90% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they had enough close by. However, a significant number of respondents (37%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have access to good public transport links.

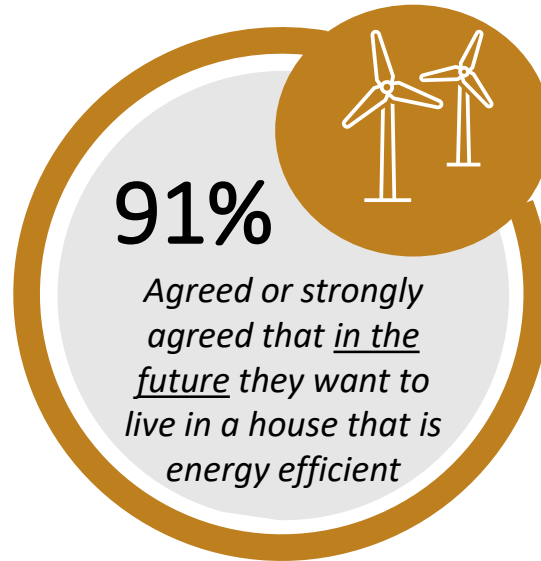
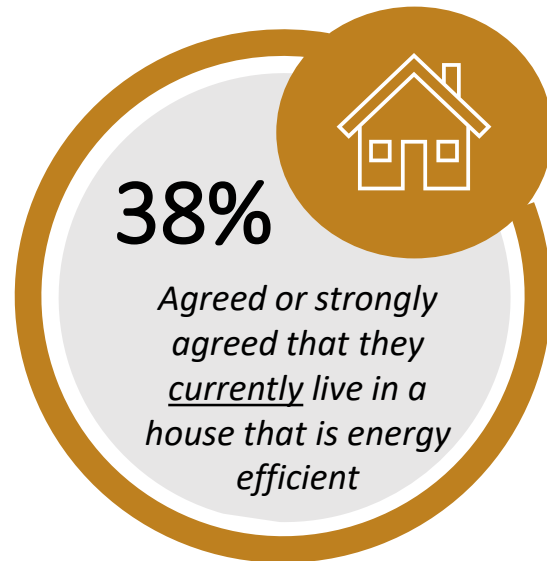
There were mixed views on community and safety. A higher proportion of residents strongly agreed or agreed (66%) that where they lived was safe and had a sense of community. However, a significant minority (34%) had concerns about anti-social behaviour in their area.



Energy Efficiency

The survey asked residents whether they considered that their property was energy efficient and therefore lowers bills and helps the environment. The number of respondents that did was quite low at only 38%. However, when asked whether they wanted this to be the case in their future home 91% agreed or strongly agreed.

We also asked what technologies they would be interested in to help achieve this solar panels, electric car charge points and air or ground source heat pumps were the most popular.



Do any of these technologies interest you?

Solar panels	72%
Home electric car charge point	47%
Air or ground source heat pump	43%
Battery storage	39%
External wall insulation	38%
Cavity wall insulation	31%
Internal wall insulation	31%
Loft insulation	24%

Future Plans

Over half of residents (54%) want to stay in their current home for many reasons including proximity to friends and family, they like the house or the area, it has good access to services, facilities and public transport, they have invested in improving the property or they cannot afford to move. Nearly a quarter (24%) liked the area they lived in but wanted a different house because they want to be closer to services and facilities, want a smaller or larger house or a bungalow, want more outside space or parking or want to buy their own house. A further 12% want to move somewhere else in County Durham either because of a lack of facilities, for family reasons, want a more rural or more urban location, want to move from an area dominated by students or to avoid anti-social behaviour. Finally 10% want to leave County Durham altogether because of a lack of jobs, family reasons, areas are neglected, cost of living is too high or lack of community spirit.

Do you plan to stay in the area you currently live in?

Yes, I want to stay in the house I live in now	54%
Yes, but I want to move to a different house	24%
No, I want to move somewhere else in County Durham	12%
No, I want to move out of the county	10%

"I live in a convenient location, with good neighbours and easy access to green space."

"I am getting older and may need to move to smaller property or bungalow."

"I want to move somewhere with better transport links."

"There are very limited employment opportunities in County Durham."

Future priorities

Residents were asked to rate the importance of what do you think the council and its partners should do to support you and your local community's housing needs. The top 3 areas were:

- Making our towns and villages safer and more attractive
- Energy efficient improvements
- More affordable housing

They were also asked for any other suggestions and the most popular were:

- Limit student housing
- Enforcement of selective licensing
- Improving infrastructure
- Build more bungalows
- More jobs
- Reduce rents/Council Tax
- More brownfield not greenfield land for building

What do you think the council and its partners should do to support you and your local community's housing needs?

Local schemes to improve our towns and villages making them cleaner, safer and more attractive places to live	53%
Energy efficiency improvements and advice which helps reduce bills and is good for the environment	52%
More affordable housing	50%
Bring empty homes back into use	47%
Raise property and landlord standards in the private rental sector	40%
More older persons housing	26%
Provide adaptation schemes for older people and people with disabilities	20%
Provide supported accommodation to meet the needs of relevant groups e.g. children's homes, older persons, independent living for adults with learning disabilities	15%

Industry survey

Is there anything else that should be included?

“prefer - within communities connected with attractive active travel links.”

“The provision of active travel facilities and renewable energy.”

“more of a discussion on temporary housing for those in immediate need.”

“a reference to safety and security.”

“climate change/carbon reduction, and large-scale housing renewal.”

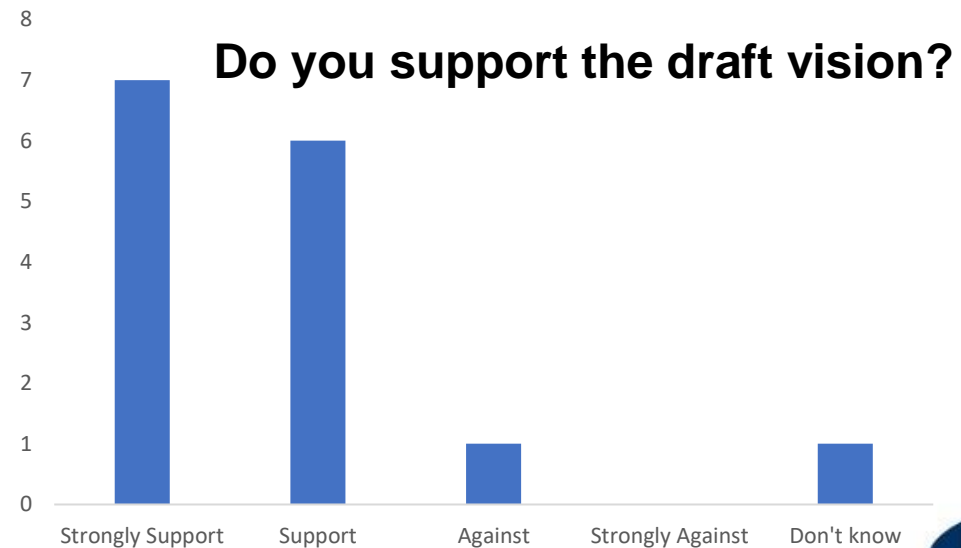
“recognition of the importance of infrastructure in supporting new housing.”

“refurbishing older assets and repurposing already-existing buildings as fresh housing stock.”

Vision

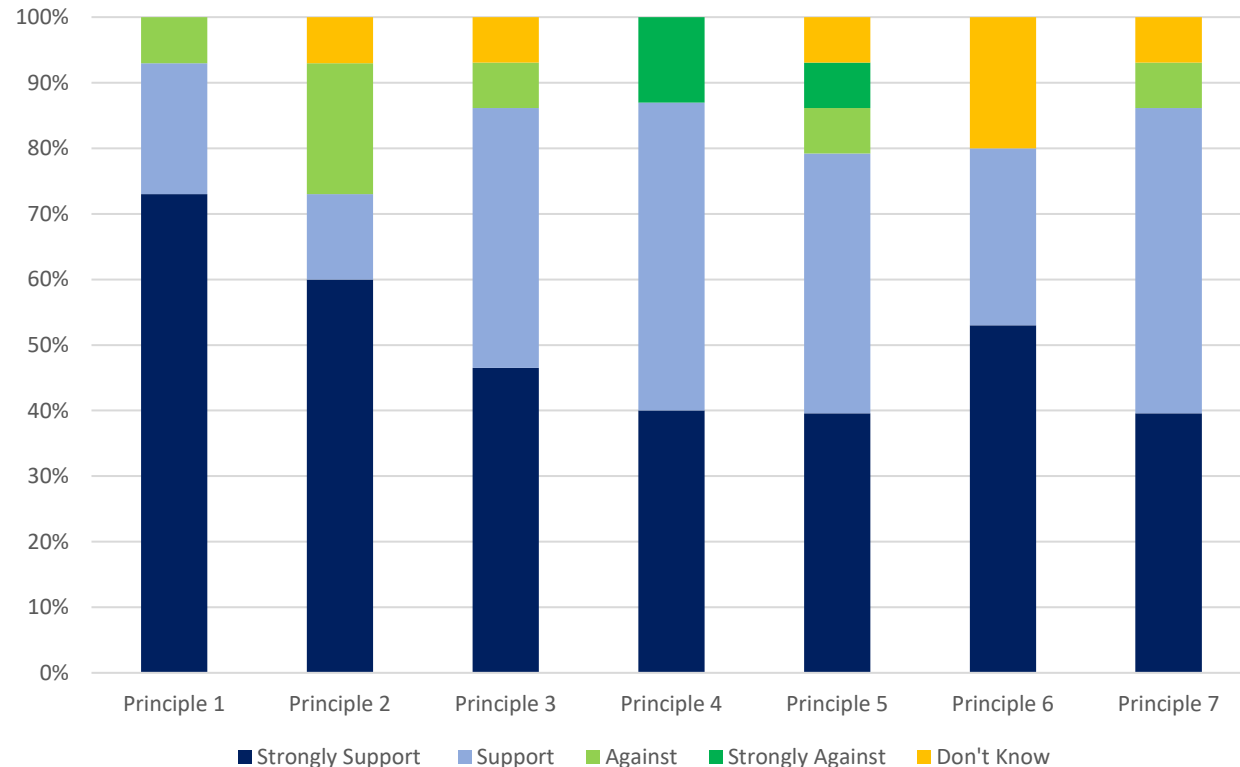
Do you have any views on the vision?

- Rural areas should not be forgotten
- Subjective and lacks precision
- Should include the location of housing sites
- It is not attainable
- Support the vision but how would it be delivered?
- It reflects what is effectively been done now
- Support the elements of affordability, sustainability, mixed and balanced communities



Principles

The Principles in the Housing Strategy establish the foundation and rationale underpinning decisions and actions to deliver the vision. We asked the industry for their views on the seven proposed principles. The graph below shows strong support for all of the principles and in particular for **Principle 1 (Everyone has a right to a warm, safe and decent home)**, **Principle 2 (Everyone should have access to a home that is affordable to them)** and **Principle 6 (Existing and new communities should be physically, digitally, culturally and economically connected to support the creation of sustainable, mixed and balanced communities, including bringing empty homes back into use).**



Although limited across the board there was some disagreement with the principles, in particular with **Principle 2 (Everyone should have access to a home that is affordable to them)** and **Principle 5 (All new homes should be accessible, tenure blind and provide flexible living for different stages in a person’s life, always aiming to allow people to be independent, including remaining in their home for as long as they desire)** and **Principle 4 (The strategy will be for the county, not the council, and will promote local solutions underpinned by community engagement)** which seems to have caused some strong feeling against.

Views on the Principles

Principle 1: Everyone has a right to a warm, safe and decent home

- Should be acknowledged that damp and mould can be caused by lifestyle as well as the condition of houses
- Consideration of additional safety features would be useful, for example, the installation of sprinkler systems
- Second line should include reference to neighbourhoods not just homes
- A revision to recognise that domestic abuse can be oppressive or coercive
- An Additional Licensing Scheme should be introduced in Durham City

Principle 2: Everyone should have access to a home that is affordable to them

- Everyone should have access to a safe roof over their head not a home. It's not quite the same thing
- Bringing empty homes back into use is critical to prevent the loss of agriculture or recreation land
- it is ignorant to suggest that more houses need to be built for those who can afford to purchase a home
- Other groups also require affordable housing, such as older people and students, this should be made explicit in the principle
- There should be some mention of affordable social housing as a tenure of choice not just affordability
- It would benefit from something around ability to sustain their homes when we talk about affordability, energy affordability is crucial

Principle 3: Housing is the cornerstone of communities and should support improved health, educational attainment and the local economy

- Infrastructure is the cornerstone, not housing, it must be improved first
- Health and wellbeing and life opportunities should be the same for all residents of County Durham
- Housing should be in the correct location, considering issues such as accessibility to jobs and education facilities
- Should include a commitment to the principles in the Anti-Social Behaviour pledge

Views on the Principles

Principle 4: The strategy will be for the county, not the council, and will promote local solutions underpinned by community engagement

- Engagement should be much broader than just the County Durham Partnership
- Presumably, the intent is for the Strategy to be for the benefit of residents rather than the Council
- How will the strategy be delivered in left behind neighbourhoods like Horden?
- We need to understand better how we can jointly develop "local solutions" and how community consultation/engagement mechanisms will develop

Principle 5: All new homes should be accessible, tenure neutral and provide flexible living for different stages in a person's life, always aiming to allow people to be independent, including remaining in their home for as long as they desire

- Tenure blind - conflicts with need for varied housing market in Principle 2
- This principle will push up costs and reduce supply in practice
- Include accessibility features where there are no cost implications
- Building new houses that will encourage older people to remain in three and four bedroom houses, supported by an entire care apparatus, and not downsize is counter to the principles of sustainability

Principle 6: Existing and new communities should be physically, digitally, culturally and economically connected to support the creation of sustainable, mixed and balanced communities, including bringing empty homes back into use

- Should be more incentives for owners to bring properties back into use
- Focuses too heavily on bringing empty homes back in to use. Should recognise that some of the housing stock is not sustainable for the long-term and that renewal or demolition is sometimes necessary
- Need to identify ways to recover HMOs into family homes

Principle 7: The strategy will support energy efficiency and carbon reduction in existing and new housing and contribute towards the council's Climate Emergency Response Plan

- Many of the green initiatives are unviable, ineffective, uneconomic and potentially more or as harmful to the environment as the status quo
- Locating new estates with public transport options in mind will also help to tackle poverty

- Should be a greater focus on climate change/carbon reductions through the strategy
- The minimum is the strategy should mandate is that all development is sustainable, has to produce less waste including land use, minimises impacts on local biodiversity and promote wider net biodiversity gain, more use of renewable energy sources and lowering lifecycle environmental impacts

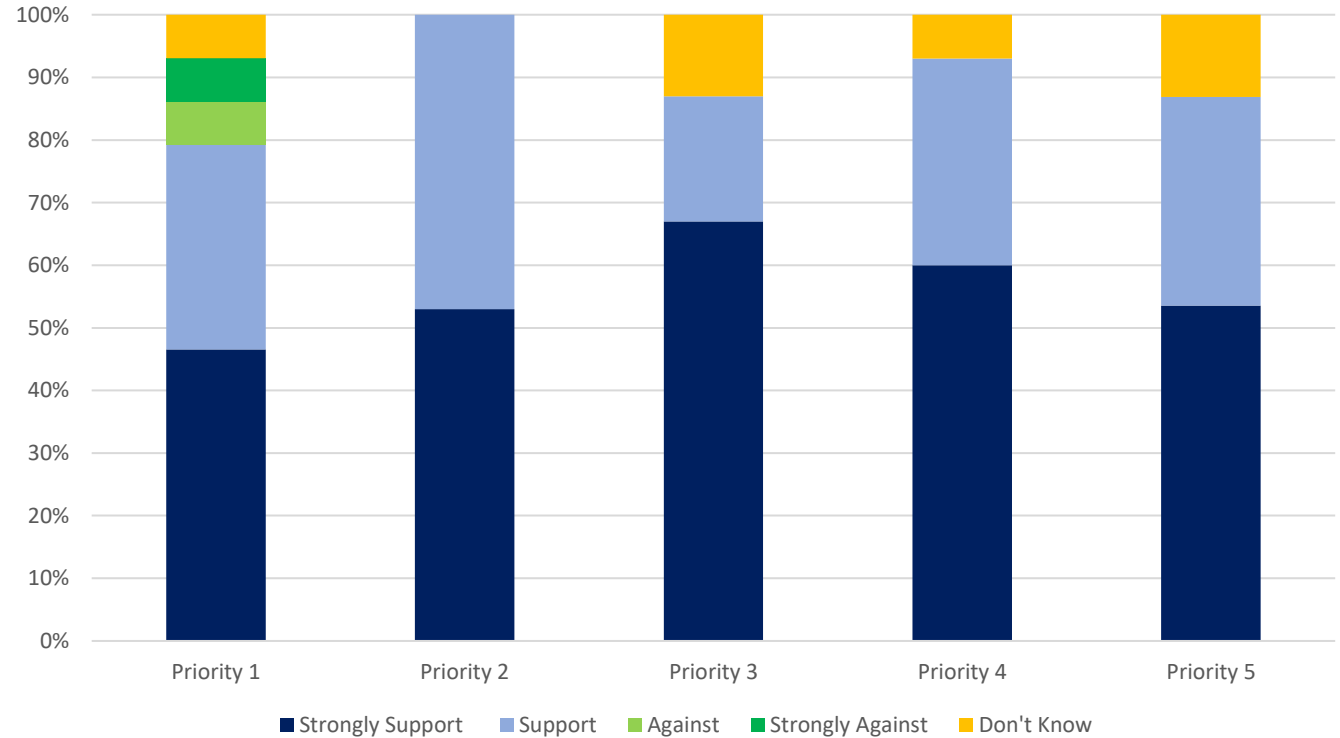
Other Comments on the Principles

- There should be a strong principle of equal treatment for privately owned and tenanted properties
- It should be recognised that there is increasing evidence that access to green space and biodiversity benefits health and well-being and so can reduce the burden on the NHS
- Welcome the sentiments but how will the masterplan for Horden be delivered?
- New housing should be designed so that the active travel options are so good that owning a private motor vehicle is considered an unnecessary expense
- Should be an additional principle that anticipates and seeks to target future transport poverty by ensuring all homes have fast, direct, safe and segregated active travel routes to major destinations

Priorities

The Priorities are where we will focus our actions and activities to deliver the vision. We asked the industry for their views on the five proposed priorities. The graph below shows strong support for all of the priorities and in particular for **Priority 3 (Ensure high quality homes and landlord services)** and **Principle 2 (Ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that meets their needs)**.

Although still limited the only priority which generated any disagreement was **Principle 1 (Increase the delivery of new homes, including secure, affordable housing to meet needs and to provide a Housing First approach, along with the infrastructure required)**.



Views on the Priorities

Priority 1: Increase the delivery of new homes, including secure, affordable housing to meet needs and to provide a Housing First approach, along with the infrastructure required

- New homes should only be built on brown field sites
- Accommodation should be able to access local facilities and shopping without incurring additional costs
- More supported housing is required
- There is a need for a much better approach to the impact of new homes on supporting infrastructure and communities
- The priority should reference working more collaboratively with RP partners
- Housing first relies on engagement and good support, it is unlikely to be successful in all cases
- The council should encourage the use of local construction labour with apprenticeships for building trades

Priority 2: Ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that meets their needs

- For housing to be safe it needs to have appropriate safety measures in place, as part of the design or retro-fit, for example sprinkler systems
- Rather than being about "management of Durham Key Options" it should be about "working collaboratively with partners to deliver through DKO
- Prevent landlords marketing properties for the following academic year only a few weeks after students arrive in Durham

Priority 3: Ensure high quality homes and landlord services

- This means higher rents
- Suggest it is only 'Ensure high quality homes'. Forgets that the condition of properties is also the responsibility of tenants
- Supporting landlords to help them understand their safety obligations would be useful
- An Additional Licensing Scheme should be established in Durham City
- The final bullet point should read "Registered Providers "will continue" to ensure that the condition of their housing is maintained and improved where necessary

Views on the Priorities

Priority 4: Ensure a comprehensive range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, disabled people and children and young people, including specialist accommodation and support

- The priority needs to be wider and inclusive of other agencies/providers
- Should make it clear that it includes victims of crime, antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse and people involved in the Criminal Justice System, and in particular prison releases

Priority 5: Ensure high quality placemaking, creating great and sustainable places to live

- New homes are required but should prioritise brownfield sites
- Giving thought to the safety and security of housing developments, as well as making places accessible and aesthetically pleasing can contribute towards sustainability
- Does not go far enough to address CO2/climate emergency issues in current housing stock or ensuring new development is sustainable
- Should include the use of Council land resources to deliver best value to neighbourhoods through a high-quality place strategy
- Needs greater consideration/emphasis on housing renewal
- Need a detailed strategy or Supplementary Planning Document which recognises the challenges that are faced by mixed student / non-student communities
- Should recognise that student accommodation can be blended with visitor, short stay, and / or young professional accommodation to make efficient use of the land that accommodation is built on

Other Comments on the Priorities

- Higher priority being given to already deprived and left behind neighbourhoods where decline has increased more recently.
- Active travel to ensure that people are not trapped in transport poverty
- Housing renewal needs to be included as we need to recognise some of the County's housing stock just isn't sustainable for the long-term and that it is not where people want or aspire to live
- How will the Strategy be used to address housing delivery needs or regeneration activities through the new Combined Authority?

Other General Comments

How can housing contribute to the Council's Climate Emergency?

- Assist landlords to provide energy efficient homes
- By building to the highest possible environmental standards
- Retrofit existing homes with renewable energy solutions
- Move towards net zero/passivhaus standards for all new build homes
- Undertake a large-scale education campaign for all County Durham households
- Build to net zero standards now, not wait for Government compulsion
- Design for maximum active travel

How can we prevent homelessness in County Durham?

- Encourage private landlords, rather than taxing them with unnecessary licensing schemes
- Temporary accommodation is an absolute must for County Durham
- Fill the empty houses
- There are very few homeless people but there are a number of rough sleepers that choose to sleep outside either due to substance issues or feeling unsafe within their home
- By continuing to work with other providers on those people greatest at risk and ensuring early interventions to prevent homelessness
- By ensuring that tenants are getting the best start to their tenancy, affordable accommodation, maintaining engagement, supporting vulnerabilities, easy access to services, better mental health support and sufficient short-term accommodation
- It should include victims of crime, antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse and people involved in the Criminal Justice System, and particularly prison releases

How do we ensure a comprehensive range of housing options?

- Building more houses including for older people or single people
- A wider range of properties with accessible bathrooms or ramps
- By replacing ageing properties
- Reuse empty houses and other buildings
- Understanding the data of the County to provide the correct options in the correct locations based
- Priority should be given to appropriate housing schemes that meet the needs of the vulnerable, elderly, disabled and children and young people
- Through multi-agency working

How can the delivery of housing support the local economy?

- A better question would be how on earth can the local economy support the massive number of houses which are being thrown up?
- If housing is in sustainable locations this would require less spend on housing costs, energy and transport, leaving more to be spent in the local economy
- Give priority to those new housing schemes that employ young people
- Good affordable housing will provide stable and sustainable communities that will feed into the local economy, people will want to stay, work, bring up families in their local area
- Ongoing development and delivery of a pipeline of new homes will support jobs and training opportunities leading to further investment

Other Comments

How can we ensure everyone has a warm, safe and decent home?

- The Council has statutory a responsibility for this so do not see it as a high enough priority
- By building to the highest possible environmental standards
- Making sure houses are actually repaired when needed
- Staying long enough in communities until matters are resolved in the most deprived areas
- Build more homes
- Expand selective licensing to the whole county including Durham City
- Through investment programmes and data led investment
- Implement the policy changes arising from the Renters Reform Bill

How can we meet our need for affordable homes?

- Build more homes including family housing
- Have up to date data to indicate how many are needed
- Work with landlords more effectively
- A massive public sector and grant-aided private sector programme is necessary

Is there anything else that should be included in the Housing Strategy?

- Bringing the most deprived areas up to a better standard rather than improving already more affluent areas
- I think there should be a principle that landlords should be treated equally to private owners on such matters as home insulation
- Include a target for how many homes you are going to have built in County Durham annually

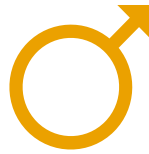
Young people survey

Overview of Respondents



257

young people responded

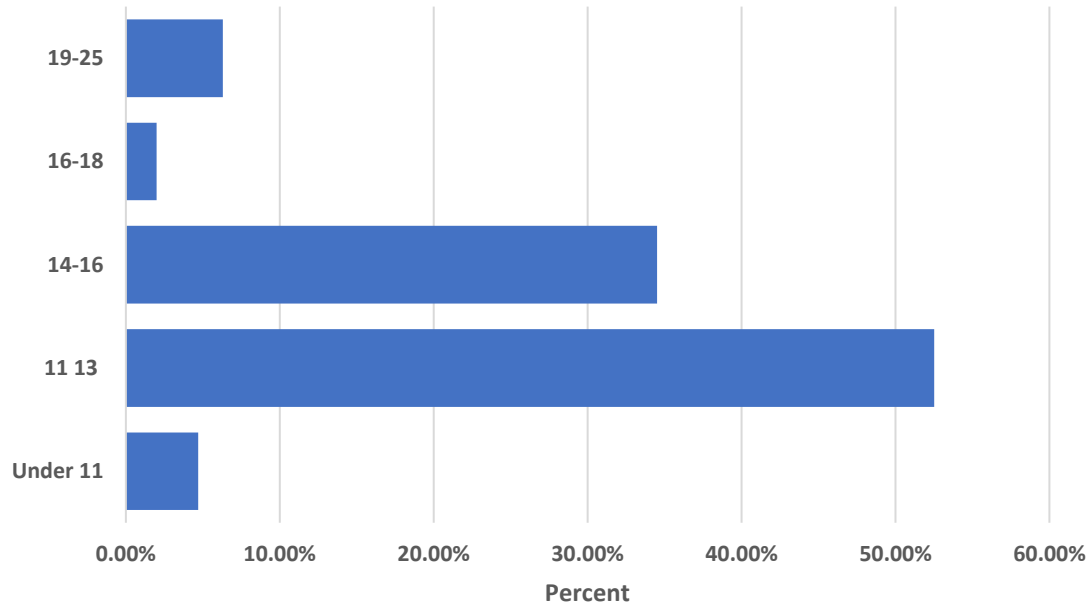


48% Female
45% Male
8% non-binary or other



11% of respondents identified as disabled

The majority of respondents were aged between 11 and 16:



Nearly **94%** lived with parents/guardian or family members

Housing Condition and Affordability

“I love my home, it is really cosy and warm”

“I love my house, it is my safe space.”

“My mam my brother my dog are living with my grandma because we cannot afford the expensive homes.”

“I like my house because it is quite big but we only have 3 bedrooms for 5 people which means me and my sister have to share a bedroom and we argue all the time as we don't have our own space.”

Over 4 in 5 young people felt that the home they lived in had enough space for their family to live in

The most common comment regarding what they would change about their home was that they wanted their own room

Over
1 in 10

Young people agreed they or their family was homeless or at risk of homelessness



Housing safe to live in

Nearly 90% thought their home was well maintained and safe to live in



Energy Efficiency

Over 30% disagreed that their home was energy efficient

Place, the local community and services

Young people were generally positive about the area where they live with 92% agreeing that they could easily get to work, school or college, the shops and leisure facilities. Access to outdoor space was particularly valued with 94% agreeing they had enough access to outdoor space close-by. Comments on what they liked about the area they lived in included, good outdoor space, good access to shops, good transport.

There were mixed views on community and safety. Whilst 96% of young people felt their homes were in good condition and safe, a significant minority (19%) disagreed that the area they lived in was safe and had a sense of community, with comments on what they didn't like including, problems with the area being rundown, litter, fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour.

"Where I live is on a big street for people to play on and enjoy the sun."

"There are lots of people throwing rubbish or furniture like freezers out onto our street."

"I like my house but where I live the neighbours don't like each other and they are always fighting on the street."

92%



Agreed they could easily get to work school or college, the shops and leisure facilities from the area they lived.

84%



Valued living close to their friends and family

94%



Agreed that they have access to enough outdoor space close-by

19%

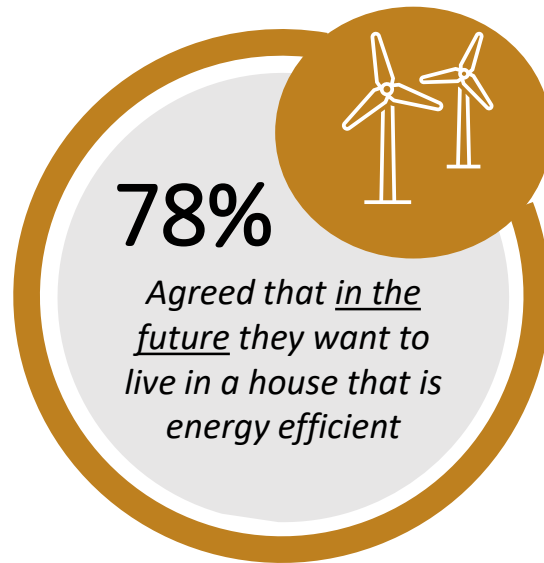
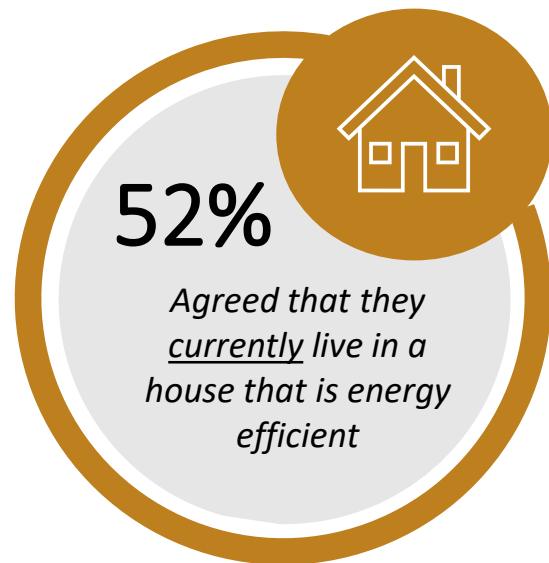


Disagreed that they live somewhere safe

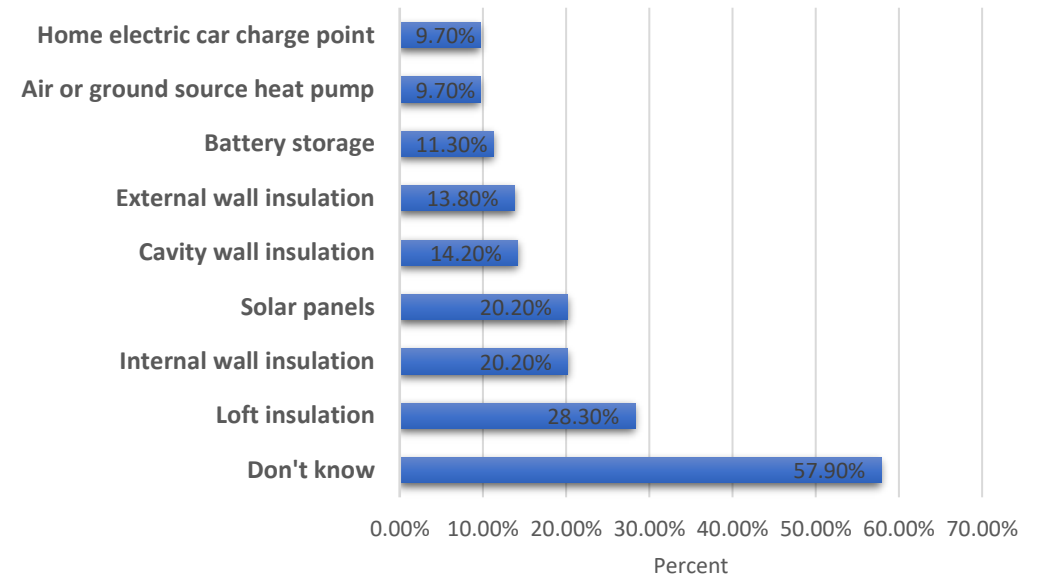
Energy Efficiency

We asked young people whether they considered that their property was energy efficient and therefore lowers bills and helps the environment. The number of respondents that did was 52%. However, when asked whether they wanted this to be the case in their future home 78% said this was important to them.

When asked if their home had energy efficiency products in their home, nearly 58% did not know. For those who did know, the most common products were loft insulation, internal wall insulation, solar panels.



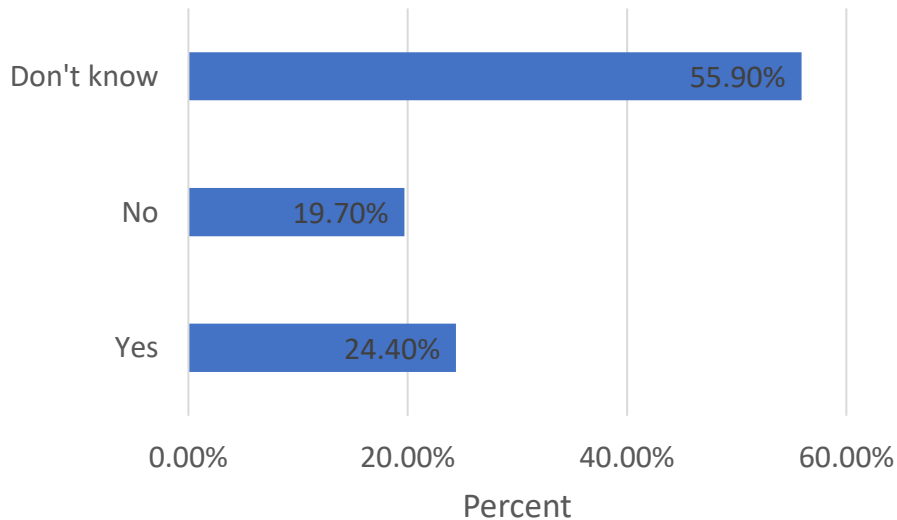
Does your home have any of the following?



Future Plans

Over half of the young people (nearly 56%) did not know if they wanted to live in the county when they left school or further education. Of those that answered Yes or No, 54% of young people planned to live in the county and 46% planned to leave. The reasons young people gave included wanting to explore the world or move to another country (21%), seeking better employment opportunities (16%), to be close to family (10%). The main reason for wanting to move was not feeling safe in the area they lived in with 31% of young people who stated they planned to leave the county citing the reason being the area they lived in was rundown or had issues with safety and anti-social behaviour.

After you have left school or further education, do you plan to stay in County Durham?



“I just don’t like all of the anti social behaviour.”

“I want to travel the world and explore.”

“There are poor opportunities for young people here.”

“The area I live in is aggressive and loud.”

“There are very limited employment opportunities in County Durham.”

Future priorities

Young people were asked to rate the importance of what do you think the council and its partners should do to support you and your local community's housing needs. The top 3 areas were:

- More affordable housing
- Bring empty homes back into use
- Energy efficiency improvements and advice which helps reduce bills and is good for the environment

They were also asked for any other suggestions and the most popular were:

- Local schemes to make places safer, cleaner and more attractive places to live
- More affordable housing
- Affordability of living
- Homes for local people in need
- Outdoor play areas (football)

What do you think the council and its partners should do to support you and your local community's housing needs?

More affordable housing	77.80%
Bring empty homes back into use	51.00%
Energy efficiency improvements and advice which helps reduce bills and is good for the environment	50.20%
Local improvement schemes that help bring buildings back into use, improve the local environment or make neighbourhoods cleaner and safer	38.10%
Provide supported accommodation to meet the needs of relevant groups e.g. children's homes, older persons, independent living for adults with learning disabilities	23.30%
Raise property and landlord standards in the private rental sector	20.20%
Provide adaptation schemes for older people and people with disabilities	20.20%
More older person's housing	19.10%

Conversations



Approach to the conversations

- As part of the Housing Conversation, conversations were held with a range of groups to ensure that the process was as inclusive as possible. This included, elected members, town and parish councils, partnerships and stakeholders. other interest groups and residents.
- The structure and format of conversations was varied and included attendance at meetings and events, presentations with Q&A, and workshops.
- Most conversations covered the challenges facing the groups and sought to capture a local perspective on housing issues and solutions, but topics and questions varied according to the type of organisation taking part in the event:

Overview

- The Housing Conversation has:
 - Engaged with communities across County Durham to gain an understanding of local perspectives and priorities.
 - Sought the views of specialist organisations working with in the field of housing.
 - Captured the perspectives of related professions and sectors to ensure the Housing Strategy reflects a wider context and maximises its impact.
 - Engaged with groups and organisations representing those within our communities with specific and / or specialist housing needs.
 - Sought the views of key anchor institutions and partners, many of which will have a key role in the delivery of the Housing Strategy.

County-wide and regional engagement

Partnerships

Health & Wellbeing Board
Place, Health & Communities Board
Housing Forum
County Durham Together Partnership
GRT Executive
Poverty Action Steering Group

Mid Durham AAP
Spennymoor AAP
Weardale AAP
4 Together
3 Towns AAP
Chester le Street AAP

Anchor institutions & partners

Durham County Council Members and officers
Believe Housing
Livin

Community groups, residents and other stakeholders

County Durham Association of Local Councils
Virtual drop- in events
Rural Housing Event
GRT Wardens

Area Action Partnerships

BASH
Durham AAP
East Durham AAP
GAMP

Summary

- The conversations were active with high levels of engagement across all groups.
- Consultees emphasised that this should be a Housing Strategy for County Durham, not just a Council or public sector document.
- Consultees effectively provided a local perspective unique to their community.
- Consultees from a range of specialisms ensured their knowledge and expertise has informed the development of the Housing Strategy.
- Many of the themes raised in the conversations overlap and mirrored those raised in the surveys. Conversation participants were actively encouraged to also submit a survey response to expand upon and follow up on discussions.

Key issues from across the Housing Conversation

- **The delivery of homes to meet needs** – including homes for older people, families and affordable homes.
- **The Private Rented Sector** – concerns raised about the impact of concentrations of PRS, which can be associated with ASB, empty homes and absent landlords.
- **Climate emergency** – New homes should incorporate new technologies and existing stock should be improved to support energy efficiency.
- **Housing and health** – good quality housing is a significant factor in supporting health and wellbeing outcomes
- **Infrastructure** – New housing needs to be provided alongside sufficient infrastructure to accommodate the impact of the development inc. schools, doctors, parking.
- **Regeneration** - Undertake regeneration including bringing empty homes back into use and considering demolitions where appropriate

Overview and Scrutiny Workshop (1/2)

An Overview and Scrutiny Workshop was held on the 10th July 2023. A detailed overview of comments made at the workshop has been prepared and has fed into the consultation process. Below is a summary of some of the main points raised:

Prevention of homelessness

- Emphasis on access to early advice, support and assistance which is vital to ensure that homelessness is prevented as far as possible.
- Consider the use of empty homes to meet needs of vulnerable groups and those at risk of homelessness.

Delivering a comprehensive range of housing options

- A need to have the right mix of housing to meet housing demand. It was considered that there are few housing options for single people, single young people, older people, vulnerable and disabled people, although these are all groups who have increasing housing demand. New homes should be adaptable over time to meet changing needs and existing stock should be adapted.
- Supported housing is essential for those people with multiple and complex needs. Supported housing requires wrap around services for vulnerable residents and families, including health services, education, welfare benefits and transport connectivity.

Climate emergency

- Housing should be built to the best possible standard with new technologies but, consider that the traditional view of 'sustainable locations' may have been overcome by new technologies supporting a reduction in travel to some extent.
- Concern that insulation and newer heating technologies are not as affordable as gas. Retrofitting existing stock is key but is also expensive. Upskill the sector lined to IES to support provision and maintenance of new technologies.

Overview and Scrutiny Workshop (2/2)

Housing and its relationship with the economy

- Ensure developers are employing people with the correct skills to build the new homes we need. Including in relation to greener technologies and capitalising on local supply chains.
- Utilise Council House Programme to create housing for communities and reuse derelict buildings and empty homes to support renewal also support the provision of executive housing to attract entrepreneurs in suitable locations

Ensuring a warm, safe and decent homes to support improved education, health and wellbeing

- Note issues with mould through lack of ventilation/insulation, which can be an issue with the with design of buildings and older properties.
- Need effective complaints / escalation procedure for tenants or a prevention procedure (such as regular inspections).

Meeting the need for affordable homes

- Needing to make sure people can afford housing and have sufficient disposable income to enjoy lives as well.
- Integrate affordable homes into developments in a 'tenure blind' manner

Housing issues in communities

- Ensure a high standard of maintenance in housing, gardens and open spaces, use of S.215 notices where appropriate.
- Concerns about property investors / developers acquiring properties. A concern especially in former mining communities but also in Durham City in the context of student HMOs and the impact on communities. Important to work to prevent ASB.
- Need to ensure that existing stock is maintained and kept up to required standards.
- Ensure that infrastructure is in place to support new housing, and ensure affordable housing is affordable, including Durham City.
- Second homes are an issue in some parts of the county such as Weardale.
- An emphasis on actions and local level actions required, with a timeline for delivery communicated to members and the community.

Area Action Partnerships (1/2)

A presentation with a Q&A session was undertaken at the AAPs. The AAPs provide an opportunity to consider the principles and priorities of the Housing Strategy from a local perspective and with a range of stakeholders, community representatives and members of the public. Below is an overview of some of the main points and common themes raised by the AAPs:

The Private Rented Sector

- The AAPs reflected concerns about the private rented sector (PRS) in County Durham. PRS properties can often be associated with crime and ASB, particularly in areas with a predominance of PRS stock.
- Empty Homes and absent landlords were also cited as an issue in localities
- Selective licencing was a common point of discussion, some wanted its extension whereas others felt it was only partly solving problems and was less effective in transitional communities associated with vacant properties.

Housing needs

- A need for older persons bungalows or housing suitable for older people. Ensure these are available for older people.
- A need for family housing and affordable homes to meet needs.

Infrastructure

- AAPs reflected that new housing puts a strain on existing services, inc. schools, doctors and dentists. It can result in parking concerns, including amongst existing stock. A need to work with communities to understand infrastructure requirements.
- Seek to include more greenspace in new development.

Area Action Partnerships (2/2)

Student HMOs

- A major issue in Durham City. Empty HMOs but more are approved. Empty or occupied HMOs have a significant impact on communities.
- HMOs have impacts upon communities and can result in a loss of family homes. Air B and Bs can bring similar issues.

Regeneration

- Older stock can be run down and associated with empty homes. Consider a demolition programme and bring new stock, utilise CPO powers more in this context.
- Address empty homes prior to introducing new build homes.

Scope of strategy

- Cost of living has hit residents hard – the housing strategy needs to address poverty.
- Strategy should support work with delivery partners and reflect potential of devolution deal.

County Durham Partnerships

The County Durham Partnership and other groups provide a valuable input into housing conversation. Presentations and discussions have been undertaken with the County Durham Together Partnership, the Housing Forum, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Place Health and Communities Board and the GRT Executive amongst others. Below is an overview of some of the main points:

Importance of collaboration

- The value of collaboration between housing and other partners is recognised. The clear linkages between the quality of housing and other outcomes, such as health and wellbeing is recognised.
- Where possible, residents and communities should be involved in actions and decisions that will affect them so they can feel that we are doing things 'with' not 'to' them and that we are listening to them about what success looks like.

Importance of housing on health outcomes

- Housing conditions have significant influence on people's physical health. Good housing also promotes positive mental health.
- The County Durham Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028 references the importance of housing as a wider determinant of health and the HWB believes that the seven housing principles, and the five priorities support the vision that County Durham is a healthy place, where people live well for longer.

Housing support and specialist accommodation

- The Housing Strategy should reflect the findings of the emerging Needs Led Accommodation Review and should cover care and supported housing.

Cost of living

- Fuel poverty and cost of energy for caravans on GRT sites is causing fuel poverty. Caravans cannot benefit from energy efficiency measures applicable to brick-built homes and caravans are out of scope for energy efficiency grants.

Rural Housing Development Event

The Housing and Development in Rural County Durham was held on the 11th July 2023 at Mickleton Village Hall. The event was introduced by Cllr Shuttleworth and Cllr Scott and covered a broad range of issues, including housing delivery, planning, economic and community matters, infrastructure, diversification and climate change. Below is an overview of some of the main points:

Housing

- Insufficient affordable homes for local young people in rural communities. Also, a lack of accessible, energy efficient housing.
- Registered Providers (RPs) are not normally attracted to smaller scale developments, which can be challenging in viability terms; explore private rented sector to take units as an alternative option. Smaller sites can be challenging in viability terms.
- Locational sustainability for housing development in rural areas should be more flexible to recognise relative levels of access to services and facilities.

Planning

- Problems with short term lets and second homes and issues of seasonality where people move out in the winter seasons.
- Exception policy doesn't allow for housing unless it is affordable

Infrastructure

- Rural areas lack modern infrastructure which affects businesses and prevents people moving to the area as well as development opportunities.
- Schools – class sizes are reducing as people are moving away.

Climate change

- Housing infrastructure in need of regeneration and retrofit; concerns around grid capacity and reliability of energy in rural communities.
- Disincentivise non renewables and incentivise renewables and consider relaxation of planning rules to accelerate net zero transition with regards to heritage buildings/assets.

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Draft County Durham Housing Strategy

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny 18 December 2023

Amy Harhoff
Corporate, Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth



The presentation sets out...

- Introduction
- Overview and scrutiny workshop comments and responses
- Vision
- Principles
- Priorities
- Next Steps

Introduction



Introduction

- Consultation undertaken on the Principles and Priorities Paper from 26 June to 18 August 2023 including:
 - Workshop with Overview and Scrutiny Members on 10 July
 - Presentations to Area Action Partnerships, County Durham Association of Local Councils, County Durham Partnership groups
 - Rural housing event
 - Online consultation events
 - Social media campaign
 - Resident, industry and young people surveys
- Detail of comments received set out in the Feedback Report
- Feedback has informed the draft strategy wherever possible

OSC Workshop Comments and Reponses



OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

Prevention of homelessness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on access to early advice, support and assistance which is vital to ensure that homelessness is prevented as far as possible. 	<p>A focus on early advice has been included in Priority 2 that incorporates homelessness prevention through the Homelessness strategy. (5.19/ 5.21/ 5.24/ 5.47).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the use of empty homes to meet needs of vulnerable groups and those at risk of homelessness. 	<p>Emphasis on bringing empty homes back into use where possible incorporated as part of Principle 2 (para 4.3) and Principle 6 (Para 4.9).</p> <p>The use of empty homes to meet need of those at risk of homelessness is further addressed in the Homelessness Strategy (para 5.16), the Housing Strategy has also identified, as an action, preparing a Temporary Accommodation Strategy that would consider the option of empty homes, where appropriate (para 5.23).</p>
Delivering a comprehensive range of housing options	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A need to have the right mix of housing to meet housing demand. It was considered that there are few housing options for single people, single young people, older people, vulnerable and disabled people, although these are all groups who have increasing housing demand. New homes should be adaptable over time to meet changing needs and existing stock should be adapted. 	<p>Sustainable, mixed and balanced communities are part of the Housing Strategy Vision.</p> <p>Greater detail is included in Priority 1 regarding meeting specific housing needs through housing delivery (Para 5.5/ 5.7).</p> <p>Greater emphasis on a range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, children and young people, disabled people has been included(Para 5.38/ 5.39/ 5.40 – 47). This includes implementing the County Durham Plan policies regarding adaptation and M42 standards.</p>

OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

- Supported housing is essential for those people with multiple and complex needs. Supported housing requires wrap around services for vulnerable residents and families, including health services, education, welfare benefits and transport connectivity.

Support for people with multiple and complex needs is highlighted as a priority in the Homelessness Strategy that is identified as part of Priority 1 and actions for delivery (Para 5.21/ 5.24).

The link between housing and support and care and wrap around services are emphasised in the supporting text of Priority 4 (Para 5.38- 47).

Climate emergency

- Housing should be built to the best possible standard with new technologies but, consider that the traditional view of 'sustainable locations' may have been overcome by new technologies supporting a reduction in travel to some extent.

Further detail and emphasis regarding climate change is outlined in the alignment of the Housing Strategy with the CERP vision for new technologies to be used on new developments (Para 3.5).

Addressing climate change Principle 7 of the strategy. Greater detail has been added around the maximising of opportunities for new developments to contribute to energy efficiency targets including using new technologies (Para 4.10).

- Concern that insulation and newer heating technologies are not as affordable as gas. Retrofitting existing stock is key but is also expensive. Upskill the sector lined to IES to support provision and maintenance of new technologies.

The Housing Strategy sets out that it will compliment activities of other plans and strategies, including the CERP and the IES (Para 3.5).

As part of Principle 7, detail in the supporting text has been included to address maximising opportunities to address fuel poverty, heating improvements and carbon reduction. (Para 4.10).

OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

Housing and its relationship with the economy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure developers are employing people with the correct skills to build the new homes we need. Including in relation to greener technologies and capitalising on local supply chains. • Utilise Council House Programme to create housing for communities and reuse derelict buildings and empty homes to support renewal also support the provision of executive housing to attract entrepreneurs in suitable locations 	<p>The Housing Strategy sets out that it will compliment activities of other plans and strategies, including the CERP and the IES (Para 3.5).</p> <p>Priority 1 includes detail around the delivery of Council Housing. This includes both new build schemes and a programme of targeted acquisitions.</p> <p>Bringing Empty Homes back into use, where appropriate, is reflected as a key aim of the strategy and detailed in Principle 2 (Para 4.3) and Principle 6 (Para 4.9).</p>
Ensuring a warm, safe and decent homes to support improved education, health and wellbeing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note issues with mould through lack of ventilation/insulation, which can be an issue with the with design of buildings and older properties. 	<p>Greater detail has been added to Priority 3 regarding housing stock standards and conditions. It is acknowledged that the county has a large percentage of older housing stock. Priority 3 sets out a requirement that new stock is delivered to the highest standard with a focus on sustainability and energy efficiency.</p> <p>There is further detail given regarding the continuous review of housing conditions, inspections and working with landlords to ensure that decent homes standards from the Social Housing Act 2023 are met. (Para 5.27- 5.32).</p>

OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

- **Need effective complaints / escalation procedure for tenants or a prevention procedure (such as regular inspections).**

The Housing Strategy will be delivered in the context of new legislation, including The Social Housing Act 2023 (Para 2.6).

In Priority 3 the supporting text outlines that the Act gives more rights for tenants (Para 5.27).

Further detail is given regarding how we will ensure high quality landlord services and high-quality homes. This includes continuous housing condition reviews, inspections, powers under the selective licensing scheme and HMO licensing requirements (Para 5.31- 5.37).

Meeting the need for affordable homes

- **Needing to make sure people can afford housing and have sufficient disposable income to enjoy lives as well.**

The impact of affordability and the cost of living is a key theme of the Housing Strategy.

Measures to address poverty through the Housing Strategy are laid out in Priority 5 (Para 5.51-59).

Addressing Fuel Poverty is detailed in Principle 7 (Para 4.10) regarding energy efficiency and Priority 3 regarding high quality homes in the rented sector (Para 5.28).

Issues regarding the cost of living and the impact of this on affordability of homes and keeping a home warm are identified as part of the Homelessness Prevention in Priority 1 (Para 5.16).

- **Integrate affordable homes into developments in a ‘tenure blind’ manner**

Ensuring affordable homes are tenure blind on developments is part of Principle 5 (Para 4.8).

OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

Housing issues in communities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a high standard of maintenance in housing, gardens and open spaces, use of S.215 notices where appropriate. 	<p>Further text regarding the standard of housing in the rental sector is included in Priority 3 (Para 5.30/ 5.31).</p> <p>Greater emphasis has been added to green and open space as part of quality placemaking in Priority 5 (Para 5.48/ 5.49, 5.51-58).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about property investors / developers acquiring properties. A concern especially in former mining communities but also in Durham City in the context of student HMOs and the impact on communities. Important to work to prevent ASB. 	<p>The Housing Strategy incorporates how the County Durham Plan will be utilised to meet housing needs and ensure mixed and balanced communities. This includes student accommodation (Para 5.7).</p> <p>The licensing of HMOs and enforcement for non-compliance are detailed in Priority 3 (Para 5.32/ 5.33/ 5.35/ 5.56).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to ensure that existing stock is maintained and kept up to required standards. 	<p>This is addressed in Priority 3 regarding housing stock standards and condition (Para 5.30/ 5.31/ 5.38).</p>

OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

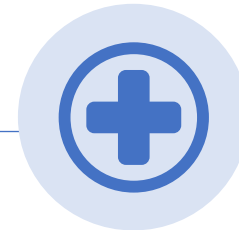
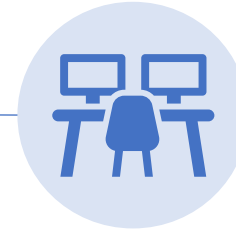
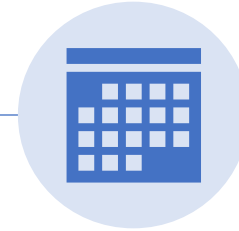
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that infrastructure is in place to support new housing, and ensure affordable housing is affordable, including Durham City.	<p>Additional supporting text has been included under Priority 1 to ensure the provision of infrastructure that supports new housing (Para 5.4/ 5.6/ 5.13).</p> <p>The importance of Infrastructure in high quality place making is emphasised under Priority 5 (Para5.51/ 5.53).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second homes are an issue in some parts of the county such as Weardale.	<p>It is recognised in the Housing Strategy that rural areas have issues that are unique to them. The provision of housing in rural areas is incorporated in the supporting text of Priority 1 to deliver housing to meet housing needs. (Para 5.4/ 5.7).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An emphasis on actions and local level actions required, with a timeline for delivery communicated to members and the community.	<p>The steps for the delivery and monitoring of the strategy are detailed in the final section of the strategy (Para 6.1-6.4).</p>

Vision



Housing Strategy: Vision

‘By 2035 County Durham will be a place that has good quality homes that meet the needs of existing and future residents that they can afford. The provision and quality of housing will support economic growth, contribute to improved health, and create and maintain sustainable, mixed and balanced communities. People will live long and independent lives within connected communities.’



Principles

Housing Strategy: Principles



Principle 1: Everyone has a right to a warm, safe, and decent home



Principle 2: Everyone should have access to a home that is affordable to them



Principle 3: Housing is the cornerstone of communities and should support improved health, **community safety**, educational attainment, and the local economy



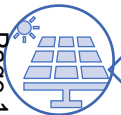
Principle 4: The strategy will be for the county, not the council, and will promote local solutions underpinned by community engagement



Principle 5: All new homes should be accessible, tenure ~~neutral~~ **blind** and provide flexible living for different stages in a person's life, always aiming to allow people to be independent, including remaining in their home for as long as they desire



Principle 6: Existing and new communities should be physically, digitally, culturally, and economically connected to support the creation of **sustainable, safe**, mixed and balanced communities, including bringing empty homes back into use



Principle 7: The strategy will support energy efficiency and carbon reduction in existing and new housing and contribute towards the Council's Climate Emergency Response Plan

Priorities



Housing Strategy: Priorities



Priority 1: Increase the delivery of new homes, including secure, affordable housing to meet housing needs and to provide a Housing First approach, along **together** with the infrastructure required



Priority 2: Ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that ~~meets their needs~~ **support health and wellbeing**



Priority 3: Ensure high quality, **energy efficient** homes and **effective** landlord services



Priority 4: Ensure a comprehensive range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, disabled people and children and young people, including specialist accommodation and support



Priority 5: Ensure high quality placemaking, creating ~~great~~ **safe, accessible, prosperous** and sustainable places to live

Next Steps

Next Steps

- Consultation on the Draft Strategy is currently under way between October 30 and 18 December 2023
- Following consultation, Draft Strategy modified to reflect comments received
- Adoption Spring/Summer 2024
- Preparation of delivery plan and monitoring framework following adoption

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Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18 December 2023

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029



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

Electoral divisions affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2029) (as set out in Appendix 2).

Executive summary

- 2 The Homelessness Act 2002 brought about a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness, in particular, the requirement for the development and publication of a homelessness strategy for every housing authority every five years. The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2029) will replace the current strategy adopted by Cabinet in July 2019.
- 3 The revised strategy has been developed following a detailed review of homelessness and rough sleeping. It establishes four priorities to tackle homelessness between 2024 to 2029; these are:
 - a) priority 1: prevent people from becoming homeless;
 - b) priority 2: improve access to and supply of accommodation;
 - c) priority 3: ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (work with partners to build resilience in people); and
 - d) priority 4: reduce rough sleeping.

- 4 The review analysed data from April 2019 through to October 2022 looks at the current and future trends in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping and the challenges that the council faces as a housing authority. This period included the years of the Covid Pandemic during which time the Government implemented a range of initiatives to prevent homelessness. The data has shaped the four priorities of the strategy which were consulted upon with the public, key partners and stakeholders from December 2022 to March 2023.
- 5 As a result of a more in-depth review, this draft strategy is different from previous strategies. It will address the varying housing and support needs across the 10 main cohorts of people who present to housing as homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 6 Some of the key findings from the review include:
 - a) a large increase in the number of people requiring early advice;
 - b) the number of people being able to remain in their existing home has considerably reduced;
 - c) an increase in the numbers of people with a support need, in particular those with complex needs;
 - d) access to accommodation for certain cohorts is difficult;
 - e) a reduction in affordable accommodation; and
 - f) there is insufficient supported accommodation for rough sleepers.
- 7 The scope of the strategy recognises all types of homelessness needs for people who are:
 - a) considering their housing options and require advice;
 - b) at risk of homelessness;
 - c) statutory and non-statutory homeless;
 - d) street homeless and are rough sleeping;
 - e) children who experience homeless; and
 - f) people who are moving on from homelessness (moving from temporary or supported accommodation and require longer term accommodation).

- 8 A detailed delivery plan will be developed in liaison with key partners after the strategy has been adopted. A light touch review will be carried out annually to address any policy or funding changes as well as taking into consideration any significant differences in demand to the service. The delivery plan will be updated accordingly following the annual review.
- 9 Consultation on the draft strategy will be for seven weeks from 30 October 2023 to 18 December 2023.
- 10 Consultation will be undertaken with residents of County Durham and other stakeholders with a potential interest in the content of the document. The council will make use of its partnership structure to assist in disseminating information about the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- 11 Following the consultation the strategy will be modified as necessary and presented to Cabinet for adoption in 2024.

Recommendation

- 12 It is recommended that the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers this report and provides feedback to inform the development of the final strategy for approval by Cabinet in June 2024.

Background

- 13 The County Durham Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed in line with the Government's Code of Guidance for reviewing homelessness and formulating a strategy. An in-depth review of homelessness and rough sleeping was carried out, analysing data from April 2019 through to October 2022, to determine current and future trends of people presenting to housing solutions as homeless or at risk of homelessness including rough sleepers. It should be noted that this period included the years of the Covid Pandemic during which many Government initiatives were introduced to support households and prevent homelessness, including the Everyone In programme, ban on evictions and increased benefits payments. It is possible therefore that some of the figures are not truly reflective of the levels of homelessness.
- 14 This draft strategy is very different from previous strategies. It will address the varying housing and support needs across the 10 main cohorts of people who present to the council as homeless or threatened with homelessness. These cohorts are:
- a) general homeless (with no support need);
 - b) complex needs;
 - c) young people;
 - d) domestic abuse;
 - e) offenders;
 - f) larger families;
 - g) rough sleepers;
 - h) care leavers;
 - i) hospital discharge; and
 - j) veterans.
- 15 Informal consultation was carried out between December 2022 to March 2023 on the proposed four priorities with the draft priorities amended to reflect the feedback. The priorities set out the key areas where the council will focus activity to deliver the vision 'Durham is a county where we all work together to eradicate homelessness and rough sleeping and where everyone has a safe place to call home'. The four priorities are:

- a) priority 1: prevent people from becoming homeless;
 - b) priority 2: improve access to and supply of accommodation;
 - c) priority 3: ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (work with partners to build resilience in people); and
 - d) priority 4: reduce rough sleeping.
- 16 Under each priority there are a number of high-level actions, which are in response to current and future pressures around homelessness in County Durham. Since the development of the last strategy the housing market and economic climate has changed therefore this strategy includes a range of new actions, for example:
- a) introduction of specialist officers within housing solutions including drug and alcohol support workers, social workers and trauma informed specialists;
 - b) utilise the council house delivery programme for new build and acquisition;
 - c) co-ordinate all existing support pathways and services; and
 - d) develop a housing first model for rough sleepers.
- 17 The strategy will be delivered in partnership via a newly established multi-agency homelessness forum. It will also provide a strategic framework to ensure that Durham County Council is well positioned to maximise future funding opportunities. The review document and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy provides the evidence to identify issues surrounding homelessness and rough sleeping and a clear approach to address these issues.
- 18 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy aligns with existing or emerging strategies including the County Durham Plan and the Housing Strategy for County Durham. It will also support delivery of the Inclusive Economic Strategy by seeking to ensure that a lack of access to good quality housing is not a barrier to economic growth.
- 19 An equalities impact assessment and wellbeing assessment are being prepared alongside the development of the strategy that will ensure that the document reflects and takes account of differing needs of our communities.
- 20 Consultation will be undertaken on the document for a period of seven weeks from 30 October 2023 to 18 December 2023. This consultation

will run alongside the consultation on the draft housing strategy and will be joined up where appropriate. Consultation will be carried out with residents of County Durham and other key partners and stakeholders with a potential interest in the document including:

- a) presentations to Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and County Durham Partnership thematic groups including the Housing Forum, Health and Wellbeing Board and Economic Partnership etc.;
- b) a survey for residents;
- c) workshop for all Members of Scrutiny;
- d) conversations with key partners and stakeholders including one-on-one sessions with our housing association partners and a presentation to the Housing Forum;
- e) briefings for elected Members; and
- f) discussions at a regional level with North East Mayoral Combined Authority (NEMCA) colleagues.

21 The outcome and feedback from the consultation will inform the final iteration of the strategy that will be presented to Cabinet in March 2024 for approval.

Background papers

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping review (data from 2019 to 2022)
- Housing Strategy Principle and Priorities Paper 2023

Other useful documents

- None.

Author

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Compliance with legislation.

Finance

None.

Consultation and Engagement

Consultation on the draft strategy will be carried out in October 2023 through to December 2023 with the public and key partners/stakeholders.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

An equality impact assessment has been developed alongside the strategy around the protected characteristics. The main three where action is required are:

- a) age: work with children's services and registered providers to work with care leavers and older people as early as possible to prevent homelessness;
- b) disability: work with adult social care to provide accessible accommodation and dedicated support, specialist social workers and mental health support workers embedded in the services; and
- c) race: dedicated humanitarian support team; staff trained in equality and diversity.

Information from the review on the key priorities is being fed into this.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

The Probation Service is an identified key partner who will work with the housing team to help achieve the priorities identified and meet the needs of people being released from prison and those living in the community.

Staffing

The strategy will be delivered utilising existing staffing resource.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

Procurement guidelines and regulations will be met when procuring any additional services.

Appendix 2: Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2029)

Please refer to the attached draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2029).

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Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029



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DRAFT

Foreword



“I am proud to introduce this proactive strategy which sets out our vision, priorities and actions to address and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping across all areas of County Durham”

By Councillor Alan Shield
Portfolio Holder for Equality and Inclusion

Being at risk of or losing a home can be the result of many different structural or personal factors. Unless these factors are addressed, the ability of an individual or family to become resilient and improve their chance of a positive future is greatly reduced, placing them at risk of becoming trapped in a cycle of homelessness.

Homelessness can lead individuals and their families and friends into a cycle that can have a profound effect on all aspects of life. It is not just a lack of accommodation; homelessness can affect our physical and mental health and wellbeing, educational achievement, ability to gain and sustain employment and puts pressure on personal and family relationships. The impact of homelessness devastates lives, and it is often a long journey for an individual to build their life up again.

We need to work together with our partners and stakeholders to address homelessness and prevent people from living in precarious housing circumstances, including temporary accommodation, hostels and B&B's.

The Strategy shows the current and future trends in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping across County Durham, as well as the challenges that we face as a housing authority. It also highlights how we will tackle the complex causes of homelessness by focusing on prevention and early intervention.

Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 brought about a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness in particular the requirement for the development and publication of a homelessness strategy for every housing authority every 5 years.

This strategy has been developed following a detailed review of homelessness and rough sleeping. The review highlighted the demands on the Council and the gaps that need addressing to ensure that homelessness is prevented and addressed as effectively as possible. The four priorities within this strategy have been developed to ensure that the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are achieved over the next 5 years, covering the period 2024 – 2029.

We will carry out a light touch review annually to address any policy or funding changes, as well as taking into consideration any significant differences in demand for the service.

The evidence base that has been used to inform this strategy has analysed data from April 2019 through to October 2022, looking at the current and future trends in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping and the challenges that we face as a housing authority. The data has shaped the four priorities of the strategy, which were consulted upon with the public, key partners and stakeholders, from December 2022 to March 2023.

The scope of the strategy recognises all types of homelessness needs:

- Those who are considering their housing options and require advice,
- Those at risk of homelessness,
- Those who are statutory and non-statutory homeless,
- Those who are street homeless and are rough sleeping,
- Children who experience homeless
- Those who are moving on from homelessness (moving from temporary or supported accommodation and require longer term accommodation).

Strategic Context

The vision and priorities of this strategy are set within the context of national strategies and plans. There are two main national policy drivers that apply to homelessness and rough sleeping; the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Government's 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good' Strategy 2022.

The Homeless Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 extended the responsibilities of local authorities towards people that are homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless. In particular, the duty to prevent homelessness, as well as the requirement to assess and provide more meaningful assistance to all people who are eligible and homeless, or threatened with homelessness, irrespective of their priority need status.

Between 2010/11 and 2018/19 there was a 12% increase in the number of homeless people nationally, this increased again by a further 19% up to 2021/22.

'Ending rough sleeping for good' is a cross-government strategy setting out how the government and its partners will work together to deliver on their commitment to end rough sleeping, by laying the foundations for a long-term system change to end rough sleeping sustainably and for good. The Strategy has four key themes; Prevention, Recovery, Intervention and a Transparent and Joined up System. The strategy sets out for the first time a clear definition of what the government means by ending rough sleeping, which is that it is prevented wherever possible, and where it does occur it is rare, brief and non-recurrent.

There has been a new national focus on rough sleeping since the Covid-19 pandemic with the Government's 'Everyone In' policy. This ensured all rough sleepers were housed in temporary accommodation to keep them safe during the pandemic. 37,000 people were helped through this scheme. This policy enabled councils to build relationships and reach homeless people who had been either unknown to, or ineligible for, local housing services previously. In addition, the temporary eviction bans during the pandemic also kept people in their homes who may have otherwise become homeless. These policies have since ended, but we want to build on this momentum to tackle homelessness and end rough sleeping.

The number of people estimated to be sleeping rough across England on a single night in autumn 2022 was 3,069, this is an increase of 26% from 2020 and a 74% increase since 2010, when the average number sleeping rough on a single night was 1,768. The numbers did peak in 2017, with an estimated figure of 4,751.

To assist with the delivery of the Governments Rough Sleeping Strategy, £2 billion will be invested over a three-year period from 2022 to 2025, including an expanded £500m Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) and £200m Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP).

£20m was made available by the Government as part of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP), to help address poor quality supported housing and improve standards of support.

Homelessness can happen to anyone at any time, generally associated with a period of crisis or trauma. Homelessness permeates all aspects of a person's life including housing, health and employment and can lead to people falling into extreme poverty.

Our other strategic partnerships and their strategies and plans, focus on things such as poverty, employment, education, safety of our neighbourhoods, the quality of our homes and the environment we live in. Each of these will play a key role in helping us deliver the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. These strategies and plans include but are not limited to:

- Council Plan 2019 - 2035
- County Durham Vision 2035
- County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy
- County Durham Plan
- County Durham Housing Strategy
- County Durham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025
- Growing up in County Durham Strategy 2023 – 2025
- Sufficiency and commissioning strategy for children looked after and care leavers 2022 – 2024
- Safe Durham Partnership Plan

Note: We are working with Design and Print for an appropriate graphic to show these strategies and their linkages

Local context and challenges in County Durham

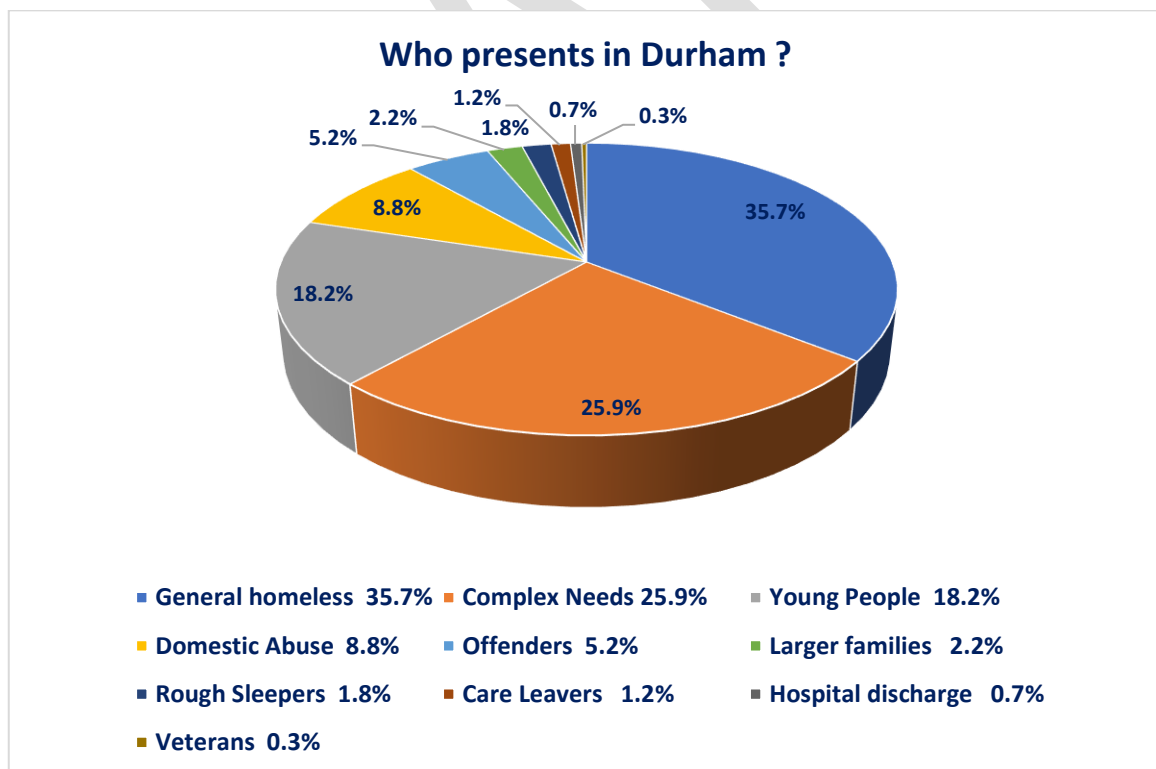
In Durham, the number of people that approach the Council when they require housing advice, are homeless or at risk of being homeless has remained broadly consistent over the last three years, with 7,846 people presenting in 2021/22 compared to 7,497 in 2019/20. Over the same period, the number of people requiring housing advice increased by 96% with the number of people who were assessed in line with homeless legislation and owed a homeless duty falling by 19%.

Single households remain the largest group presenting as homeless, making up around 58% of the total, 31% are households with children and 11% couples with no children.

The main reasons why people present to the housing service have remained consistent over the past three years:

- private rented tenancy is ending (30% in 21/22),
- family no longer willing to accommodate them (23% in 21/22), and
- victims of domestic abuse (11% in 21/22).

As well as considering why people present as homeless, we have identified the groups of people who are most likely to become homeless. This diagram shows the percentage of each group presenting as homeless or potentially homeless in County Durham.



There is a shortage of affordable housing across all sectors. The annual target for the delivery of affordable housing is 836, however only 464 affordable units per year have been delivered on average over the last seven years. This means that since 2016, 2,601 fewer affordable houses have been delivered across County Durham than required to meet identified housing need. The County Durham Housing Strategy sets plans to meet this shortfall in future years.

The availability of accommodation is reducing in the private rented sector. Recent increases in interest rates are having an impact on landlords, forcing them to sell properties or increase their rents, which is resulting in people being evicted or making the sector less affordable for those on lower incomes. People leaving the private rented sector is the main reason why people are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless; this number has increased by 6%.

Younger people under the age of 35 are experiencing increasing difficulties to secure affordable, independent accommodation, particularly when on a low-income, this can be seen across both the private rented and social housing sectors.

The number of people presenting with complex needs has increased by 13%. This is the largest increase across all cohorts, making up 26% of all presentations. There is a lack of appropriate housing options for people with complex or additional support needs, including those with poor mental health, substance misuse and a history of homelessness and rough sleeping. There is a clear correlation between complex support needs and those people repeatedly presenting as homeless. It is therefore important to secure appropriate accommodation for this cohort with the right level of support to prevent evictions and repeat presentations.

Domestic abuse is a significant reason why people present as homeless in County Durham. The number of people that moved to suitable alternative accommodation when fleeing domestic abuse has reduced by 16% between 2019/20 and 2022/23. This is due to a lack of readily available affordable housing, resulting in placements into temporary accommodation, which is often not an ideal solution for families.

There are increasing pressures in utilising temporary accommodation due to the lack of council owned stock. This has been exacerbated by the number of people requiring placements increasing by 47%, resulting in increased costs to the Council. On average in 2023 there are between 80 and 90 households in temporary accommodation at any one time, in comparison to around 48 households in temporary accommodation at any one time during 2018/19.

During 2022/23, around 126 people were found rough sleeping, an average of 11 on a single night. Around 42% were new to rough sleeping, the remaining had previous experiences of sleeping on the street. One of the main reasons why people end up rough sleeping, is due to them being evicted from supported accommodation. Most of our rough sleepers are found in Durham City, although we do respond to reports in outlying towns including Seaham, Peterlee and Consett.

Vision, approach and priorities

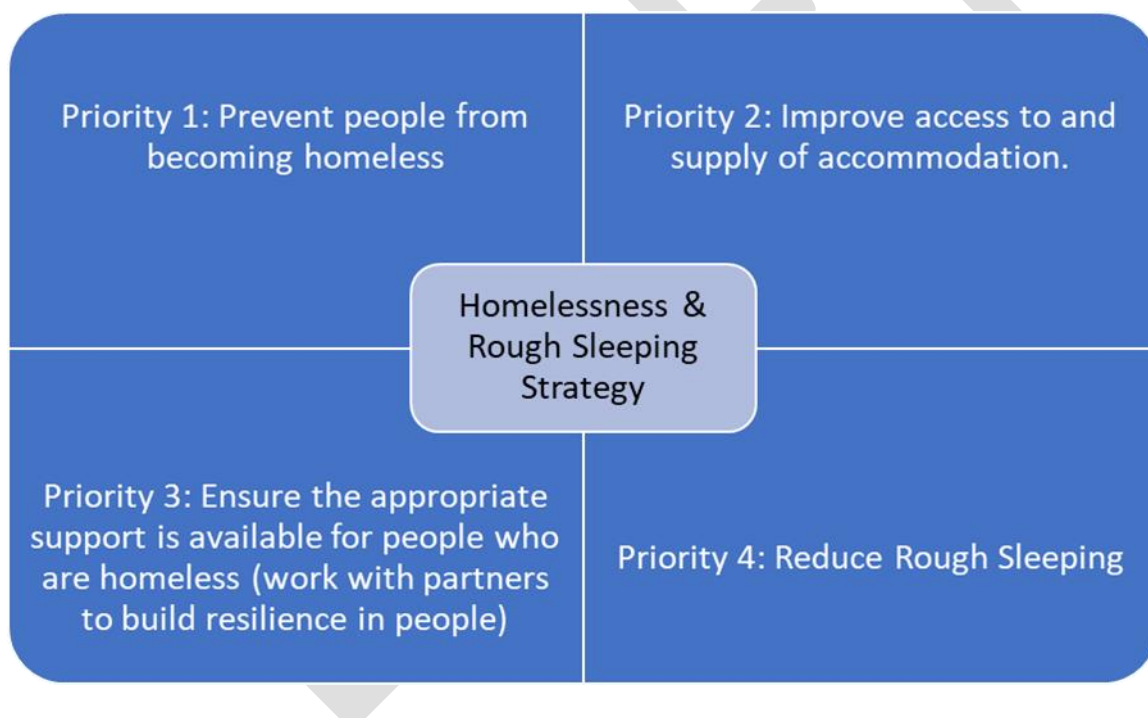
Our Vision

Durham is a county where we all work together to eradicate homelessness and rough sleeping and where everyone has a safe place to call home

This strategy and its vision will support the delivery of the County Durham Housing Strategy, which identifies the key housing opportunities and challenges facing County Durham.

It is recognised that a partnership approach is required to successfully achieve our vision and deliver on the priorities set out in this strategy. This will tackle issues that increase the likelihood of someone becoming homeless, including the shortage of affordable housing and rising household poverty.

The priorities were agreed following consultation with a range of partners, members of the public, including people with lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping.



Priority 1: Prevent people from becoming homeless

Preventing someone from becoming homeless is far more effective than intervening afterwards. The best way to do this is to support a household to remain in their current home, providing it is suitable, or proactively support a move to alternative suitable long-term accommodation.

Issues that can lead to someone becoming homeless or being threatened with homelessness are multi-faceted and we recognise that working with people to overcome and resolve these at the earliest opportunity is the best way of preventing homelessness. In recent years this has become increasingly more challenging due to a reduction in the availability of affordable accommodation across all tenures and increasing numbers of people with complex support needs.

It is recognised that the principle of 'invest to save' must be rooted across our prevention offer. By providing financial incentives and support to help people remain in their existing home not only prevents homelessness but also prevents the need, and cost, of having to source alternative accommodation or avoid utilising temporary accommodation.

It is important to understand the early causes of homelessness, to ensure that the right intervention can be made. Some of these include domestic abuse, substance misuse, poor mental health, financial difficulties and criminal activity. We need to address the inequalities that exist in people accessing employment, education, training and health services, all of which are negatively impacted if someone is homeless, threatened with homelessness or otherwise living in unsuitable conditions.

There has been a significant increase of 34% in the number of people who have been unable to remain in their existing home which has resulted in them becoming homeless. This is seen mainly where private rented tenancies are ending due to landlords selling or where the tenant has fallen into rent arrears and where people are suffering from domestic abuse. We must therefore ensure that a more proactive and preventative approach is taken to avoid people being in a homeless crisis situation.

To prevent people from becoming homeless we will:

- Review our allocations scheme to prioritise prevention over homelessness, ending the use of homelessness as a housing option
- Ensure people receive appropriate and relevant advice and support as early as possible, including improved information and signposting and the development of an online self-help tool
- Ensure early intervention is targeted towards people who are most likely or identified to be at risk of homelessness, through the introduction of specialist teams and dedicated support
- Ensure front line staff are equipped with the tools and techniques to help them prevent households from becoming homeless, e.g. negotiating with private landlords and mediating between family members
- Work with the private rented sector, Registered Providers and supported accommodation providers to establish new approaches to reduce evictions and assist people remain at home
- Work with people with lived experience to involve them in designing services to make sure they are accessible

- Intervention through trauma informed practice, understand the root causes and how it may lead to homelessness
- Develop creative approaches to working earlier with young people in schools, youth groups and young people within the care system to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place.
- Work with our partner Registered Providers to review the lettings policy to ensure that the housing register is accessible and assists homeless households
- Establishing a multi-agency Homelessness Partnership with a focus on developing, designing and implementing solutions to help reduce homelessness

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Priority 2: Improve access to and supply of accommodation

This priority is focused on improving how people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness can better access the most appropriate type of accommodation to meet their needs. In the longer term, addressing the supply of accommodation to ensure that Durham has the right type and mix of accommodation in the required locations. The housing options available are: -

- Private rented sector
- Social housing
- Supported accommodation
- Low cost home ownership

Whilst we recognise the necessity of a more proactive, preventative approach, we must also ensure there is an effective response for those who present as homeless in an emergency or crisis situation. Groups that are recognised as predominantly affected in this area are private rented sector tenants, people experiencing domestic abuse, young people experiencing parental exclusion, people with multiple and complex needs, people with drug and or alcohol addiction, and street homeless people.

Housing options for people on low incomes or in receipt of welfare benefits is becoming limited. Average rents in the private rented sector are increasing, making this option less accessible for many households. However, the private rented sector is helping to accommodate those homeless households in a crisis situation across all cohorts. This comes at an increased cost as landlords price the risk.

The turnover of stock amongst Registered Providers is reducing, making the social rented sector less reachable for many households. The number of people who were homeless and in a crisis situation and accommodated in this sector has reduced by around 11%. The main two cohorts being accommodated are those people with no support needs and victims of domestic abuse. This means that many people who are homeless and in housing need are unable to access the social housing sector.

Supported housing is accommodating the majority of people who face homelessness in a crisis situation, mainly where family are no longer willing to accommodate. This sector accommodates the majority of people with complex support needs and those under the age of 25 including care leavers. In line with the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, local authorities must ensure that the standard of accommodation and support provided is sufficient to meet housing needs. The Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) will assist with the delivery of the Act and ensure that the supported accommodation offer for homeless people is fair and consistent.

The number of people placed into temporary accommodation has seen a significant increase. The main reasons why people require temporary accommodation is due to domestic abuse, family no longer willing to accommodate or because their assured shorthold tenancy has ended. The Council is often forced to use holiday lets and bed and breakfast due to the lack of availability of appropriate temporary accommodation in County Durham. These are both costly and unsustainable in the longer term.

To improve access to and supply of accommodation we will:

- Utilise the Council House Delivery Programme to provide additional affordable housing and move on options
- Work with registered providers and developers to increase the supply of accommodation for:
 - vulnerable households including; victims of domestic abuse, people with complex support needs, ex-offenders, rough sleepers (specialist 24/7 provision) and people included within the humanitarian support programme
 - Households on low incomes, in particular younger people
 - Larger families
- Expand the Private Sector Leasing (PSL) scheme, working with property owners to bring empty and dilapidated homes back into use in return for medium to long term leases to use for temporary and permanent housing
- Increase the supply of council owned and commissioned temporary accommodation, rather than rely on B&B and hotels
- Work with commissioning teams to ensure appropriate accommodation is available in particular for additional dispersed properties for victims of domestic abuse and additional supported accommodation for those with complex needs.
- Work with supported accommodation providers to deliver the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)
- Develop clear housing pathways for the most vulnerable people, including; those leaving prison, hospital, rough sleepers, those experiencing domestic abuse and those leaving the care system
- Make information readily available setting out the various housing options available, how people can access those options and how they can help themselves

Priority 3: Ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (work with partners to build resilience in people)

This priority is focussed on providing people with the most appropriate type of support to meet their needs and, to enable them to access and maintain sustainable accommodation.

It is vital that a person or household who becomes homeless or is at risk of homelessness is provided with the most appropriate support at the earliest opportunity. Durham has a range of support services available, provided via a combination of commissioned services and in house support provided by staff working in the housing solutions team. These services need to be made as accessible as possible for all clients to assist with homeless prevention as well as supporting people through their homeless journey.

The review of homeless and rough sleeping identified that the number of homeless people with two or more support needs has increased significantly, with almost 40% of people with a support need suffering from a history of mental health problems. There is clear correlation between the number of support needs and the number of times a person presents as homeless. The main household type with multiple support needs is amongst single people.

People with complex and multiple support needs can end up being inappropriately housed in accommodation that doesn't provide the right type of support, which can result in tenancies failing and people re-presenting back to housing solutions as homeless. It is important to prevent this happening by ensuring that the support needs are being met as well as their housing needs.

To ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless, we will: -

- Map all available support services to determine their effectiveness for homeless people using this to improve and target provision where required
- Ensure that support needs are identified when developing personalised housing plans and the necessary referrals are made to the most appropriate support and accommodation to meet the needs of the individual
- Work with partner agencies to ensure referral pathways are in place and are effective to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness
- Increase specialisms within housing solutions including social workers, trauma informed, dual diagnosis and drug and alcohol workers who may form a central service accessible to all teams
- Ensure the existing range of health initiatives are co-ordinated and fully utilised
- Review support needs and ensure that support services are available to cater for them

Priority 4: Reduce Rough Sleeping

This priority is focused on reducing the number of people that sleep rough across County Durham. In alignment with the Governments Strategy to end Rough Sleeping for Good, we aim to prevent rough sleeping wherever possible and where it does occur, ensure that it is rare, brief, and non-recurrent.

Across County Durham there is a flow of people who are street homeless. During 2022/23, around 126 people were found rough sleeping, an average of 11 on a single night. Around 42% were new to rough sleeping, the remaining had previous experiences of sleeping on the street.

The majority of people within this cohort have multiple complex needs, including mental health and substance misuse problems, which is often the reason why their previous housing situation has failed.

We know that the main reasons why people find themselves sleeping rough is because their family will no longer accommodate them, they have been evicted from supported accommodation or their private rented tenancy has ended.

Around 60% of those sleeping rough are accommodated in supported accommodation, less than 5% are accommodated with a Registered Provider or in the Private Rented Sector.

There is a dedicated rough sleeper team that operate within County Durham, consisting of a co-ordinator, two navigators and two outreach staff that focus on those with drug and alcohol support requirements. The team has access to accommodation dedicated for rough sleepers, which includes:

- 9 short term commissioned bedspaces to enable further assessment to be carried out and longer-term accommodation to be sourced
- 7 (24/7) supported housing bed spaces for complex rough sleepers and two dispersed properties with floating support, the dispersed properties are used as step down accommodation for those people that are ready to move onwards from the intensive supported housing project
- Dispersed properties with floating support provided in house for rough sleepers requiring low level supported accommodation

Despite having access to commissioned and in house provision, it can still be difficult to find accommodation for the most chaotic and complex rough sleepers, particularly if they have a high-risk offending history or require support with drug and alcohol misuse and have complex mental health.

There is a night shelter that operates in Durham City during the winter months, however as it relies upon volunteers the hours are not 24 hours, seven days a week, which makes it difficult to accommodate rough sleepers during periods of severe winter weather emergencies.

To reduce rough sleeping and the themes set out in the Governments Rough Sleeping Strategy, we will:-

- Work with health and social care professionals to understand the underlying factors that result in people sleeping rough and formulate strategies to deal with these.

- Work with supported housing providers to establish new approaches to reduce evictions and prevent rough sleeping
- Develop awareness around rough sleeping and begging through the introduction of a communications campaign and co-ordinate the reduction of cash donations to rough sleepers by establishing an alternative method, working with local charitable groups
- Work with partners to improve access and supply to accommodation for those most complex and hard to house rough sleepers, including the provision of specialist support where requested
- Liaise with local stakeholders particularly Durham University and Durham Business Improvement District in relation to rough sleeping in Durham City
- Establish a night shelter that can be accessed all year round
- Develop a pathway to independent living designed around the needs of rough sleepers
- Develop a Housing First programme with access to appropriate support where requested by the client, including services to cater for those who may be alcohol or drug dependant

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Delivering the Strategy

As part of the delivery of the strategy, we will develop a more detailed delivery plan with our partners, this will be in line with each of the four strategic priorities, as outlined in this strategy. This will clearly show how we will tackle and address homelessness and rough sleeping in the next five years.

This delivery plan will cover a range of more detailed actions and will include timescales, funding and clear milestones. This will be developed in line with our existing partnerships as part of the County Durham Partnership Structure, a range of other partnerships linked to homelessness, regional and national colleagues and with people with lived experience.

It is proposed to set up a Homelessness Forum with all relevant partners. This Forum will meet quarterly and will take responsibility to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the delivery plan. This will include a range of partners from other public bodies, landlords, charities and others.

The monitoring of the strategy will be reported annually to a range of forums as part of the County Durham Partnership including the Safer Durham Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, The Housing Forum and others.

An annual refresh of the evidence base and a review of the delivery plan will take place to analyse updated data, address any policy or funding changes as well as taking into consideration any significant differences in demand on the service. This will be overseen by an internal housing project group, the Homelessness Forum and will be reported to Cabinet annually.

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Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18 December 2023



Contents



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- Background
- Key points
- Priorities
- Next steps
- Consultation
- Case studies

Background



Background – how we got here

- Statutory requirement to have a strategy in place
- In depth review of homelessness and rough sleeping carried out over a 3 year period
- Consultation earlier in the year on proposed priorities with a range of partners and members of the public

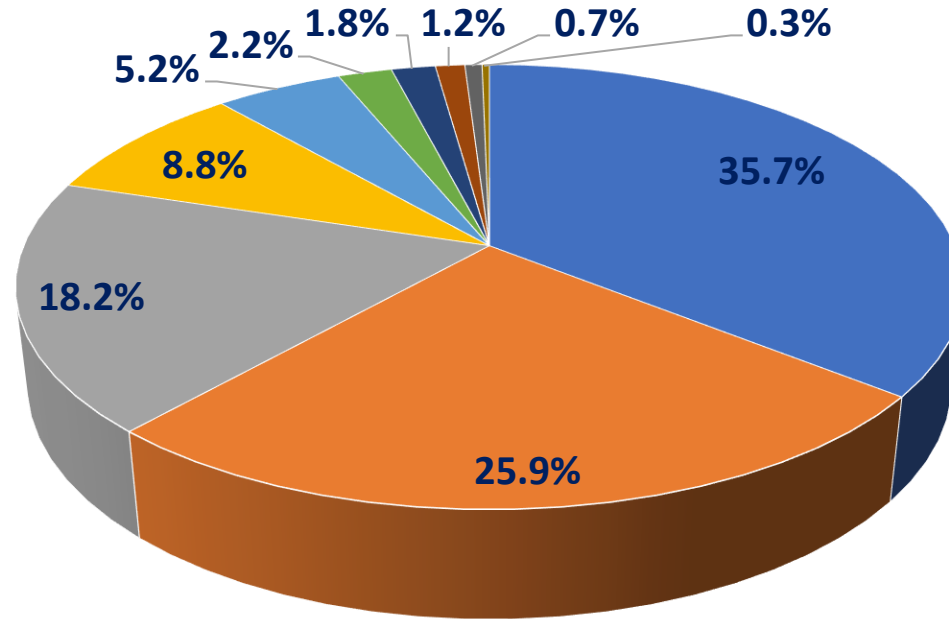
Key Points

Key points

The draft strategy differs from the existing strategy: -

- It has a more detailed evidence base to inform the strategy
- Reviewed the housing needs across a range of cohorts to identify gaps and service offer
- It is clear which landlords we need to engage with to assist in homeless prevention and access to the supply of accommodation

Key points – who presents in Durham



- General homeless 35.7%
- Complex Needs 25.9%
- Young People 18.2%
- Domestic Abuse 8.8%
- Offenders 5.2%
- Larger families 2.2%
- Rough Sleepers 1.8%
- Care Leavers 1.2%
- Hospital discharge 0.7%
- Veterans 0.3%

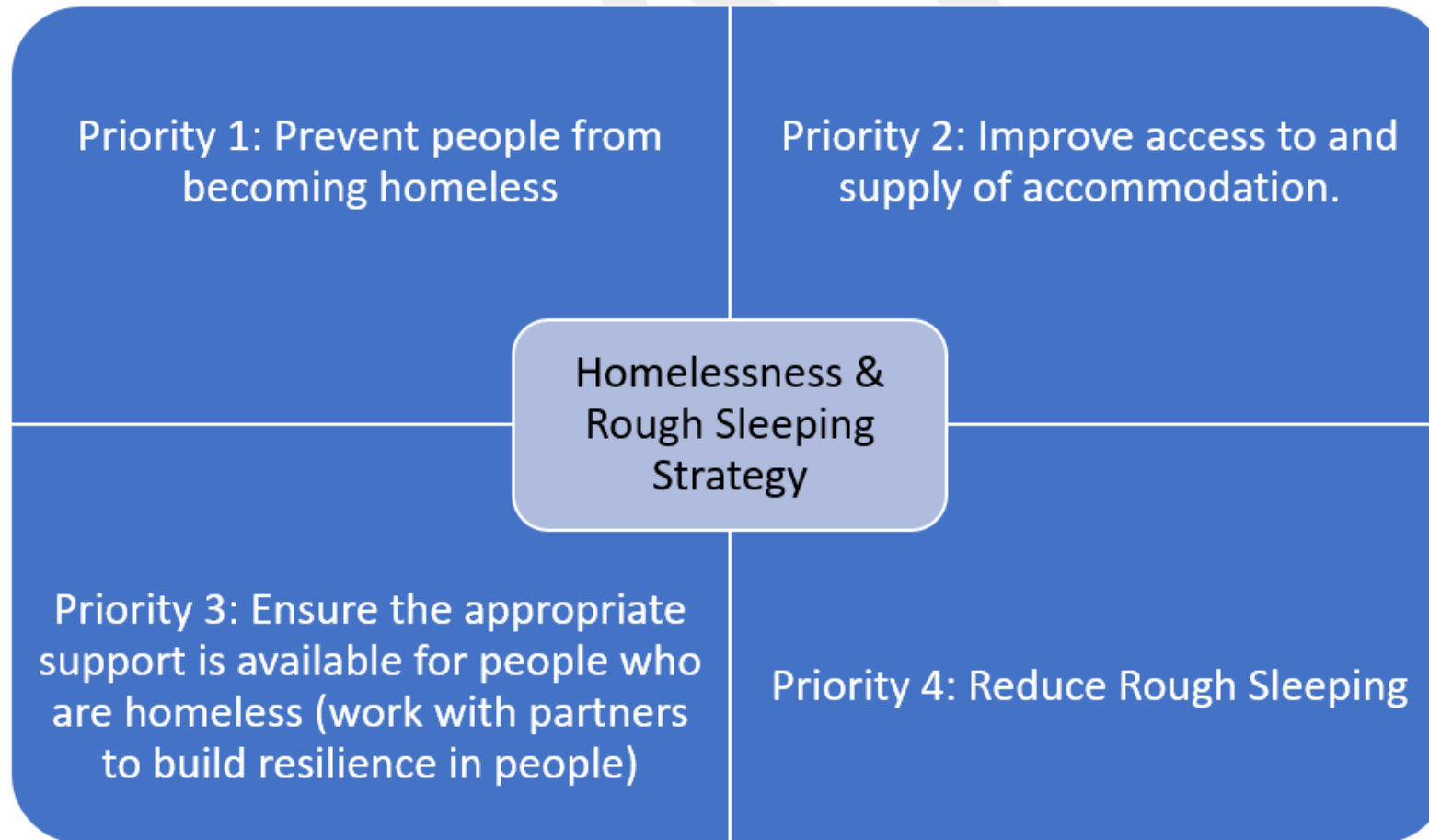
Key points

- Around 7,500 people contact the housing service each year claiming homelessness
- Of those around 2,500 are accepted as being homeless in line with legislation
- Main reasons for homelessness are, end of private rented tenancy, domestic abuse and parent/friends no longer willing to accommodate.

Key points

- Large increase in number of people requiring early advice
- Reduction in helping people remain in their existing home
- Increase in numbers of people with complex needs
- Access to some tenures for certain cohorts is difficult
- Pressures on temporary accommodation

Key points/priorities of the strategy



Next steps



Next steps

- Approved by Cabinet
- 7 week consultation period until 18 December
- Final approval in June 24
- Establishment of a Homelessness Forum
- Development of a delivery plan

Consultation



Consultation

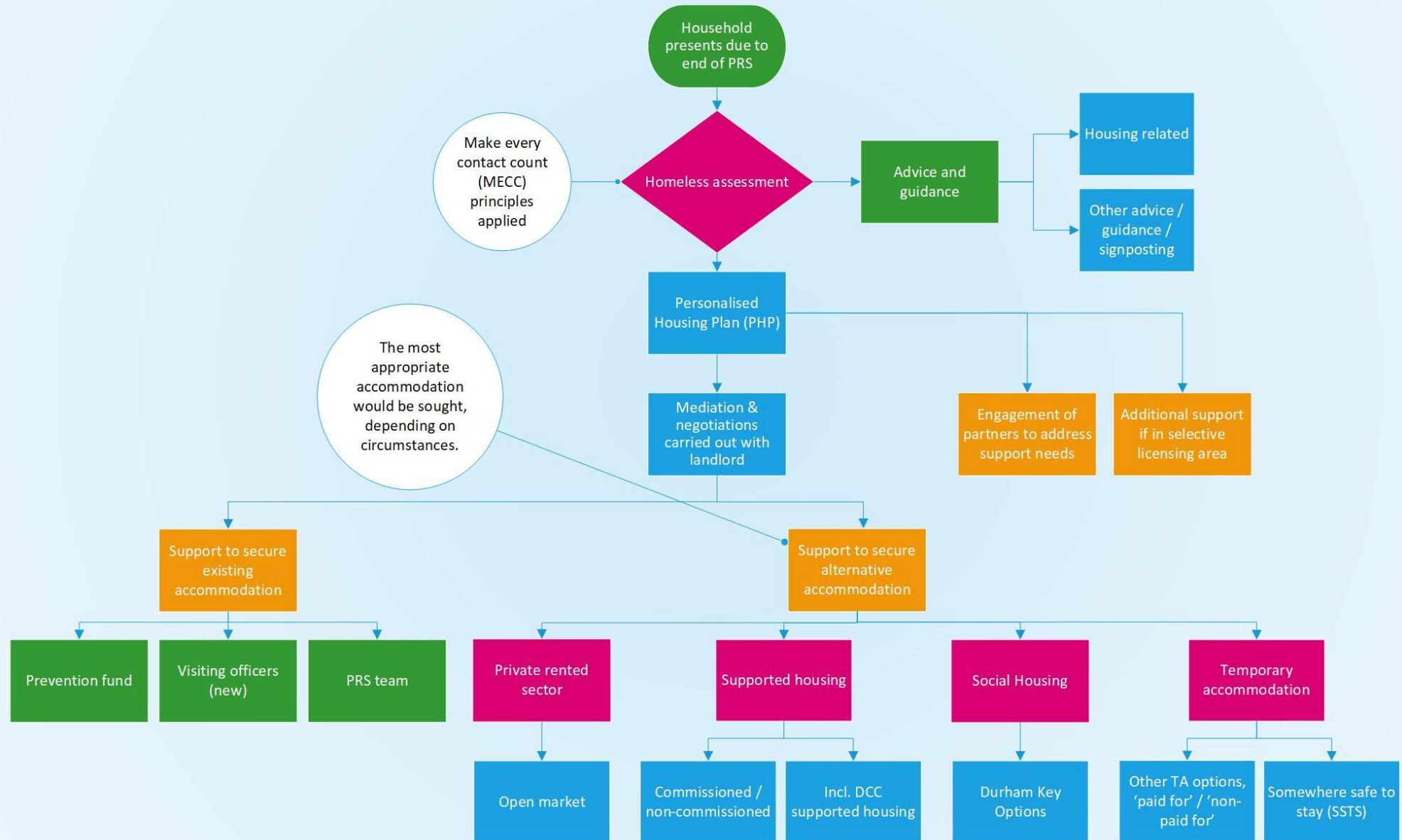
Consultation for both draft strategies is between **30 October and 18 December 2023**

Provide your feedback on the Housing Strategy and/or the Draft County Durham Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy:

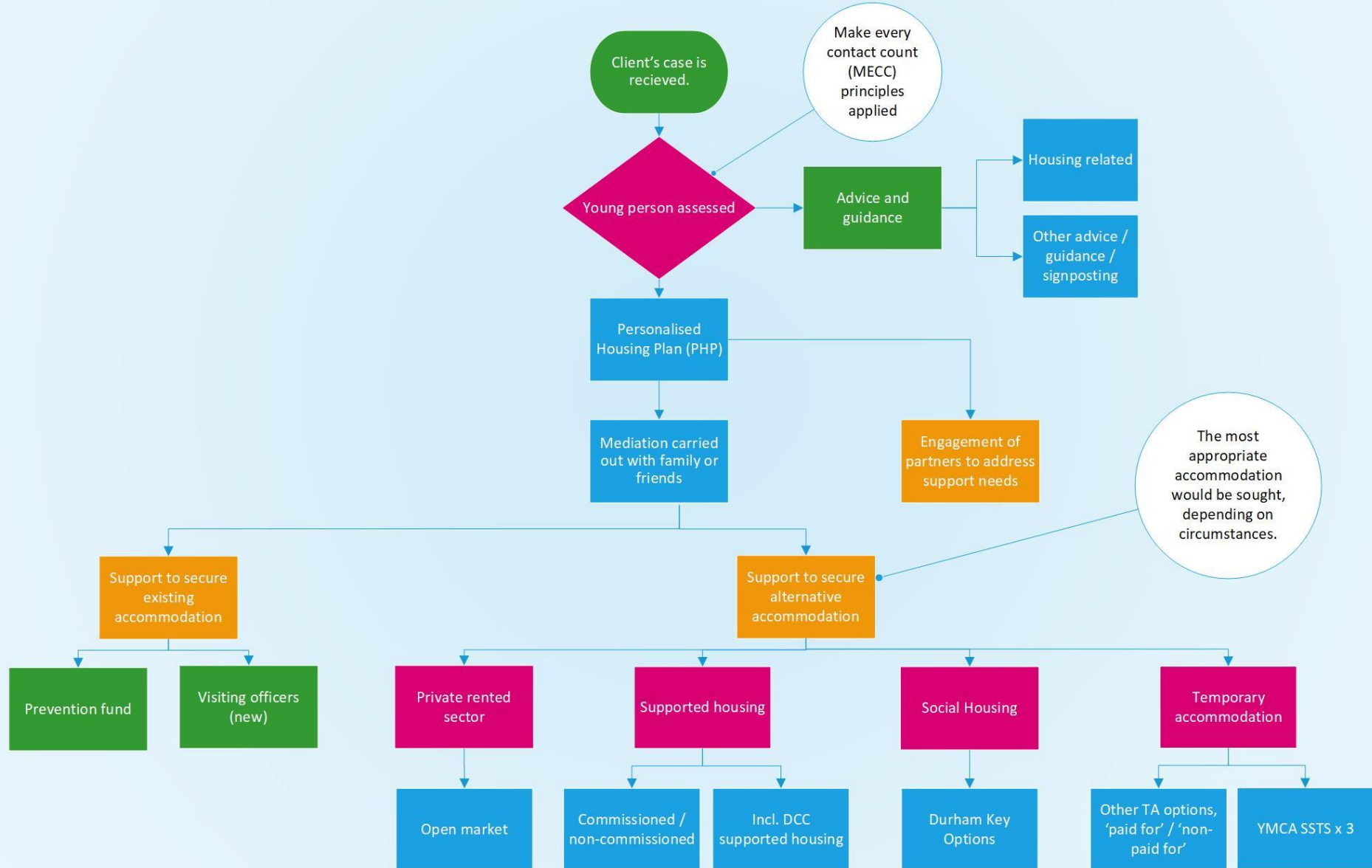
- Online at www.durham.gov.uk/consultation
- By taking part in one of two virtual meetings, which can be booked via the web page above:
 - Monday 13 November 2023 from 1.30pm to 3.00pm
 - Monday 20 November 2023 from 6.00pm to 7.30pm
- By emailing comments to thehousingconversation@durham.gov.uk
- At any of the council's Customer Access Points and libraries

Case study pathways

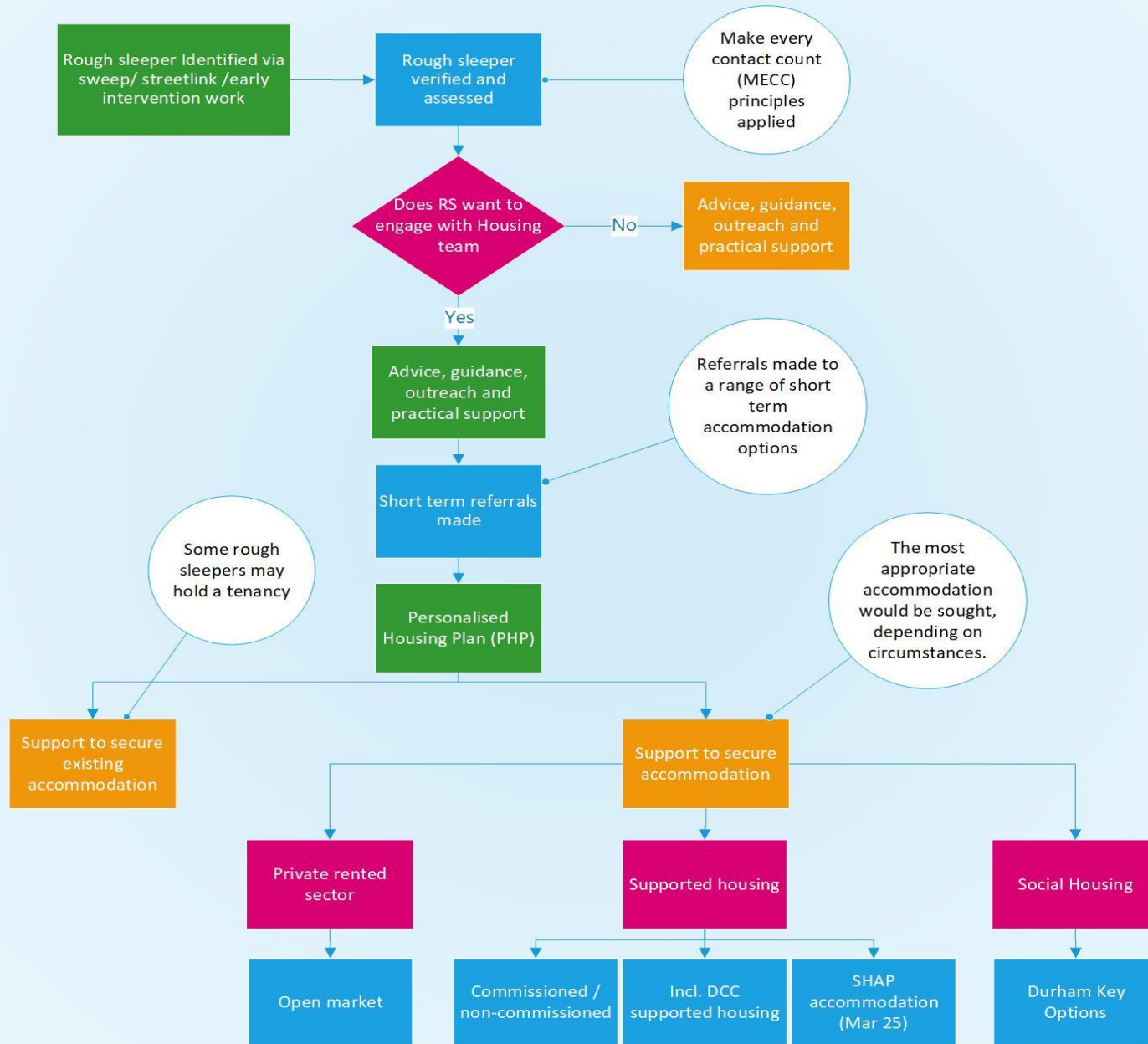
End of PRS presentation



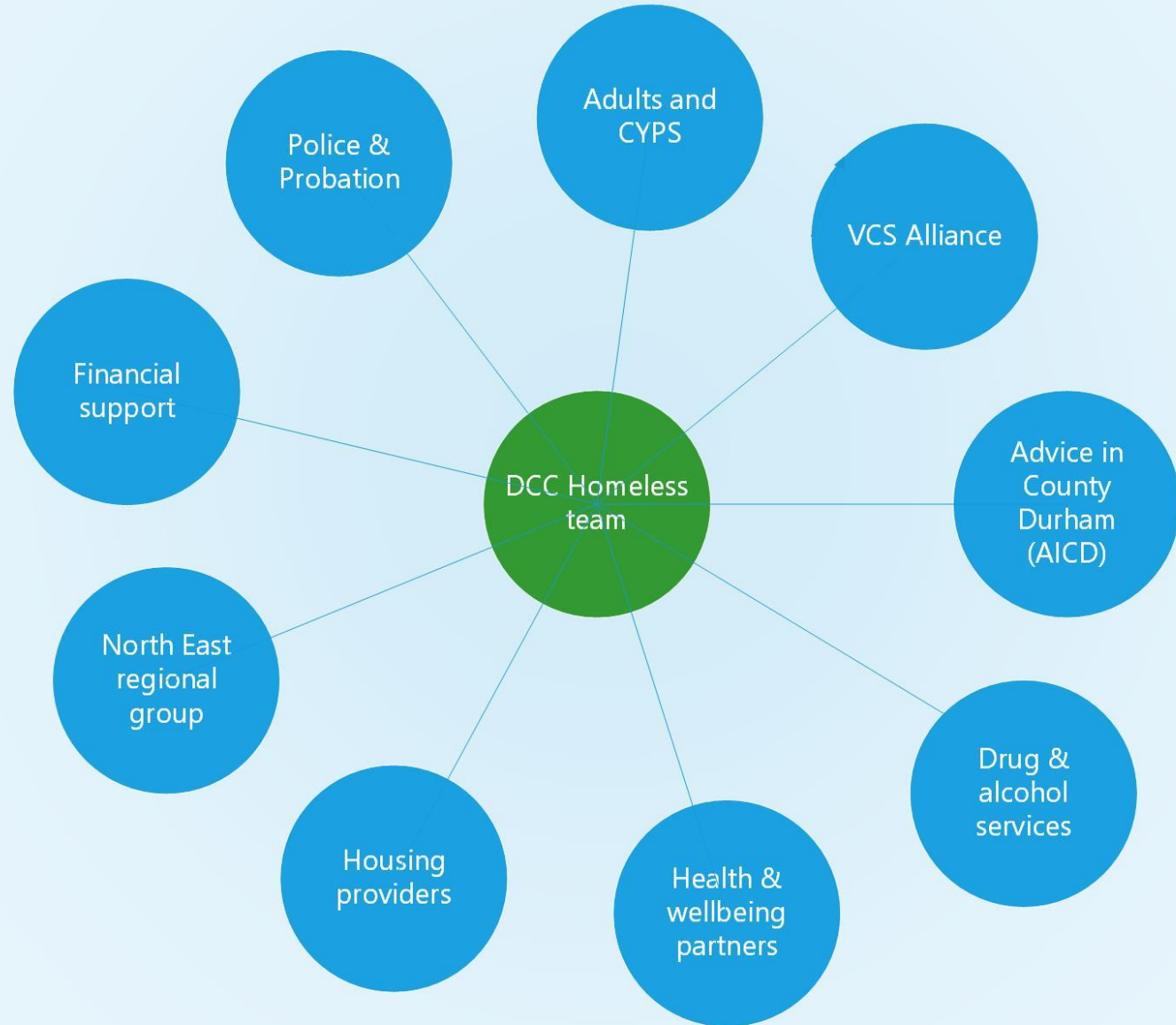
Presentation of an 18 yr old, family or friends not able to accommodate



Rough Sleeper - Journey/pathway



Partners the homeless team work with



Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18 December 2023



Supported Housing Improvement Programme / Non-Commissioned Supported Accommodation

Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Electoral divisions affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) working with non-commissioned supported housing providers across County Durham.

Executive summary

- 2 Supported housing can be both commissioned and non-commissioned:
 - a) supported housing that is commissioned by the local authority is inspected and monitored with a clear performance framework in place; and
 - b) there is however currently no regulator of non-commissioned supported housing and providers can set up without approval from the local authority.
- 3 Currently in County Durham there are 19 providers of non-commissioned supported housing. These providers manage 522 properties providing transitional/short term supported accommodation for approximately 650 people. The number of supported bedspaces provided by non-commissioned providers has increased by approximately 40% since early 2020.
- 4 Both nationally and regionally there have been increasing reports of poor-quality non-commissioned supported housing. As a result, there are concerns about the detrimental impact this can have on resident

wellbeing and outcomes, the neighbourhoods surrounding these schemes and the pressure this can place on public services. A BBC Panorama documentary exploring this issue was produced in August 2022.

- 5 To address the emerging challenges within the non-commissioned supported housing sector the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) launched the SHIP in summer 2022. Local authorities were invited to bid for a share of £20 million to help address poor quality supported housing and improve standards of support and provision.
- 6 Durham submitted a bid and in autumn 2022 was awarded £578,795 to implement the SHIP in County Durham. The main objectives of SHIP are to improve the standards of accommodation and support provided by non-commissioned supported housing providers.

Recommendation

- 7 It is recommended that the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the contents of this report and presentation delivered at the meeting and provide feedback accordingly.

Background

- 8 Supported housing is accommodation packaged with support to enable some of the most vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in the community. The cohorts this sector supports include*:
- a) individuals at risk of or who have experienced homelessness;
 - b) people recovering from drug or alcohol dependence;
 - c) people with experience of the criminal justice system;
 - d) young people with a support need (such as care leavers or teenage parents);
 - e) people with mental ill health; and
 - f) people fleeing domestic abuse.
- (*These are not always distinct groups and many individuals may have multiple needs).
- 9 Supported housing can be both commissioned and non-commissioned.
- 10 Supported housing that is commissioned by the local authority is inspected and monitored with a clear performance framework in place.
- 11 There currently is however no regulator of non-commissioned supported housing and providers can set up without approval from the local authority. This can provide many problems including developers and landlords setting up for 'commercial gain' and not for the welfare of the client, as well as not providing the level of 'care, support and supervision' as set out in their housing benefit application. These properties are often purchased in cheaper locations including regeneration areas therefore potentially adding to existing problems of anti-social behaviour. A recent example of this was a provider who bought properties across the county, some of which were in Horden, a targeted delivery plan area. This provider could not demonstrate an adequate provision of 'care support and supervision' to their tenants and subsequently resulted in non-payment of housing benefit by Durham County Council. This decision was made in late 2022 in advance of the SHIP programme.
- 12 Currently in County Durham there are 19 providers of non-commissioned supported housing. These providers manage 522 properties providing transitional/short term supported accommodation

for approximately 650 people. The number of supported bedspaces provided by non-commissioned providers has increased by approximately 40% since early 2020.

- 13 Landlords can request for their scheme to be classed as 'exempt accommodation'. Exempt accommodation is a term used in housing benefit regulations to describe supported accommodation which is exempt from certain housing benefit provisions. One of the main criteria to qualify for 'exempt supported accommodation' is that 'care, support or supervision' (CSS), above a minimal amount, is being provided in connection with the property and is beyond the 'normal' management tasks a landlord would be expected to perform.
- 14 It is however difficult to determine if the tenants are receiving the stated level of care and support and if the standards of these schemes/properties meet basic regulatory requirements. It is also important to establish that the tenant has a support need to justify their tenancy within supported accommodation. Across the housing providers there is a broad range of ways in which CSS is provided and funded.
- 15 Both nationally and regionally there have been increasing reports of poor quality non-commissioned supported housing. As a result, there are concerns about the detrimental impact this can have on resident wellbeing and outcomes, the neighbourhoods surrounding these schemes and the pressure this can place on public services. A BBC Panorama documentary exploring this issue was produced in August 2022 where the provider 'My Space' was investigated.
- 16 To address the emerging challenges within the non-commissioned supported housing sector the DLUHC launched the SHIP in summer 2022. Local authorities were invited to bid for a share of £20 million to help address poor quality supported housing and improve standards of support and provision.
- 17 The council submitted a bid and in autumn 2022 were awarded £578,795 to implement the SHIP in County Durham. The funding will enable the council to increase its oversight and involvement in the non-commissioned supported housing sector, the proposed outcomes of the programme are:
 - a) improved property and management standards of supported accommodation;
 - b) improved knowledge and introduction of a new gateway approach to better manage supply of supported accommodation across the county;

- c) quality support tailored to meet individual tenant needs;
- d) value for money for both providers, tenants and the council;
- e) upskilling of the providers' workforce;
- f) improved engagement and support to service users from the council;
and
- g) collaborative production of a supported accommodation charter to help establish and maintain high standards.

18 The proposed SHIP activity in Durham includes:

- a) creation of a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) (project co-ordinator, two housing benefit officers, housing needs officer, private sector housing officer and adult social care support officer);
- b) visits to properties and tenants housed by non-commissioned supported accommodation providers focusing on one provider at a time;
- c) review all housing benefit decisions including rents and service charges and the eligibility of the exempt accommodation status;
- d) review the quality and suitability of the care, support and supervision provided;
- e) inspect properties to identify any areas of disrepair or hazards and ensure they are being let in line with relevant legislation;
- f) identify any safeguarding concerns or unassessed tenant vulnerabilities and take appropriate action; and
- g) discuss move on plans to longer term accommodation and work with providers and tenants to prevent evictions.

Supported Housing Improvement Programme Core Activity - Review of Providers currently operating in County Durham

19 Recruitment of the SHIP MDT is now complete and all members of the MDT are in post. A SHIP project group has been established to provide oversight of the delivery of the programme.

- 20 SHIP funding runs until March 2025 and during this time the SHIP will review each of the 19 non-commissioned supported housing providers currently operating in County Durham. The reviews will ensure high standards are being maintained in terms of both property management and support for the tenants. The programme will also offer support and guidance to supported housing providers where required.
- 21 The SHIP team is now working with five of the 19 providers, that has included meetings with the providers, property inspections and tenant reviews to determine the level of CSS received by the tenants. As of 15 November 2023, 92 tenant reviews have taken place and 64 property inspections.
- 22 The SHIP team liaises with each provider throughout the inspections and tenant reviews to:
- a) understand how their organisation operates;
 - b) obtain data in relation to referrals; and
 - c) support plans, engagement with tenants and move on plans etc.
- 23 At the end of the inspections and reviews, a final report is produced with feedback and recommendations and an action plan is developed with the provider to ensure improvements are made within appropriate timescales.
- 24 Early findings identified via SHIP reviews include:
- a) the vast majority of tenants have a support need;
 - b) a significant proportion of tenants have been in supported accommodation for in excess of two years with examples where tenants have been in supported accommodation for five years or more;
 - c) in some cases there is a lack of evidence that the support provided is tailored to meet the needs of the tenant;
 - d) there is concern around staff knowledge and development including expertise to appropriately support all tenants needs and ability to direct referrals to other agencies and support services; and
 - e) in most instances property standards are of a satisfactory standard with only low / medium level repairs needing to be carried out.

- 25 The SHIP MDT is working with providers to ensure improvements are made, some examples include:
- a) training for providers in relation to:
 - (i) accessing the Durham Key Options (DKO) housing register;
 - (ii) referrals to other supports agencies;
 - (iii) safeguarding;
 - (iv) trauma informed practices; and
 - (v) accessing the private rented sector.
 - b) providing move on information to enable tenants who are ready to move onto independent living and prevent 'bed blocking';
 - c) ensuring support is tailored to meet the needs of individuals;
 - d) identification of cases who may require additional support from adult services;
 - e) engagement with training and employment services;
 - f) housing benefit advice, e.g. annual rent reviews;
 - g) re-inspections of properties where standards did not meet the regulatory requirements; and
 - h) subsequent visits after a period of time (in most instances this will be no later than six months) to ensure recommendations are being actioned.
- 26 DLUHC has appointed consultants' 'Kantar' to co-ordinate the monitoring of the SHIP programme. Six monthly monitoring information (MI) has been submitted with future dates for MI returns planned. Regular meetings have taken place with both Kantar and DLUHC to discuss the progress of the programme to date.

Supported Housing Improvement Programme Additional Activity

Training and Development

- 27 The SHIP programme has provided a number of training opportunities that supported housing providers have been encouraged to attend. This includes training on property standards:
- a) trauma informed approaches;
 - b) DKO; and
 - c) Durham Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service.
- 28 The SHIP MDT will continue to communicate with providers on training need and provide training and support where needed.

Non-Commissioned Supported Housing Forum –

- 29 This was established in the summer of 2022 to bring together non-commissioned housing providers to share best practice and improve working practices with housing solutions around referrals and void properties. The forum meets quarterly and is an opportunity to engage with providers in relation to:
- a) SHIP;
 - b) training;
 - c) updates on key topics; and
 - d) address local emerging challenges.
- 30 The forum is well attended with many of the County Durham providers attending.

Non-Commissioned Supported Housing Charter

- 31 The housing strategy and partnerships team, along with the SHIP MDT, are in the process of working together with housing providers to co-produce a charter for providers of non-commissioned housing. The charter will aim to set out minimum expectations in relation to property standards, quality of support and value for money. This will be finalised over the next six months, ready for implementation in April 2024.

Supported Housing Steering Group

- 32 Housing and housing benefits facilitate an overarching supported housing steering group (the group was established following recommendations contained in a report shared with Corporate

Management Team in December 2021). The group which is made up of officers from housing, commissioning (adults and children), housing benefit and adult services has a remit to ensure all supported accommodation in County Durham (commissioned and non-commissioned) is of a consistently good standard. SHIP officers are members of this group and have previously brought non-commissioned supported housing queries to this group for discussion at a strategic level. Recently, a number of task and finish groups have been established which will address the emerging priorities of the supported housing steering group. Task and Finish groups are:

- a) gateway approach, position statement and registered provider status;
- b) eligibility for supported accommodation and pathway for move on;
- c) development of a common referral portal for all supported accommodation; and
- d) impact of the supported housing act.

Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services

- 33 Durham County Council has accessed a Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery (SSMRT) housing support grant. A proportion of the grant will be used to fund three recovery workers who will work directly with the non-commissioned supported housing sector (providers and tenants) to address substance misuse issues in their accommodation and encourage people to access drug and alcohol recovery services. In the interim, prior to the SSMRT recovery workers being recruited, the SHIP MDT has engaged Humankind (County Durham's drug and alcohol recovery service) and public health to provide additional support and resources to providers and their tenants where there had been increased instances of drug and alcohol misuse, which on one occasion recently has led to a death at the property. Humankind has intervened to provide additional support and signposting for the providers and tenants. Information has also been shared with the Police.

Health Squad

- 34 The SHIP MDT is working closely with Durham County Council's health squad to address health inequalities within supported housing. The health workers will work with supported housing tenants to provide advice on:
- a) weight;

- b) blood pressure;
 - c) mental health;
 - d) healthy eating and cooking; and
 - e) smoking and alcohol consumption.
- 35 They will also support tenants to sign up to GPs, dentists and support services and groups (e.g. exercise opportunities and gardening groups).

Engagement with Police, Probation Services and Fire Services

- 36 The SHIP MDT has provided SHIP updates to these services including an overview of SHIP work to date and findings and action required following engagement with providers. Moving forward, bi-monthly meetings have been planned in with Community Policing Teams and Probation where the SHIP team and the Police will share anti-social behaviour and criminality concerns and intelligence linked to supported housing.

Non-Commissioned Supported Housing 'Gateway'

- 37 Officers from the SHIP team are represented on the task and finish group which is developing a gateway approach for new and existing providers of supported housing, looking to set up or expand provision in County Durham. Currently, the authority deals with queries from providers on a case-by-case basis as requests are received. Moving forward Durham County Council would like to implement clear processes for how the authority deals with new or expanding provision. The council have discussed this with existing providers via a recent forum event, that we would encourage them to speak with us if they are considering expansion within Durham.

Improved Engagement and Comms

- 38 A new supported housing webpage has been developed on the Durham County Council website, to provide updates to members of the public, providers, local Members and tenants. A generic SHIP inbox, ship@durham.gov.uk, has also been developed to direct and co-ordinate all queries in relation to non-commissioned supported housing providers. This has been shared with services across the council and can be used by members to the public, tenants, providers and local Members to raise queries or log concerns.

- 39 Regular updates in relation to the activity and progress from the SHIP project are given at relevant management teams.

Housing Benefit Subsidy Loss

- 40 SHIP officers are currently supporting housing benefit services and the council's finance team to identify solutions to reduce the council's 'subsidy loss shortfall'.
- 41 If a supported accommodation provider is a registered provider, Durham County Council receives 100% of the housing benefit payment back from the Department for Work and Pension (DWP) however where the provider is not a registered provider (16 of the 19 currently operating in County Durham) the local authority will only receive 60% (approximately) of the costs back DWP, the remaining 40% is a cost to the local authority.
- 42 In addition to an increase in new providers of supported accommodation who are not registered providers, there has also been an increase in the number of housing units offered by existing non-registered providers in the last 18 months. As a result, this has increased the council's subsidy in recent years. The SHIP work will contribute to the council's plan to reduce subsidy loss by:
- a) encouraging providers to become registered;
 - b) encouraging tenants to move out of supported accommodation into their own tenancy;
 - c) ensuring tenants in supported housing have a support need; and
 - d) ensuring supported housing costs are correct.

Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023

- 43 In response to the challenges linked to non-commissioned supported housing sector, the Government has implemented the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act. The Act, which received royal ascent in June 2023, will:
- a) require local authorities in England to review supported housing in their areas and develop strategies;
 - b) provide for the creation of a national expert advisory panel to advise on matters related to supported housing;

- c) give the Secretary of State power to introduce national support standards;
- d) give local authorities power to create local licensing schemes for exempt accommodation; and
- e) give the Secretary of State an option to introduce a new planning Use-Class for exempt accommodation.

44 Consultation on the Supported Housing Act will commence in January 2024 with implementation of the Act expected to commence from April 2025.

Conclusion

- 45 The number of non-commissioned housing providers has increased by 40% over the last three years across County Durham. As an unregulated sector, the council have had a lack of resources to be able to inspect and monitor provision and standards within the sector.
- 46 The SHIP funding has enabled the recruitment of an MDT that will work intensively with the non-commissioned housing providers to improve property and support standards.
- 47 Additional work, including the development of a charter, a gateway approach and partnership working with health colleagues will add value to the SHIP Project.
- 48 The Supported Housing Act 2023 will introduce requirements for both housing providers and the local authority, with the aim of providing a framework to improve standards across the sector.

Background papers

- None.

Other useful documents

- None.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Supported housing providers have a legal responsibility to ensure properties they own or lease are safe for the tenants that occupy them. Durham County Council has a duty to act if properties are unsafe.

Durham County Council's housing benefit team can legally request documents and information from supported housing providers to ensure tenants are receiving more than minimal CSS.

Finance

The funding awarded to Durham County Council for SHIP is to support the local authority to achieve the outcomes and objectives set out in the funding bid.

Consultation and Engagement

Durham County Council will ensure it carries out any consultation requirements linked to changes in supported housing moving forward.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Durham County Council will take all opportunities to obtain feedback from hard-to-reach individuals across the county.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

The programme aims to work with supported housing providers improve crime and anti-social behaviour within supported housing.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)

Emma Regan - Housing Solutions Team Leader (Strategy & Partnerships)



Page 202 Agenda and Objectives

- Background
- Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023
- Context for County Durham
- SHIP Funding
- SHIP Objectives
- SHIP Outputs
- Strategic approach to supported accommodation
- Questions

Background

Background

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- No regulator of non-commissioned supported accommodation
- Can set up without LA approval
- Providers often set up for commercial gain, buying cheap properties often in deprived locations – [BBC Panorama documentary](#)
- Supported housing accommodates the most vulnerable people
- Eligible for ‘exempt accommodation’ if certain criteria are met, where ‘care, support or supervision (CSS)’ is above a minimal amount
- Nationally and Regionally – increased reports of poor quality accommodation
- Detrimental impact of communities, health and well-being of tenants and public services

Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023

Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023

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- Initiated in response to the challenges linked to non-commissioned supported housing sector
- Received Royal Assent 29 June 2023, came into force on 29 August 2023
- The Act will:
 - require local authorities in England to review supported housing in their areas and develop strategies
 - provide for the creation of a national expert advisory panel to advise on matters related to supported housing
 - give the Secretary of State power to introduce national support standards
 - give local authorities power to create local licensing schemes for exempt accommodation, and
 - give the Secretary of State an option to introduce a new planning Use-Class for exempt accommodation
- Further consultation will take place in early 2024, including draft regulations developed by DLUHC and DWP

Context for County Durham

Supported Housing In County Durham

- 19 providers
- 522 units providing transitional/short term supported accommodation for approx. 650 people
- Provided for some of the most vulnerable clients - homeless, those in recovery, ex-offenders, poor mental health, DA, young people
- 40% increase in the last 2 years

Providers Operating in County Durham

Addictions North East

Cornerstone Housing

Darlington & Teesdale Social
Housing

East Durham Community Initiative

Free The Way

Handcrafted Project

Harbour

Humankind

Launchpad

Moving On

My Space Housing Solution

Positive Directions NE

Red Supported Living

Roc solid

Turnaround Homes

Vision Supported Housing

YMCA Sunderland

YMCA North Tyneside

SHIP Funding, Objectives, Outputs

SHIP Funding

- DLUHC launched the SHIP funding opportunity in summer 2022
- £20m funding pot to help address poor quality supported housing, improve standards of support and accommodation
- Durham was awarded £578,795 to implement SHIP (March 25)
- Funding had enabled recruitment of a dedicated multi-disciplinary team

SHIP Objectives

- Improved property and management standards of supported accommodation
- Improved knowledge and introduction of a new gateway approach to better manage supply of supported accommodation across the county
- Quality support tailored to meet individual tenant needs
- Value for money for both providers, tenants and the council
- Upskilling of the providers' workforce
- Improved engagement and support to service users from the council
- Collaborative production of a supported accommodation charter to help establish and maintain high standards

SHIP Delivery Plan

- Initial meeting with provider
- Property inspections
- Tenant reviews
- Feedback report/recommendations
- Action Plan
- Implementation period
- Re inspections/mystery shopping
- Escalation process with partners (in review)
- With drawl of housing benefit – last resort

SHIP Outputs

- 92 tenant reviews completed (17th Nov)
- 64 property inspections (17th Nov)
- Initial findings from first 4 providers:-
 - Lack of tailored support with some providers
 - Bed blocking with high numbers staying beyond 2 years
 - Low staffing numbers in some cases
 - Lack of skilled support staff
 - Lack of knowledge about referrals, access to partner agencies

Strategic approach – supported accommodation

Strategic approach



Training/partnership work /collaboration

- Not all about enforcement



First Point of Contact/Gatekeeper Scheme

- For new providers and existing providers setting up new provision



Health and Wellbeing Support

- Health squad and drug and alcohol support workers



Supported Housing Forum, Steering Group and Charter

- Share best practice and agree a minimum set of standards
- Work together to address emerging priorities



Subsidy Loss Reduction and Scrutiny of Housing Benefit Claims

- RP status, criteria for supported accommodation



Links to partner agencies and other services

- Police, Probation & Fire



Improvement Engagement & Comms

- New web page on DCC site and SHIP contact email address - ship@durham.gov.uk



Supported Accommodation Steering Group

- Working with commissioners, wider housing colleagues to look at best practice from SHIP and share across all supported housing – task and finish groups

Questions



**Economy and Enterprise Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

18 December 2023



**Regeneration, Economy and Growth –
Quarter 2: Forecast of Revenue and
Capital Outturn 2023/24**

Report of Corporate Directors

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide details of the forecast outturn position for quarter 2 revenue and capital for Regeneration, Economy and Growth (REG) as at 30 September 2023.

Executive summary

- 2 This report provides an overview of the forecast of outturn, based on the position at quarter 2, 2023/24. It provides an analysis of the budgets and forecast outturn for the service areas falling under the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and complements the reports considered and agreed by Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- 3 The position is that there is a forecast overspend of £0.725 million, against a revised budget of £54.465 million after taking account of the forecast use of reserves and items outside the cash limit, including redundancy costs which are met from the corporate reserve, capital accounting entries and use of / contributions to earmarked reserves. The quarter one forecast estimated a cash limit overspend of £0.868 million in year.
- 4 Reductions in energy prices of £1.675 million, along with the 2023/24 pay award for Chief Officers and Apprentices of £90,000 have been excluded from the cash limit forecast outturn position. Also excluded is £1.793 million in respect of Leisure Centre income shortfalls covered

corporately and £0.548 million which has been covered from central contingencies (£95,000 Radon Monitoring, £0.280 million Milburngate legal and professional fees and £0.173 million premises double running costs at the Story and Plot C).

- 5 The revised service capital budget is £149.881 million with expenditure of £54.125 million as at 30 September 2023.
- 6 Details of the reasons for under and overspending against relevant budget heads are disclosed in the report.

Recommendation(s)

- 7 Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

Background

8 County Council approved the Revenue and Capital budgets for 2023/24 at its meeting on 22 February 2023. These budgets have since been revised to account for grant additions/reductions, budget transfers, and budget re-profiling between years (in terms of capital) as well as corporately recognised budget pressures. This report covers the financial position for the following budgets of the services within the scope of this committee;

- (a) Revenue Budget - £54.465 million (original £56.363 million)
- (b) Capital Programme – £149.881 million (original £131.502 million)

9 The original service revenue budget has been revised in year to incorporate various budget adjustments. These are shown in the table below:

Description	Change (£m)
Comms & Marketing – from REG to CEO	(1.935)
Design & Conservation – from NCC to REG (P&H)	0.262
Post Transfer to Care Connect – RES to REG (P&H)	0.030
Post Transfer from B&FM – REG (CPaL) to RES	(0.028)
Post Transfer from H&S – REG (CPaL) to RES	(0.011)
Post Transfer from T&CS – REG to RES	(0.038)
LTP Income from NCC to REG (T&CS)	(0.017)
EV Charging Infrastructure – from REG (T&CS) to NCC	(0.011)
Transfer of restructure budget – REG (Central) to Corporate	(0.101)
Self-Financing Capital Charges: House Building/CDLA – REG (P&H) to Corporate	(0.048)
Total Change	(1.898)

10 The summary financial statements contained in the report cover the financial year 2023/24 and show: -

- (a) The approved annual budget;
- (b) The forecast income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's financial management system;
- (c) The variance between the annual budget and the forecast outturn;
- (d) For the revenue budget, adjustments for items outside of the cash limit (outside of the Service's control) to take into account such items

as capital charges and use of / or contributions to earmarked reserves.

Forecast Revenue Outturn 2023/24

- 11 The service is reporting a cash limit overspend of **£0.725 million** against a revised budget of **£54.465 million** (1.33%).
- 12 The table below compares the forecast outturn with the budget by Head of Service. A further table is shown at **Appendix 2** analysing the position by Subjective Analysis (i.e. type of expense).

Service Budget - Analysis by Head of Service £'000

Head of Service	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Items Outside Cash Limit	Earmarked Reserves	Net Inflation Adjustment	Cash Limit Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Business Durham	(1,314)	(1,037)	277	0	(277)	0	0
Economic Development	1,509	2,005	496	(10)	(476)	0	10
Corporate Property & Land	1,791	1,745	(46)	(565)	354	0	(257)
Culture Sport & Tourism	16,822	21,025	4,203	(1,812)	(2,287)	0	104
Planning & Housing	7,193	7,456	263	(20)	118	0	362
Transport & Contracted Servs	2,885	979	(1,906)	(18)	2,429	0	505
REG - Central Costs	25,579	23,912	(1,667)	(7)	0	1,675	1
Total	54,465	56,084	1,619	(2,431)	(138)	1,675	725

- 13 The cash limit overspend of £0.725 million takes into account adjustments for sums outside the cash limit such as redundancy costs that are met from corporate reserves and use of / contributions to earmarked reserves.

Cash Limit Outturn – Explanation of Over and Under Spending

- 14 The main reasons accounting for the outturn position are as follows:
- 15 Culture, Sport and Tourism is forecast to overspend by £0.104 million against budget. The main reasons are an unrealised MTFP saving of £75,000, a capital contribution of £86,000 for leisure transformation and an anticipated loss of income of £0.121 million at Killhope Museum. These overspends were partially offset by a one-off benefit arising from the agreement to take full control of the gym facilities at seven of our leisure centres.
- 16 Transport and Contract Services is forecast to overspend by £0.505 million against budget. The main reasons are an underrecovery of departure charge income at Durham bus station of £0.104 million, on-going costs for a new database system of £71,000, an anticipated under-achievement of income for park and ride of £0.250 million, unbudgeted spending of £0.160 million for enforcement cameras, increased business rate charges on car parks of £0.135 million, an overspend on routine electrical testing of car park street lighting of £66,000, under-recovery of bus shelter advertising income of £0.117 million and an overspend on bus shelter repairs and maintenance of £72,000. These were partially offset by an underspend of £0.150 million against Durham bus station for its closure in year, £0.127 million overachievement of parking income and £0.193 million of underspends mainly relating to road safety employee costs and school crossing patrols.
- 17 Planning and Housing is forecast to overspend by £0.362 million against budget. This is largely due to an anticipated underachievement of income of £0.562 million with regard to planning fee income, as the volume of applications received has Page 293 reduced significantly over the last 12 months (linked to current economic circumstances such as increased interest rates and construction costs). Temporary accommodation budgets are also forecast to overspend by £0.142 million. These overspends are partially offset by anticipated staffing underspends of £0.342 million across the service;
- 18 Economic Development is forecast to overspend by £10,000 against budget, which is predominantly attributed to under-recovery of training income in the Employment & Skills service.
- 19 Any over or underspend in relation to the activity of Business Durham is managed through an earmarked reserve and therefore there is no impact on the cash limit position. A contribution to reserves in 2023/24 is anticipated based largely upon current occupancy rates across a

range of Business Space sites exceeding the base budget provision, resulting in an overachievement of net income receivable in year.

- 20 Corporate Property and Land is forecast to underspend by £0.256 million against budget. Within Buildings & Facilities Management, there is a forecast overspend of £0.216 million, mainly relating to the catering service, which anticipates a shortfall in income as a result of hybrid working and reduced footfall in the internal staff facilities such as County Hall and Green Lane. Strategy and Property Management is forecast to underspend by £0.410 million due primarily to additional budget growth of £0.600 million included in the base budget from 2022/23 for a staffing restructure that is not now expected to be in place until 2024/25. The underspend is partially offset by expenditure relating to interim support (consultants and professional fees) pending the implementation of the restructure. There are also minor underspends elsewhere within the service, including additional unbudgeted income in Business Development of £41,000, as well as underspends on supplies and services of £21,000.
- 21 In summary, the service grouping is not managing to maintain spending within its cash limit and as a result needs to draw £0.725 million from the Regeneration Cash Limit Reserve.

Capital Programme

- 22 The capital programme makes a significant contribution to the regeneration ambitions of County Durham. The programme is relatively large and diverse and is managed by project delivery officers throughout the service.
- 23 The Regeneration, Economy and Growth Services capital programme was revised at year-end for budget re-profiled from 2022/23. Since then, reports to the MOWG have detailed further revisions, for grant additions/reductions, budget transfers and budget re-profiling into later years. The revised budget now stands at £149.881 million.

24 Summary financial performance for 2023/24 is shown below.

Service	Revised Annual Budget 2023/24 £000	Actual Spend to 30 September £000	Remaining Budget 2023/24 £000
Economic Development	36,101	5,772	30,329
Corporate Property & Land	23,764	15,634	8,130
Culture Sport & Tourism	25,932	12,897	13,035
Strategic Programmes	271	-	-
Planning & Housing	17,409	7,538	9,871
Transport & Contracted Services	46,404	12,284	34,120
Total	149,881	54,125	95,756

25 Officers continue to carefully monitor capital expenditure on a monthly basis. Actual spend for the first 6 months amounts to £54.125 million. **Appendix 3** provides a more detailed breakdown of spend across the major projects contained within the capital programme.

Background papers

- County Council Report (22 February 2023) - [Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24](#)
- Cabinet Report (13 September 2023) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 – Period to 30 June 2023.
- Cabinet Report (15 November 2023) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 – Period to 30 September 2023.

Contact: Ed Thompson

Tel: 03000 263481

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Council's Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements. This report shows the forecast spend against budgets agreed by the Council in February 2023 in relation to the 2023/24 financial year.

Finance

Financial implications are detailed throughout the report which provides an analysis of the revenue and capital outturn position alongside details of balance sheet items such as earmarked reserves held by the service grouping to support its priorities.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

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

Procurement

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

Appendix 2: Regeneration, Economy & Growth Forecast Outturn at Q2 – Subjective Analysis

REG Subjective Analysis	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Items Outside Cash Limit	Earmarked Reserves	Net Inflation Adjustment	Cash Limit Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Employees	74,296	71,285	(3,011)	(90)	0	0	(3,101)
Premises	23,434	23,820	386	0	0	1,675	2,061
Transport	1,638	1,710	72	0	0	0	72
Supplies & Services	19,128	26,692	7,564	0	0	0	7,563
Third Party Payments	45,580	54,946	9,366	0	0	0	9,366
Transfer Payments	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Capital	13,592	13,592	0	0	0	0	0
Central Costs	11,996	12,669	673	(548)	(138)	0	(13)
DRF	0	159	159	0	0	0	159
Gross Expenditure	189,664	204,874	15,210	(638)	(138)	1,675	16,108
Grant	(9,222)	(15,560)	(6,338)	0	0	0	(6,339)
Contributions	(19,739)	(20,096)	(357)	0	0	0	(357)
Sales	(2,562)	(2,022)	540	0	0	0	540
Charges	(30,021)	(30,383)	(362)	(1,793)	0	0	(2,155)
Rents	(10,169)	(12,154)	(1,985)	0	0	0	(1,984)
Recharges	(62,809)	(68,245)	(5,436)	0	0	0	(5,436)
Other Income	(676)	(328)	348	0	0	0	349
Gross Income	(135,198)	(148,788)	(13,590)	(1,793)	0	0	(15,382)
Total	54,465	56,084	1,619	(2,431)	(138)	1,675	725

Appendix 3: Regeneration, Economy and Growth Capital 2023/24

General Fund	Revised Annual Budget £000	Actual Spend to 30 Sep £000	Remaining Budget £000
Economic Development			
Industrial Estates	21,980	3,468	18,512
Minor Schemes	150	75	75
North Dock Seaham	25	25	0
Beamish Capital Project	500	0	500
Town & Village Environmental Maint.	4,191	1,100	3,091
<u>Town Centres:</u>			
Barnard Castle	76	32	44
Bishop Auckland	6,296	655	5,641
Consett	516	1	515
Durham	503	0	503
Peterlee	284	6	278
Seaham	1,121	351	770
Spennymoor	327	34	293
Other	132	26	106
	36,101	5,772	30,329
Planning & Housing			
Housing Renewal	9,269	2,607	6,662
Housing Development	195	25	170
Disabled Facility Grants/Financial Assist	7,176	4,859	2,317
Care Connect Digital Upgrade	769	47	722
	17,409	7,538	9,871
Corporate Property and Land			
Office Accommodation	19,502	14,140	5,362
Structural Capitalised Maint.	3,858	1,333	2,525
Milburngate	403	160	243
	23,764	15,634	8,130
Transport & Contracted Services			
Local Transport Plan	1,795	409	1,386
Transport Major Schemes	43,802	11,782	32,020
Traffic & Community Engagement	807	93	715
	46,404	12,284	34,120
Culture, Sport and Tourism			
<u>Culture and Museums:</u>			
The Story	4,472	3,577	895
Sildon Coal Drops	513	33	480

	Revised Annual Budget £000	Actual Spend to 30 Sep £000	Remaining Budget £000
General Fund			
Redhills Refurbishment	815	500	315
Locomotion New Building	2,976	0	2,976
Weardale Railway	1,977	569	1,408
Killhope Museum	610	360	250
DLIMAG	1,630	487	1,143
Other	18	2	16
<u>Leisure Centres:</u>			
Teesdale LC	335	11	324
Spennymoor LC	2,080	988	1,092
Woodhouse Close LC	950	240	710
Peterlee LC	4,638	3,932	706
Abbey LC	2,318	2,147	171
Louisa LC	2,197	11	2,186
Other	359	13	346
Outdoor S&L Facilities	46	28	18
	25,932	12,897	13,035
Strategic Programmes			
Minor SPP	271	0	271
	271	0	271
REG Total	149,881	54,125	95,756

**Economy and Enterprise
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

18 December 2023

**Quarter Two, 2023/24
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 delivery of the key priorities within the Council Plan 2023-27 in line with the council's corporate performance framework.
- 2 The report covers performance in and to the end of quarter two, 2023/24, July to September 2023.

Executive Summary

- 3 The County Council is a key partner within the County Durham Together Partnership. Collectively partners work towards delivering a shared plan - the [County Durham Vision 2035](#). The vision document was developed with partner organisations and the public. It sets out what we would like the county to be like over the next decade and beyond. The vision is for:

a place where there are more and better jobs, people live long, and independent lives and our communities are well connected and supportive.

- 4 We have set out how the council will effectively deliver its services and its contribution to achieving this vision in our [Council Plan](#). The Council Plan is structured around five thematic areas: our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council. We monitor our success through a suite of Key Performance Indicators (our corporate performance framework), which forms the basis of this report.
- 5 During quarter one, to allow greater clarity of performance against our objectives, we introduced a new easy-read report format structured around a suite of dashboards (attached at appendix two). Greater data visualisation has provided more focus and greater transparency on trends, direction of travel, benchmarking and performance to target. The new format has been reviewed by scrutiny and feedback has been universally positive.

- 6 We want to be a well-functioning local authority in relation to performance, and continue to work to achieve the best practice model as set out by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)¹. We will continue to develop the following through our performance management processes and the wider Corporate Business Intelligence Review:
- (a) An organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement, with frequent monitoring, performance reporting and updating of the corporate and improvement plans.
 - (b) A corporate plan which is evidence based, current, realistic and enables the whole organisation's performance to be measured and held to account.
 - (c) Clear and effective mechanisms for scrutinising performance across all service areas. Performance is regularly reported to the public to ensure that citizens are informed of the quality of services being delivered.

Context

- 7 The council is a large organisation providing a broad range of services, and our operating environment can at times be challenging. However, we continue to show strong performance across our key outcomes.
- (a) Across the county, inward investment continues, new infrastructure is being created and new business parks with the potential to create thousands of jobs are being developed. The promotion of the county as a year-round tourist destination continues (in 2022, tourism contributed more than £1 billion to our local economy for the first time).

Recommendation

- 8 Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
- (a) note the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter two performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of challenge.

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 2023 to 2027 (current plan)
<https://www.durham.gov.uk/media/34954/Durham-County-Council-Plan-2023-2027/pdf/CouncilPlan2023-2027.pdf?m=638221688616370000>
- Quarter One, 2023/24 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s178933/Q1%202023-24%20Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20-%20Cabinet%2013.09.23.pdf>
- Quarter Four, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s174900/Item%204%20Q4%202022-23%202%201.pdf>
- 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>

Author

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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.



Performance Management Report

Quarter Two, 2023/24



Contents (blue text links to sections of the report)

	➤ Executive Summary
Our Economy	➤ Our Economy Performance Report
	Performance Dashboards
	➤ Economic growth: GVA and private sector
	➤ Economic growth: planning, business investments and portfolio
	➤ Business support and job creation
	➤ Employability and skills
	➤ Cultural offer: events, venues and libraries
	➤ Cultural offer: cinemas and theatres
Our Environment	➤ Our Environment Performance Report
	➤ Sustainable transport and active travel
Our People	➤ Our People Performance Report
	➤ Housing vulnerable people: homelessness
	➤ Housing vulnerable people: homes for older people
	➤ Housing vulnerable people: Care Connect, disabled facilities grant
Our Communities	➤ Our Communities Performance Report
	Performance Dashboards
	➤ Housing delivery
	➤ Housing standards
	➤ Transport connectivity and highway maintenance
	➤ Data Tables
	➤ Glossary

Executive Summary

- 1 This performance report covers the second quarter of the 2023/24 financial year (July to September 2023). It sets out our progress towards delivering the key priorities set out within our [Council Plan 2023-27](#).
- 2 Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages structured around the five thematic areas of, our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council.
- 3 In any given quarter, we will only include key performance indicators which have been updated during that quarter, for example, educational attainment will be updated annually in quarter three.

Our economy

- 4 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

- 5 Macro-economic indicators such as the employment rate and unemployment levels show a favourable picture and are on par with national trends.
- 6 One of the key ambitions within the [Vision for County Durham](#) is to create more and better jobs. There has been a steady growth in employments over the last decade and also measurable improvements in the skills levels of the labour force in the county with more people achieving higher qualifications.
- 7 One of our objectives is to help to support all people into rewarding work. We have addressed capacity issues with partner agencies experienced in the first quarter of the year which were affecting registrations onto our employability programmes. Both registrations and participants on these programmes moving on to employment, education or training have both shown increases and are now on track to achieve annual targets.
- 8 A healthy demand for development land, industrial and office premises are strong indicators that the county has potential for further economic growth.
- 9 Productivity fell during the pandemic period but is demonstrating a recovery post-Covid.
- 10 Lockdown also impacted on a number of council services with public buildings having to close. However, we are now achieving targets in terms for library usage, visits to our cultural venues and cinema attendance.

Issues we are addressing

- 11 The employment rate remains below the national average and there is a growing inequality gap between the county figures and the national average across some

economic indicators such as gross value added (GVA) and the proportion of the labour market with higher skills levels. These challenges are recognised in our Inclusive Economic Strategy, and we are developing a delivery plan with partners to address these issues.

- 12 The pandemic period has particularly impacted the retail and hospitality sector. However, we have helped to support 74 new retail businesses as part of our economic regeneration activity.
- 13 There has been a downturn in the proportion of major planning applications processed within the 13-week timescale. Procedures around extension of time agreements are being put in place to address this and it is expected that performance will return to previous levels for the next quarter. The council's planning department generally performs favourably in comparison with regional and national benchmarks in this area.
- 14 The council is not achieving targets for theatre patronage. A new appointment tasked with developing more popular programmes has been made.

Our environment

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

Going Well

- 16 The proportion of adults who walk or cycle for travel purposes has increased although there has been a corresponding decrease in the proportion of adults walking or cycling for leisure purposes. We continue to develop local cycling and walking infrastructure plans for our major centres and active travel schemes to improve pedestrian and cycle routes.

Issues we are addressing

- 17 Park and ride usage and public bus service patronage continue to be lower than pre-pandemic levels due to changes in commuter patterns and free after 2pm parking across the county during the performance period.

Our people

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

Going Well

- 19 The proportion of people that we have helped to stay in their own home has increased this quarter due to the two new appointments being made to assist in homelessness prevention work.

Issues we are addressing

- 20 The proportion of people prevented from becoming homeless remains below regional and national historical benchmarks. However, the appointment of two new visiting officers should further impact on homelessness prevention.

Our communities

- 21 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

- 22 During quarter two, more homes were built due to larger construction schemes seeing quicker completion rates for some of their builds, and more empty homes were brought back into use. Both indicators were higher than their profiled targets.
- 23 A greater proportion of properties covered by our selective licensing scheme are now licenced or have had legal proceedings instigated against them (37% compared to 34% reported last quarter). We are continuing to target private rented sector properties not yet licenced, through increasing checks with the Land Registry, and are instigating enforcement proceedings where required.
- 24 Resource and delivery issues experienced in previous quarters which impacted the repair of category 2.2 highway defects² on the footway network have now eased, and performance during quarter two improved. The maintenance of Category 1 defects (repair within 24 hours) and Category 2.1 highway defects (within 14 days) remain above target.

Issues we are addressing

- 25 Bus patronage remains lower than pre-Covid levels and is not likely to return to pre-Covid levels in the medium term. We continue to work in partnership at a regional level with bus operators and other local authorities to implement a range of initiatives through the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to encourage patronage growth. A regional wide multi-modal day ticket was launched in September 2023 allowing unlimited travel by bus, Metro and Ferry across all of Tyne and Wear, Northumberland and Durham.

² Highway defects include pot holes, missing or damaged ironwork, highway subsidence / slippage, damage to safety fences or barriers, excessive standing water, or other damage. Category 2.2 defects are not an immediate or imminent hazard, or risk of short-term structural deterioration. Due to non-urgent nature, required repairs are added to routine maintenance schedule to be carried out within 3 months.

Risk Management

- 26 The government's statutory guidance for best value authorities sets out the characteristics of a well-functioning authority. This details the arrangements that councils should have in place for robust governance and scrutiny including how risk awareness and management should inform decision making. The latest risk management progress report can be found [here](#).

Priority Aims:

County Durham has a thriving and inclusive economy with more and better jobs and fewer people suffering from the hardships of poverty and deprivation. We are continuing to,

- deliver a range of employment sites across the county
- deliver a strong, competitive economy where County Durham is a premier place in the North East to live and do business
- ensure a broader experience for residents and visitors to the county
- ensure young people will have access to good quality education, training and employment
- help all people into rewarding work
- ensure fewer people will be affected by poverty and deprivation within the county
- improve employment opportunities for disabled people

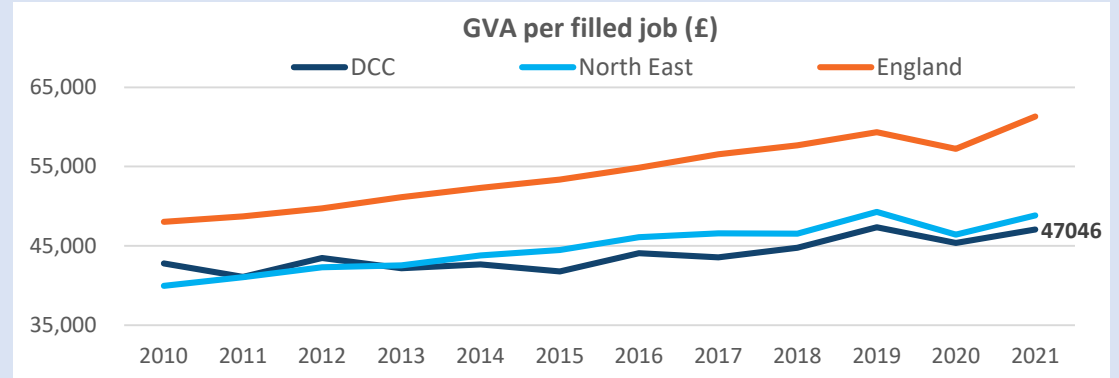
National, Regional and Local Picture

- 27 Our economy is showing signs of strength across a range of performance indicators; however, gaps remain across a range of economic performance within the county and region compared to national levels. Employment (71.8%) is within the highest level for 20 years and unemployment (4.2%) remains low, which reflects national trends (75.8% and 3.9%, respectively). We are showing strong signs of demand for development land as well as industrial and office premises of all sizes. There has been a 3.7% growth in jobs (168,500, 2020) in the county since 2010.
- 28 Our manufacturing sector which remained strong during the last few challenging years, is innovating, driving green growth, and supporting a range of other sectors such as logistics, and business services. With rising energy costs, businesses have invested in solutions that reduce their energy usage, costs, and carbon emissions. However, the last few years have been particularly challenging for the retail, hospitality and public sector.
- 29 There is a growing demand for workers in the county and the balance of jobs is starting to shift, with more people achieving higher levels of education and training, (59% of 16-64 year olds qualified to Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) level 3+) and moving into better paid jobs. However, we continue to lose many of our most talented people to urban areas which offer higher wages and have a greater choice of private sector jobs.
- 30 Average wages for residents in the county (£28,259) are growing but remain low compared to the national level (£31,490) and the cost-of-living is a long-term problem, especially for the large numbers of people with health conditions, disabilities, and caring responsibilities.

Economic Growth Dashboard: GVA per filled job and private sector businesses and employments (annual data)

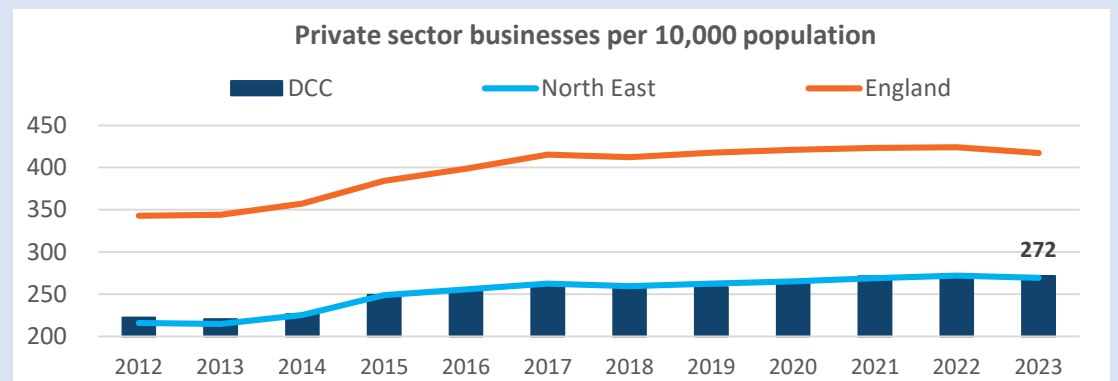
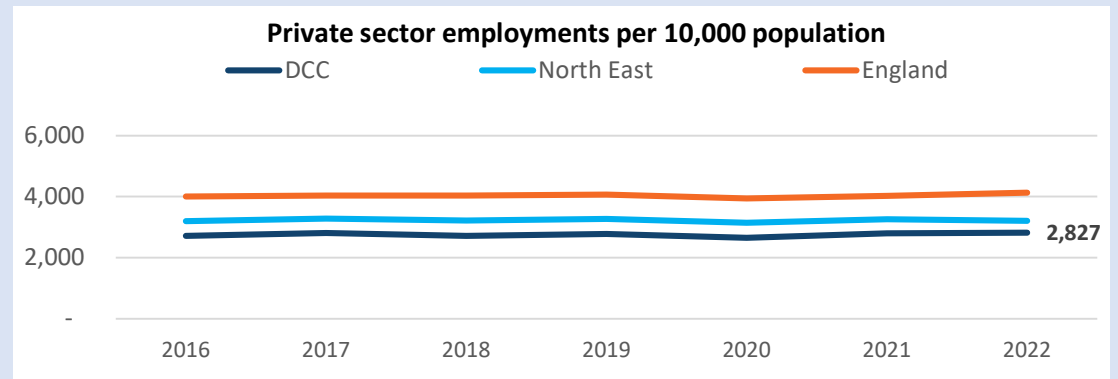
GVA per filled job

- Productivity has shown a recovery following the impact of Covid, however the gap between the county and national level has widened.
- We are addressing this through strengthening the business services sector through the Durham City Innovation District and the new Inclusive Economic Strategy which focuses on creating more opportunities across the county for more and better jobs, as well as a greater choice of jobs.



Private Sector Businesses and employments

- The rate of private sector employments increased in 2022, however as the national rate increased to a greater extent the gap has widened.
- Although the rate of private sector businesses within the county fell slightly in 2022, in line with regional and national trends, it did so to a lesser extent resulting in the gap with the national rate contracting.
- The new Inclusive Economic Strategy identifies potential growth sectors and sub-sectors to provide new opportunities. Also, the employment land identified in the County Durham Plan and a joined-up approach to growth, alongside external investment supports strong private sector growth.



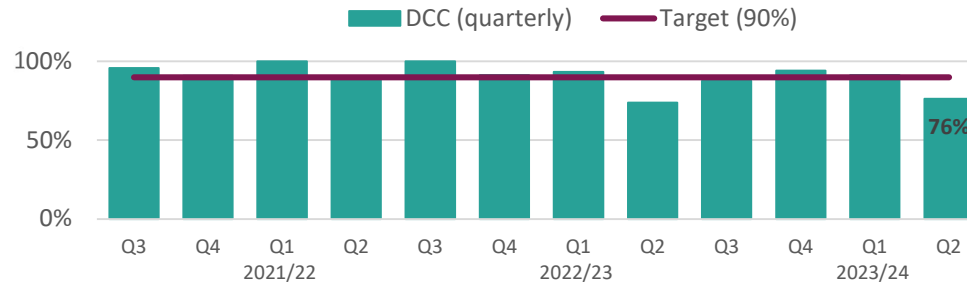
Economic Growth Dashboard: planning applications, business investments and portfolio

(year to date ending 30 September 2023 / quarterly data as at 30 September 2023)

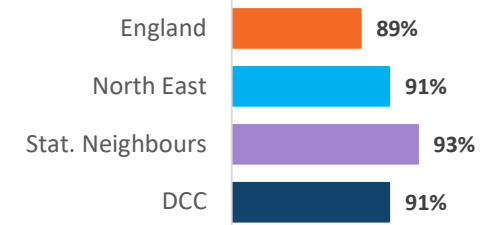
Major Planning Applications

- 76% determined in deadline (14pp below target). Work is underway to confirm drop in performance is due to a number of 'extension of time agreements' not being enforced and to put processes in place to address this going forward.
- Latest benchmarking shows we are performing above the national average.

Major planning applications completed within deadline



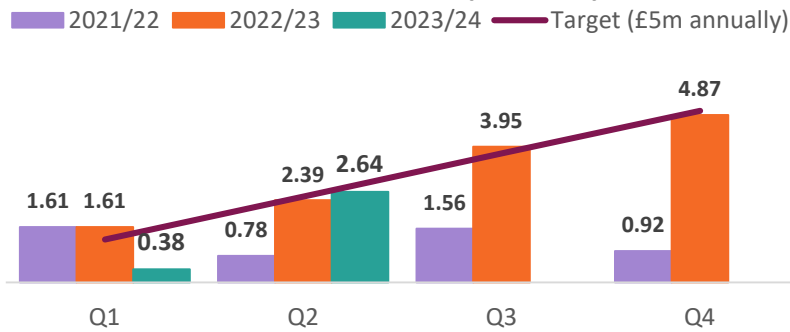
Major planning applications completed within deadline - June 2023 (3 mth lag)



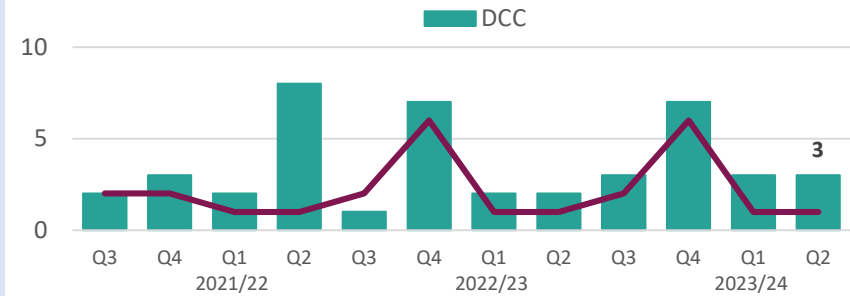
Investment in County Durham

Based on delivery in the year to date (Apr-Sep 23) both the amount of investment secured for companies and the number of inward investments attracted are on track to achieve annual targets.

Investment secured (£'million)



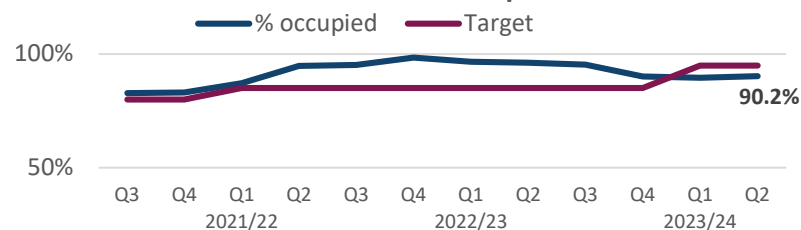
Number of inward investments



Business Portfolio

We continue to invest and expand our business space portfolio. Additional floorspace added to the portfolio has reduced the occupancy rate.

Business Durham Office Space



GVA per filled job

- 31 Although employment levels were largely maintained by furlough payments, an impact of the pandemic on the economy (national, regional and local) was a drop in business productivity between 2019 and 2020, however, this has shown recovery between 2020 and 2021.
- 32 Latest data (2021) for England (£61,310) suggests a return to the pre-Covid trend, whereas the regional (£48,828) and county (£47,046) data suggests a widening gap (+1,688) with the national average. One of County Durham's underlying weaknesses is the small business services sector, which we are addressing via developments such as the Durham City Innovation District.
- 33 The Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) Delivery Plan, which was approved by Cabinet in November 2023, is focused on creating opportunities across the county for more and better jobs. Whilst there is a need to improve the overall productivity of the county and the jobs here, it is also vital that more people have opportunities to contribute to and benefit from growth by having access to a choice of jobs. The IES recognises that there are structural challenges that need to be overcome in order to bridge the gap with national levels of growth (e.g., low educational attainment, access to jobs, poor health) which is why it has a broad and long-term focus.

Private sector businesses and employments

- 34 Private sector employment rates in the county increased to 2,827 in 2022 (from 2,795 in 2021), following the trend nationally. However, as the national rate increased to a greater extent the gap has widened.
- 35 The rate of private sector business within the county fell slightly to 272 in 2023 (from 274 in 2022) reflecting the trend regionally and nationally. However, the county's rate reduced to a lesser extent, resulting in the gap between the county and England (417) rates improving (-5).
- 36 In order to drive overall economic growth, there is a need to drive more growth and diversification in the private sector. The IES identifies potential growth sectors and sub-sectors which we can harness to generate a diverse range of opportunities for people with different talents. This will be supported by programmes that help to bring more people into the workforce and drive education and skills improvements aligned to the opportunities. The employment land that has been made available through the County Durham Plan and joined-up approach to growth, alongside external investment from the public and private sector partners suggest we can support strong private sector growth.

Planning Applications

- 37 We contribute to economic growth through timely delivery of planning decisions, however, performance in relation to the processing of major applications was below target (90%) this quarter. Of the 21 applications received, 16 (76.2%) were determined in target of 13 weeks. It is expected that a drop in performance is due to a number of Extension of Time Agreements (ETA) not being enforced. An ETA is an agreement between the council and the applicant to extend the usual deadline beyond 13 weeks due to the complex nature of the application. Work is currently underway to confirm this, and processes put in place to address this moving forward.

38 The latest benchmarking data (June 2023) shows our performance to be better than England average, on par with North East average but slightly lower than our statistical neighbours.

Investments

39 During quarter two, Business Durham secured £2,639,595 of investments for companies, above the profiled target of £1.25m. Bringing the year-to-date figure to £3.02m, on track to achieve the annual target of £5m. This includes Finance Durham Fund investments with signed terms agreed to two companies totalling £1m; along with grants paid out through the County Durham Growth Fund.

40 Business Durham supported three inward investments, above the projected target (one), placing us on track to achieve the annual target (10). Those achieved in quarter two are:

- Hibbott's Artisan Spirits, an award winning distillery relocating from Hertfordshire to Dabble Duck Business Park in Shildon;
- Fit24 Gym which has moved into Lighthouse View to serve employees of businesses at Foxcover and Spectrum as part of the re-development of this long vacant unit;
- Vestas a manufacturer of wind turbines, who's new unit at Foxcover Business Park will be its base for UK onshore turbine maintenance.

Business Durham floor space

41 New units at Station Place and two new offices at the Durham Dales Centre added earlier this year have increased the floorspace of Business Durham's office and industrial portfolio. This increase in overall floorspace has reduced the occupancy rate to 90.2%, below the target of 95%, however, demand remains high, and we expect these to be occupied soon.

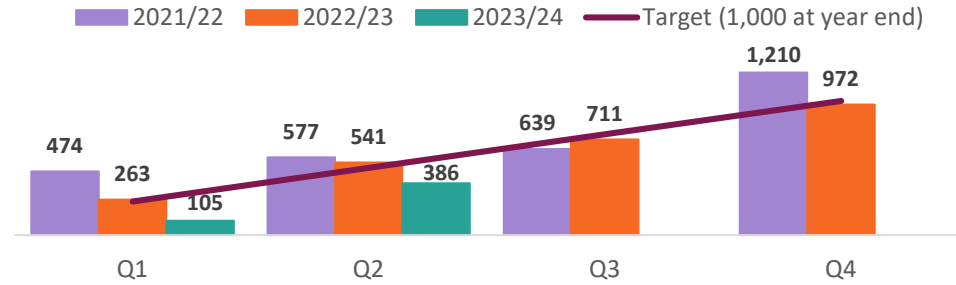
Business Support and Job Creation Dashboard

(year to date ending 30 September 2023)

Business support through Business Durham

- Due to the transition from the end of most ERDF funded schemes and the mobilisation period for the new UKSPF Productivity and Growth Programme, total engagements in the year to date are below the profiled target.
- However, engagement in the second quarter (281) is higher than the profiled target (250), delivered through networking events, conferences, direct one to one and support through funded programmes.

Businesses supported by Business Durham (cumulative)

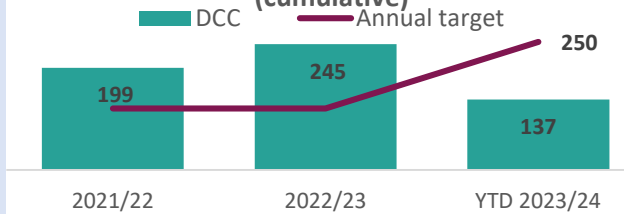


Business support through regeneration

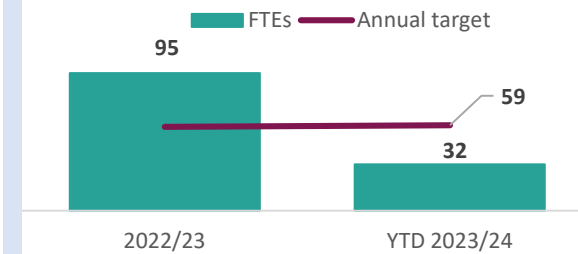
On track to achieve annual targets for businesses supported in 2023/24 through our regeneration projects and the Community Economic Team (CED). During quarter two we have supported:

- 74 new retail businesses via CED Team.
- 14 businesses via regeneration scheme.
- A further 21 schemes currently on site and two offer letters issued.

Businesses supported by Community Economic Development Team (cumulative)



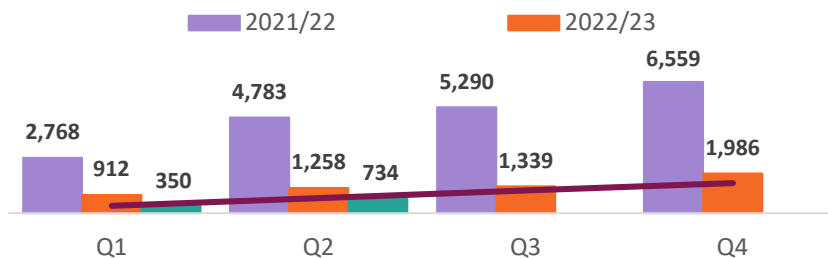
Businesses supported by regeneration projects



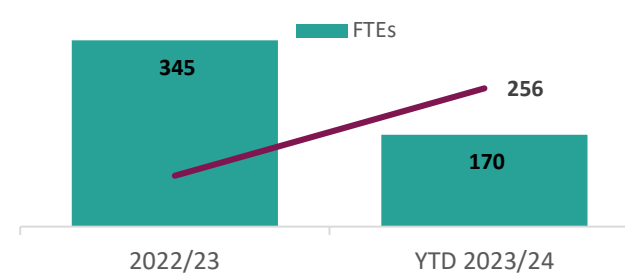
Jobs created/safeguarded

High level of delivery places us on track to achieve annual targets across both measures.

Jobs created or safeguarded by Business Durham (cumulative)



FTEs created / safeguarded via regeneration projects



Businesses supported and job created/safeguarded

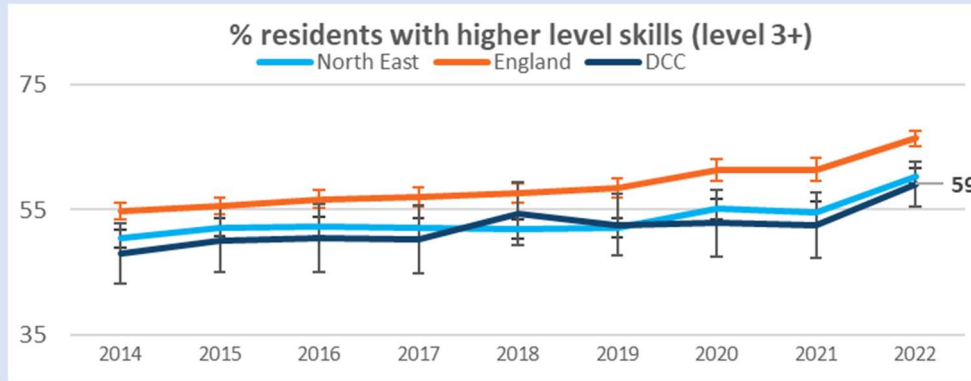
- 42 Due to the transition from the end of most ERDF funded schemes and the mobilisation period for the new UKSPF Productivity and Growth Programme, total engagements in the year to date are currently 386 against a profiled target (500). 281 businesses were engaged during quarter two (including 145 intensively assisted), higher than the profiled target (250). Across the year, engagements are delivered through a range of methods including networking events and conferences, direct one to one support through the Business Engagements and Account Managers and a range of ERDF funded programmes.
- 43 As a result, 384 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs were created or safeguarded (287 created and 97 safeguarded) higher than the period target (375) and bringing us on track to achieve the annual target (1,500) across the year.
- 44 During quarter two, our Community Economic Development Team engaged with 74 new retail businesses. Through our regeneration schemes, 87 FTE jobs were created, and 14 businesses supported; nine via Towns & Villages Programme (with a further 13 on site), four via Seaham Townscape Heritage Programme and one via Conservation Area Grant Scheme (with a further two on site and two offer letters issued). Although no businesses were supported via Targeted Business Improvement Schemes and Property Re-use Scheme this quarter, we are currently supporting six schemes across these two programmes. All schemes are progressing as expected, with quarter two position well on track to achieve annual targets for both businesses supported, and jobs created/safeguarded.

Employability and Skills Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2022 / year to date ending 30 September 2023)

Higher Level Skills (Level 3+) (Oflog measure)

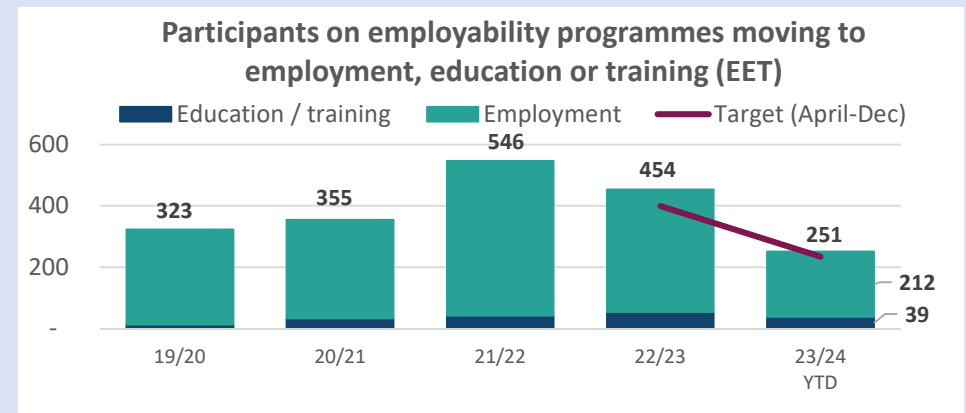
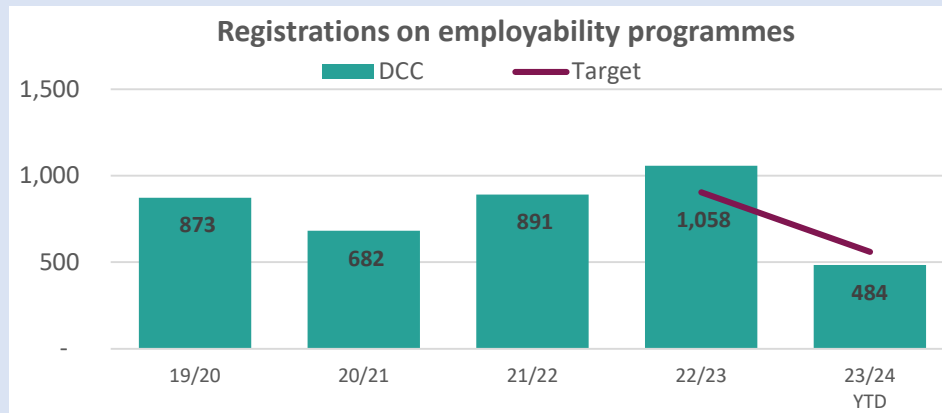
- From Jan-Dec 22 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) estimates have been replaced with estimates on a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) basis. Clarification is required as to whether the new methodology is comparable.
- The Inclusive Economic Strategy supports future improvement through growth in the private sector to increase the demand for higher level qualifications, inspiring local people to continue learning and training after they leave school, and support innovation-led growth.



Change of methodology in 2022 to RQF level 3+ from NVQ level 3+

Employability programmes

- Both registrations and clients moving into EET performed ahead of quarter one, with 311 and 146 respectively, on track to achieve annual targets.
- Significant increase in referrals from Job Centre Plus, LINKCD delivery partners working with more clients and engagement events via Durham Employment connection project have contributed to the increase this quarter.
- Funding approved to extend programmes beyond December 2023 to March 2025 and new output figures currently being finalised.



Higher level skills (Oflog measure)

- 45 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) estimates have been replaced with estimates on a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) basis. RQF based estimates are available for January to December 2022 survey period, while estimates prior to this remain on an NVQ basis. There is no clarity at this point from the Office of National Statistic as to whether the new methodology is comparable.
- 46 In 2022, 59% of 16-64 year olds held qualifications of RQF level 3 or above. This level of education and training aligns well with the general demand from local employers. It also means that more than half of the workforce is at a standard where they could undertake higher education to advance their careers.
- 47 The county has a good education system and good school outcomes, however, there is known leakage of those higher level skills to other places for higher education and professional training as well as semi-professional and professional jobs. The Inclusive Economic Strategy aims to tackle the underlying issues from both supply and demand perspectives, to support future improvement through growth in the private sector to increase the demand for higher level qualifications, inspiring local people to continue learning and training after they leave school, and support innovation-led growth.

Employability programmes

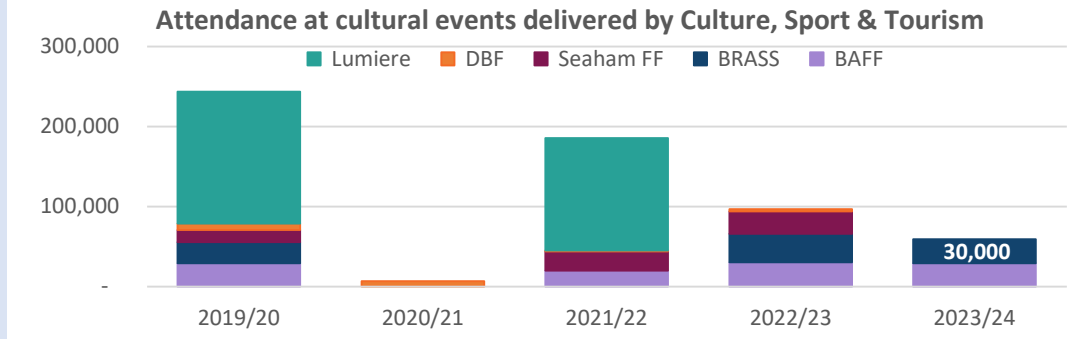
- 48 During quarter two, 311 clients registered onto our Employability Programmes. A large increase on quarter one (+80%, 138) due to our LINKCD delivery partners working with more clients, a number of engagement events being held through Durham Employment Connections project and a significant increase in referrals from Job Centre Plus as they work more closely with over 50's. The year-to-date figure of 484 places us on track to achieve the annual target of 560 (April-December 2023). Funding has been approved from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (People and Skills Investment priority) to extend employability programmes beyond December 2023 to March 2025 and revised output figures for the programme are currently being finalised.
- 49 146 clients progressed into employment and education/training this quarter, bringing the year-to-date figure to 251. This exceeds the annual target of 235 (April-December 2023) however, new output figures are being finalised in line with the extension to the programme funding. Of the 146 progressions, 116 clients progressed into employment and 30 into education or training.

Cultural Offer Dashboard : cultural events, venues and libraries

(year to date ending 30 September 2023 / quarterly data as at 30 September 2023)

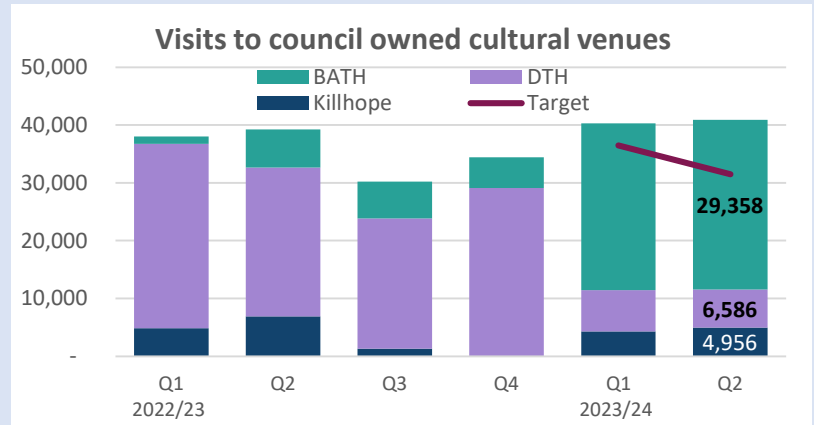
Cultural Events

- Our continued investment in our cultural events programme led to approx. 30,000* attending Durham BRASS festival. Weather conditions affected attendance at some outdoor events. A full evaluation is due in quarter three.
- Seaham Food Festival and Durham Book Festival returned in August and October, respectively. Preliminary audience figures are not yet available, however, full evaluations expected quarter three.
- Official figures for Bishop Auckland Food Festival confirmed as 29,000 for the two-day event. Slightly below last year however heavy rainfall on the Saturday impacted visitor numbers.



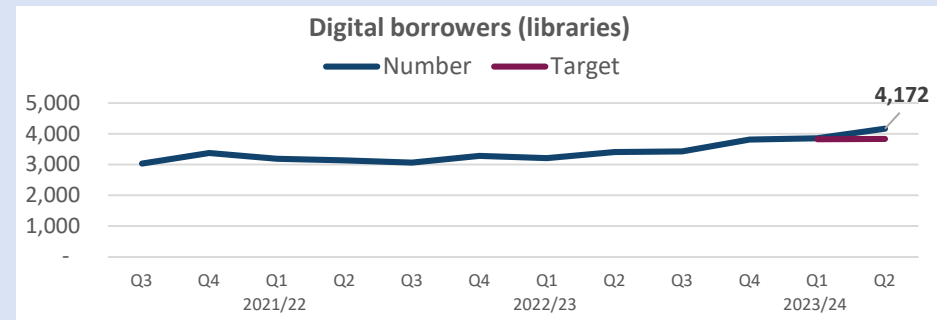
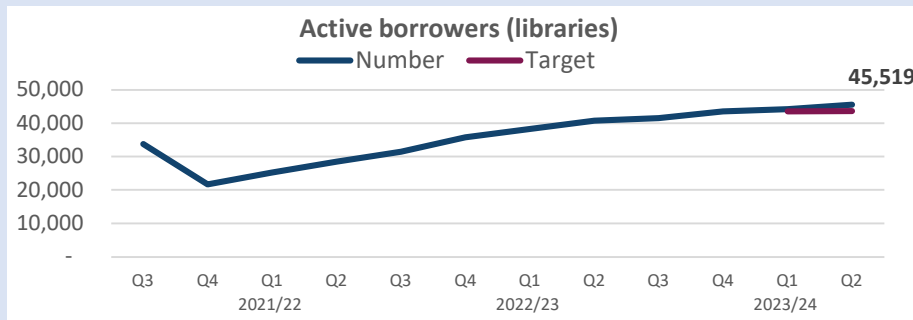
Cultural venues

Despite Killhope having to close for 22 days this quarter due to high water levels and storm damage, our cultural venues performed above target with 40,900 visits.



Libraries

- Active borrowers: 45,519 borrowers, above target by 4% (1,824). Still below pre-Covid levels, however levels continue to increase.
- Digital Borrowers: 4,713 borrowers, above target by 8% (334). An increased digital offer via BorrowBox App e.g., addition of newspapers, contributed to the increase.



BAFF: Bishop Auckland Food Festival; held April, updated figures
 DBF: Durham Book Festival; held Oct 23, figures reported Q4
 *Indicative figure, awaiting official evaluation

BRASS Festival; held July, official figures reported Q3
 Lumiere: biennial; held Nov, figures reported Q4

Seaham FF: Seaham Food Festival; held Aug, figures reported Q3
 DTH: Durham Town Hall (under reported in 2022/23, issues now rectified)

Cultural events

- 50 Our continued investment in our cultural events programme strengthens Durham's position as the 'culture' county and demonstrates the council's ongoing commitment to culture-led regeneration.
- 51 Durham BRASS festival delivered 185 events during July, reaching an audience of 30,000, despite weather conditions affecting some of the outdoor events. A full evaluation will be available in quarter three.
- 52 Seaham Food Festival returned in August, and despite wet weather conditions, crowds showed up to enjoy street food and artisan products from 120 different traders. Durham Book Festival returned in October, the programme, included 35 events with more than 40 authors across a number of venues including Gala Durham, Clayport Library and Collected Books. Currently, we do not have audience figures for Seaham Food Festival and Durham Book Festival, however, full evaluations will be available in quarter three.
- 53 Official attendance figures for Bishop Auckland Food Festival has been confirmed, with 29,000 visitors over the two-day event in April. Although slightly below last year (30,000), heavy rainfall on the Saturday morning contributed to fewer numbers this year. The festival generated a direct economic impact of £425,546, an increase on last year (£418,440) and a significant return on the council's investment of £60,000. 98% of visitors rated the whole experience positively and 99% felt it was a worthwhile event for the council to support, with the overall quality and atmosphere both standout features of the festival.

Visits to council owned cultural venues (BATH, Durham Town Hall, Killhope)

- 54 There were 40,900 visits to our cultural venues during quarter two, 30% (9,400) above target and 11% (4,092) more than the same period last year. Durham Town Hall and Bishop Auckland Town Hall performed above target, however, visits to Killhope were slightly below target by 0.9% (44) due to high water levels and storm damage causing the venue to close for 22 days during the quarter.

Libraries

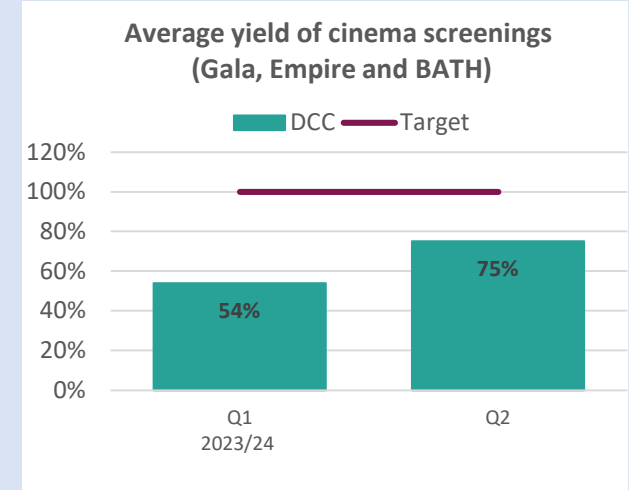
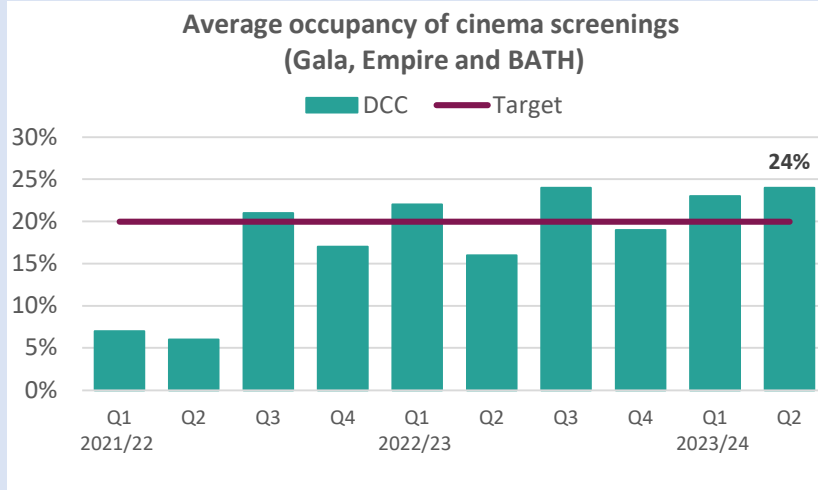
- 55 Both active and digital borrowers performed above target this quarter, with 45,519 (+4%, 1,824) and 4,172 (+8%, 334) borrowers, respectively. Although active borrower numbers remain below pre-Covid levels, it continues to follow an upward trend quarter on quarter and our new outreach team will continue to build on this going forward. Digital borrowers are also on an upward trend, mainly due to an increased digital offer to drive engagement, for example the addition of newspapers to the BorrowBox App.

Cultural Offer Dashboard : cinemas and theatres

(quarterly data as at 30 September 2023)

Cinemas

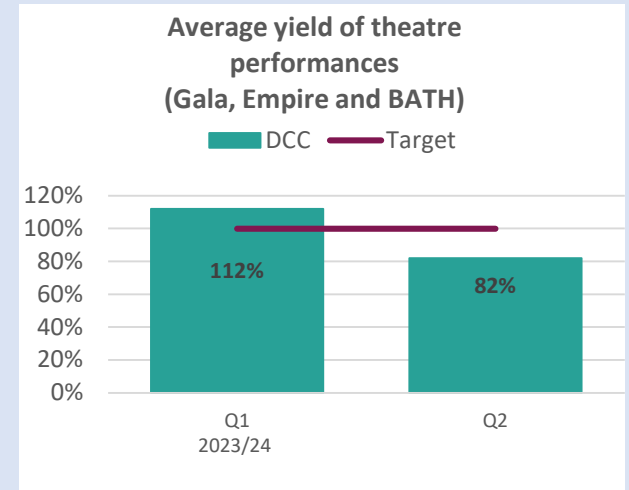
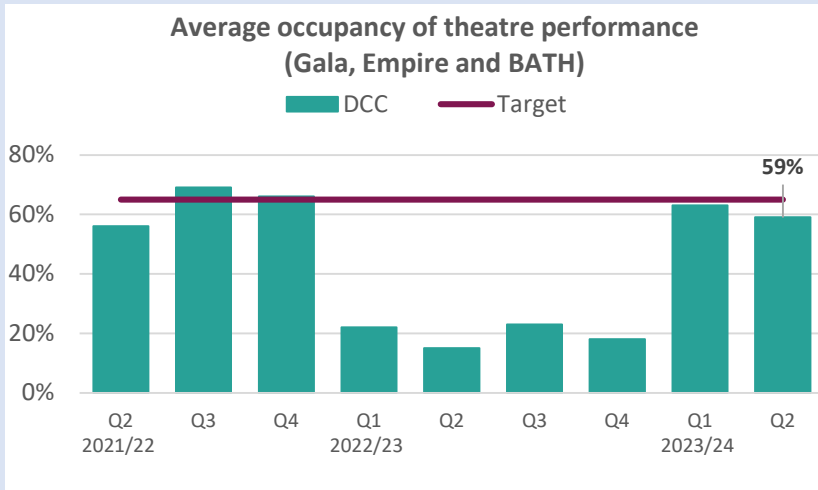
- 24% average occupancy levels, above target by 4pp due to release of two blockbuster films.
- 75% average yield*, 25pp below target due to projected sales for summer blockbuster films not being strong enough to boost overall performance against less popular titles.
- Event Cinema and Bringing in Baby screenings introduced at Empire to help boost sales, as well developing cinema offer to include themed screenings e.g., Halloween and Christmas.



Theatres

Both average occupancy and yield failed to hit target this quarter with:

- 59% average occupancy levels (-6pp), mainly due to performances at Empire with less popular programmed work and hires.
- 82% average yield* (-18pp), mainly due to less popular performances and the ongoing development of BATH programme.
- A new Audience Development Manager is in post, they will work closely with the team to help understand customer base and develop more focussed programme.



* Yield = Proportion of potential income achieved

Cinemas: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire

56 Despite average occupancy rate across all cinema screenings being above target this quarter (24%, +4pp), mainly due to the release of two blockbuster films, average yield is 25pp below target, with an average of 75% of targeted ticket sales sold across all venues. A higher sales target was introduced this quarter due the release of summer blockbuster films, however, sales for these were not enough to boost the overall performance amongst less popular titles. We have introduced new initiatives at Empire following successful pilots at Gala which include Event Cinema and Bringing in Baby screenings. We also ran a summer family film programme during school holidays. We will continue to develop our cinema offer including themed screenings for Halloween and Christmas.

Theatres: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire

57 During quarter two, the average occupancy rate across all theatre performances was 59%, 6pp below profiled target (65%) and 8pp below the same period last year. Lower attendance figures were mainly due to performances at Empire which included hires and less popular programmed work, however, we continue to review the programme to ensure more popular shows are programmed in.

58 Despite most theatre performances hitting sales targets at Gala, ticket sales at Empire and BATH performed below target, bringing the average yield across theatre performances to 82%, 18pp below target. Less popular programmed work at Empire, and ongoing development of the programme at BATH have contributed to the decrease in sales, however, a new Audience Development Manager is now in post and will be working closely with the team to have a greater understanding of our customer base to ensure more focused programming going forward.

Our Environment

Priority Aims:

County Durham has taken action to tackle the climate emergency, reduce the impact of pollution and waste on our county and protect, restore and sustain our natural environment. We are continuing to,

- create a physical environment which will contribute to good health
- work with others to achieve a carbon neutral county by 2045
- reduce the impact of waste and pollution on our environment
- protect, restore and sustain our natural environment for the benefit of future generations

National, Regional and Local Picture

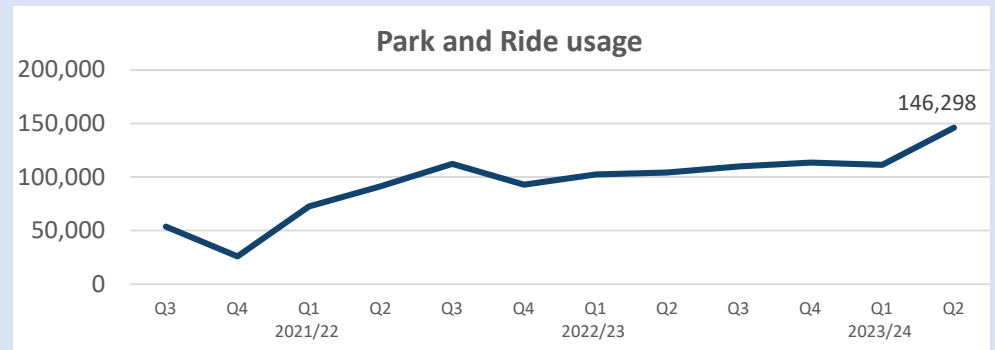
- 59 The council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and approved an initial Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) in 2020 which set out challenging targets. The second phase of the CERP was approved in 2022 and has committed the council to achieving net zero by 2030 and an 80% real carbon reduction to our emissions. We will work with partners to achieve a carbon neutral County Durham by 2045.
- 60 The council declared an ecological emergency in April 2022 and approved an Ecological Emergency Action Plan in December 2022. A wider ecological strategy, LNRS, will be developed following the release of guidance.

Sustainable Transport and Active Travel Dashboard

(12 months ending 30 November 2022 / quarterly data as at 30 September 2023)

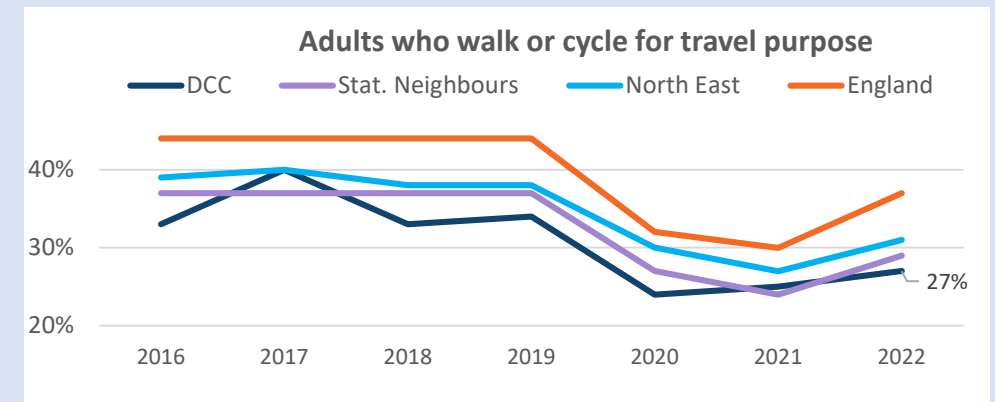
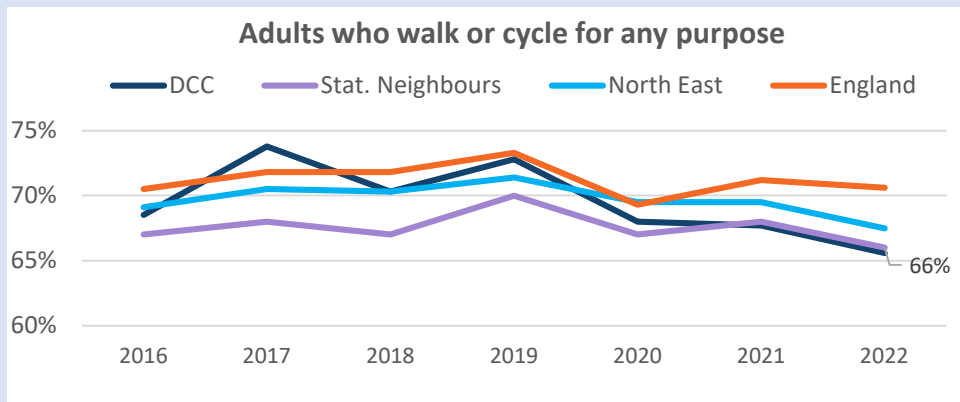
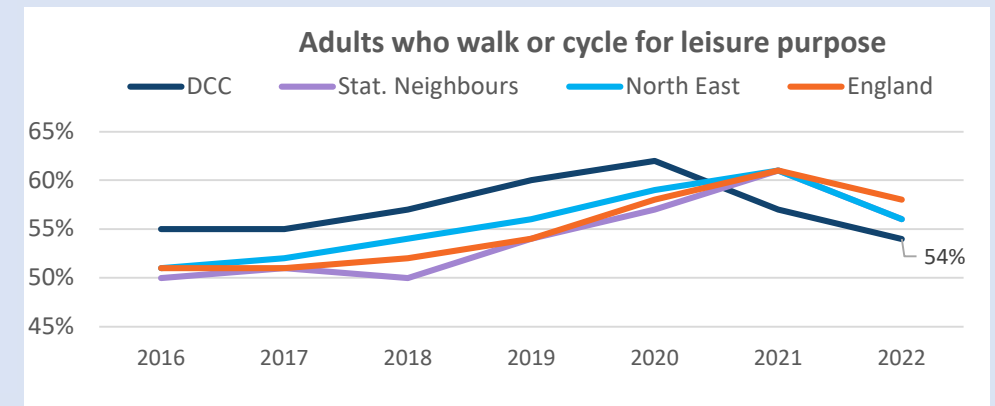
Park and Ride

- 'Free after 2pm' on our off-street parking will be removed from January 2024, to be replaced with targeted interventions including at Christmas. This will help manage when people choose to visit the city and to help deliver both environmental improvements and health benefits.
- 100% of customers chose 'very good' or 'good' for their perception of the Park and Ride service overall in our satisfaction survey.



Cycling and Walking levels

- The National Travel Survey and Active Lives Survey statistics published 2023 indicates a decrease in the proportion of adults in County Durham who walk and cycle for any purpose, remaining lower than the regional and national averages.
- Although those that walk or cycle for leisure purposes decreased, those that do so for travel purposes increased but remains below pre-Covid levels.
- We are improving our cycling and walking routes across the county to make them more usable and safer for more people including new or improved cycle routes, space for pedestrians, high quality surfaces, better junctions and crossings, and direct and connected routes.



Park and Ride

- 61 Passenger journeys on the park and ride service remain significantly lower than pre-Covid. There are a number of factors influencing this, firstly commuters are predominately the main users of the service and therefore the changes in working behaviours following the pandemic such as hybrid working has contributed to the reduction. Additionally, from April 2021 we introduced free parking after 2pm across County Durham for both on-street and off-street parking, as a stimulus to support economic recovery, which impacted on patronage on the park and ride.
- 62 On-street free after 2pm was removed on 1 April 2023 to help manage when people choose to visit the city and to help deliver both environmental improvements and health benefits. In September 2023, Cabinet agreed to a strategic review of car parking in Durham City, Seaham and Crimdon including on and off-street parking and park and ride provision on Sundays to address air quality and promote sustainable travel. This includes the removal of the free after 2pm parking initiative for off-street parking from 1 January 2024 and will be replaced with targeted interventions including at Christmas.
- 63 A customer satisfaction survey across the three park and ride sites was undertaken during August/September 2023. Of the 112 surveys carried out 100% of customers chose 'very good' or 'good' for their perception of the park and ride service overall.
- 64 Robust recording practices continue to be implemented to enable us to take a more accurate and analytical approach to monitoring the use of the park and ride service to inform decision making.

Cycling and walking levels

- 65 Based on the National Travel Survey and Active Lives Survey statistics published at the end of August 2023, 66% of adults in County Durham walk and cycle for any purpose, comparable with our statistical neighbours, but lower than the North East (68%) and England (71%).
- 66 The proportion of adults (54%) in the county who walk or cycle for leisure purpose has decreased since Covid and is now lower than the North East (56%), statistical neighbours (56%) and England (58%).
- 67 Although, the proportion of adults (27%) who walk or cycle for travel purposes has increased, it is lower than our statistical neighbours (29%), North East (31%) and England (37%). Additionally, it remains below pre-pandemic levels, following the trends seen at both the regional and national level.
- 68 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans (LCWIP's) for Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Crook, Durham City, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Shildon and Stanley have been adopted. LCWIP scheme designs for priority routes are being prepared and schemes are being delivered in Bishop Auckland and Durham City. In addition, we are currently planning and implementing walking, wheeling and cycling schemes across the county through funded programmes such as Transforming Cities, Stronger Towns and Towns and Villages.

- 69 A number of Active Travel Schemes have recently been completed providing more accessible facilities and wider, high quality surfaces for pedestrians, runners, cyclists, wheelchair and pushchair users including:
- Newton Hall to Rivergreen; a shared pedestrian/cycle route,
 - National Cycle Network 1 – Dawdon to Haswell and Haswell to Wynyard; two multi-user routes,
 - Waskerley Way; a multi user route,
 - Sedgefield to Hardwick Park; pedestrian link,
 - Pity Me Carrs – Old Tub Line; pedestrian/cycle link.
- 70 Secure cycle parking is crucial to encouraging active travel. We continue to run a successful ParkThatBike scheme for communities and businesses which includes secure parking hangars.

Our People

Priority Aims:

County Durham is a place where people will enjoy fulfilling, long and independent lives. We aim to,

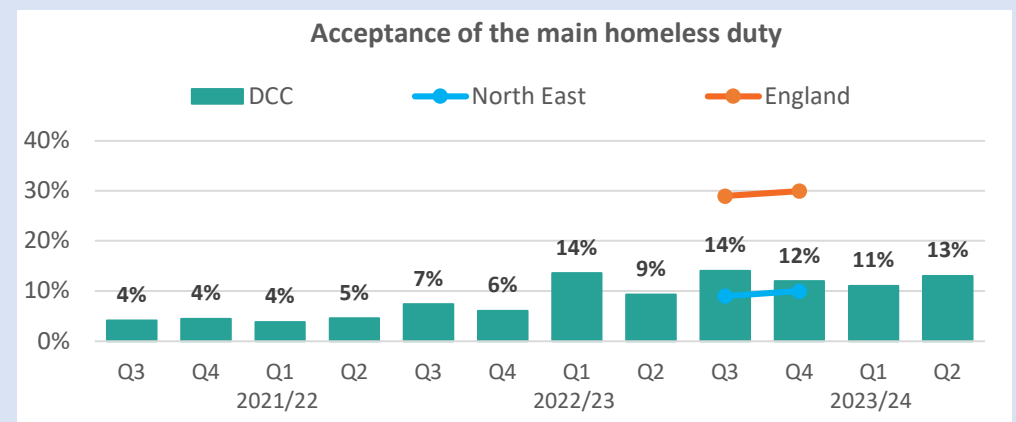
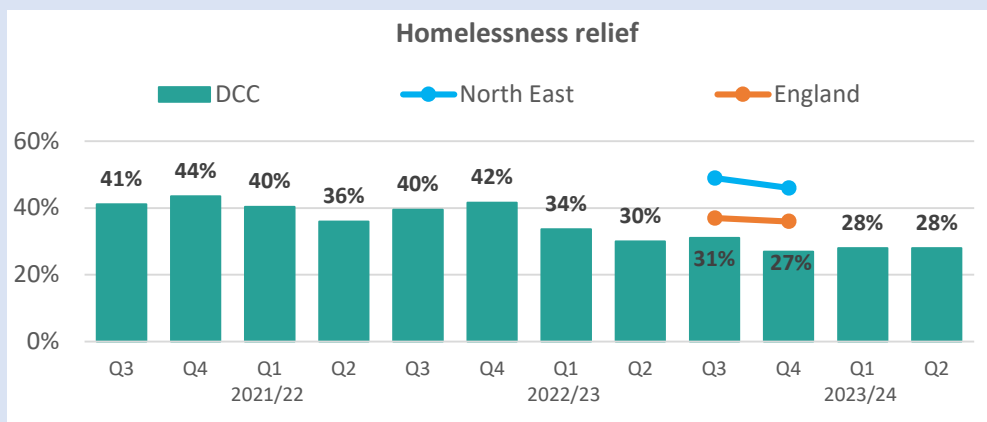
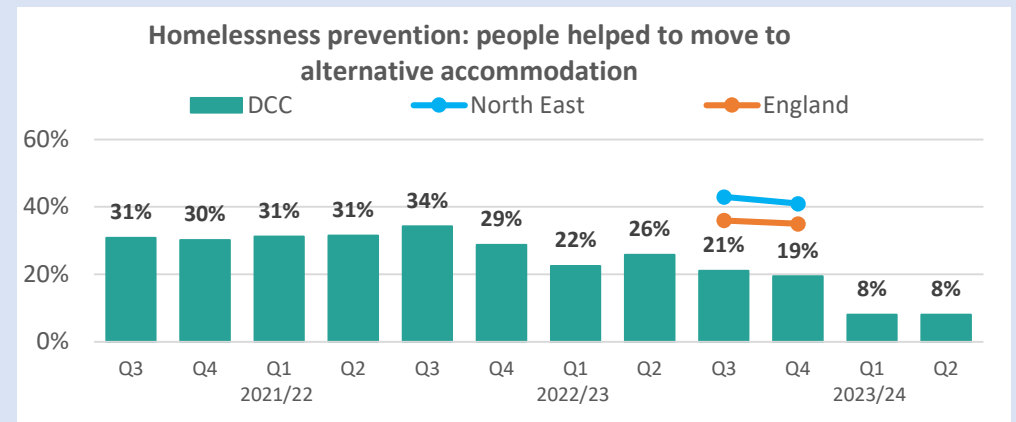
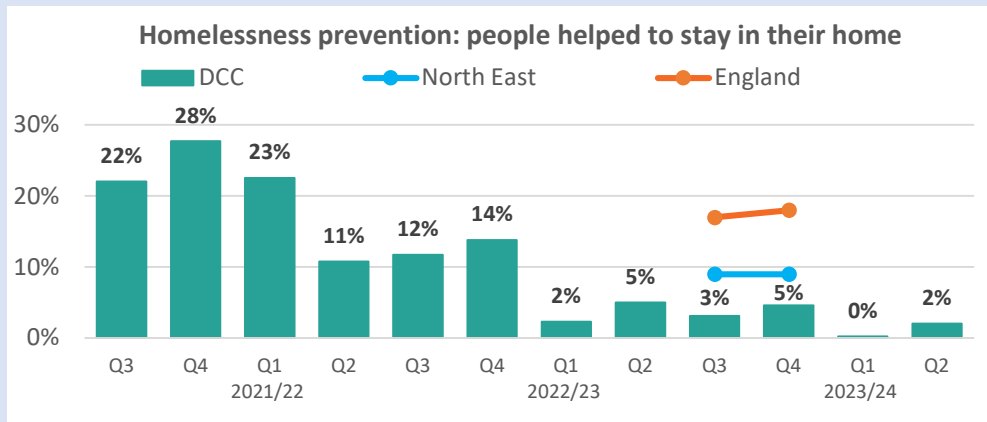
- ensure children and young people will enjoy the best start in life, good health and emotional wellbeing
- ensure children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities will achieve the best possible outcomes
- ensure all children and young people will have a safe childhood
- promote positive behaviours
- better integrate health and social care services
- tackle the stigma and discrimination of poor mental health and build resilient communities
- people will be supported to live independently for as long as possible by delivering more home to meet the needs of older and disabled people
- support people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protect adults with care and support needs from harm
- protect and improve the health of the local population, tackling leading causes of illness and death

Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard - Homelessness

(quarterly data as at 30 September 2023)

Homelessness

- Households helped to stay in their home has increased this quarter due to two new Visiting Officers in post to assist in preventative work.
- Households moved into alternative accommodation or relief stage remain on par with quarter one. Increased access to social housing is being looked at as part of the Durham Key Options review.
- More cases required a main duty decision compared to quarter one due to an increase in the number of households presenting as homeless or becoming homeless during quarter one.
- Latest benchmarking data (March 2023) shows that we performed below the national and regional average for prevention and relief outcomes and had slightly more main duty acceptances than the regional average but significantly fewer than the national average.



Homelessness

- 71 The proportion of households prevented from homelessness and helped to remain in their current home has increased this quarter by 2pp, with 2% assisted (eight households). The appointment of two full-time visiting officers to assist with preventative work into existing accommodation has already seen an increase in positive outcomes.
- 72 Additionally, the proportion of households where homelessness was prevented and the household helped to move to alternative accommodation remains on par with quarter one, with 8% (39) of households securing alternative accommodation. Increased access to social housing for those that are homeless is currently being looked at as part of the Durham Key Options review and this is expected to be complete over the next six months.
- 73 28% (209) of households' homelessness was resolved at relief stage (where homelessness was not prevented within 56 days or the household was already homeless), remaining on par with quarter one (28%).
- 74 Latest benchmarking data (March 2023) shows that we are performing below the national and regional averages in relation to homelessness prevention and relief.
- 75 The proportion of cases where there has been an acceptance of the main homeless duty (where relief duty has ended, and the client is not intentionally homeless and in priority need) has increased this quarter, with 13% (108) of households requiring a main duty decision, 2pp higher than quarter one. This is due to an increase in the number of households presenting as homeless or becoming homeless during quarter one, resulting in a higher number of main duty decisions made in quarter two.
- 76 Latest benchmarking data (March 2023) shows that we had significantly fewer main duty acceptances than the national average but slightly more than the regional average.

Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard – homes for older people

(12 months ending 31 March 2023)

Homes for older people/that meet accessible and adaptable standards

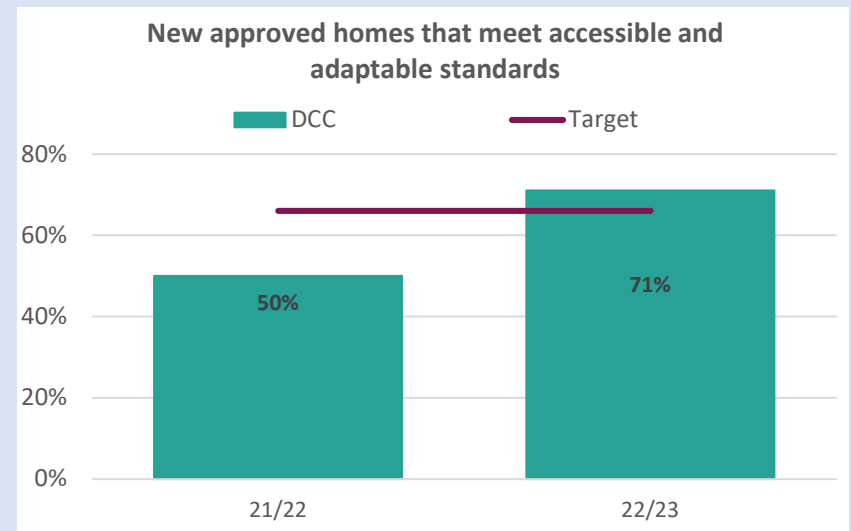
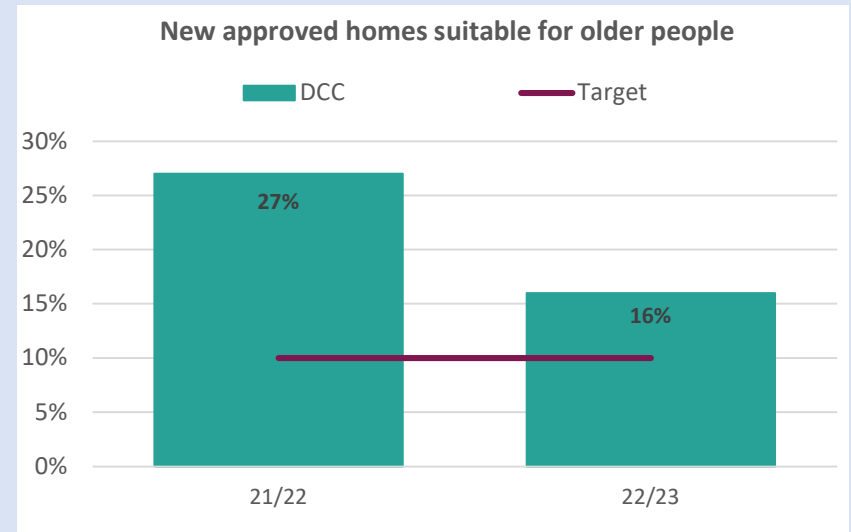
Both measures performed above target set out in the County Durham plan; 10% of new approved homes suitable for older people* and 66% of new approved homes that meet accessible and adaptable standards**.

Fewer units were approved on homes suitable for older people compared to 2021/22 due to a number of bungalow schemes approved that year that where 100% of units were specifically for older people.

The increase on last year for new approved homes that meet accessible and adaptable standards was due to some of the schemes approved in that year receiving outline permission before the CDP Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document was adopted and therefore not required to have 66% of the units built to M4(2) standard.

* on new housing developments of 10 units or more

** on new housing developments of 5 units or more



Homes for older people/that meet accessible and adaptable standards

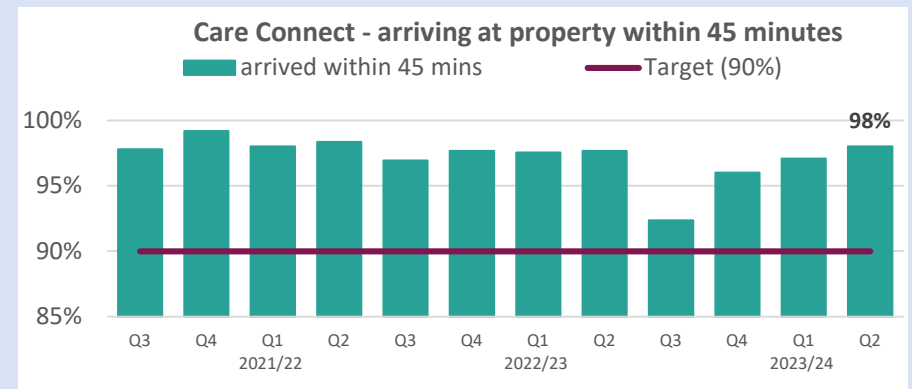
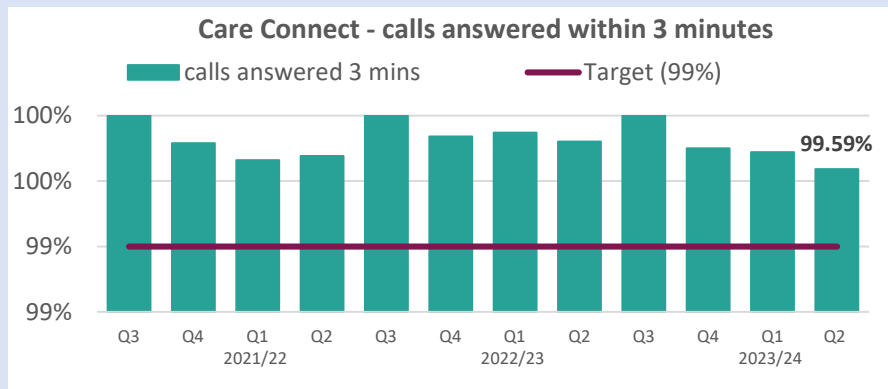
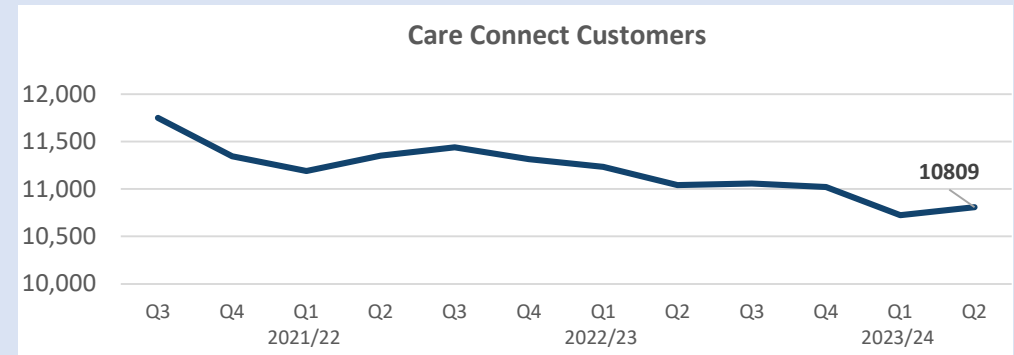
- 77 We continue to help support older people to live independently for as long as possible by ensuring a proportion of units approved on new housing developments meet their needs. During 2022/23, 16% (61) units were approved on new housing developments of 10 units or more that meet the specific needs of older people, consisting of 58 bungalows and three ground floor flats. This is 6pp above target of 10% as set out in the County Durham Plan (CDP). Figures are lower than the previous year (-11%) as a number of bungalow schemes approved that year provided 100% of the units specifically for older people,
- 78 71% (318) units were approved on new housing developments of five units or more that will be built to building regulation M4(2) standard (accessible and adaptable) and contribute towards meeting the needs of older people. This is 5pp above target of 66% as set out in the CDP and 21% more than previous year. The increase on last year was due to some of the schemes approved in that year receiving outline permission before the CDP Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document was adopted and therefore not required to have 66% of the units built to M4(2) standard.

Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard – Care Connect and Disabled Facilities Grants

(quarterly data at 30 September 2023)

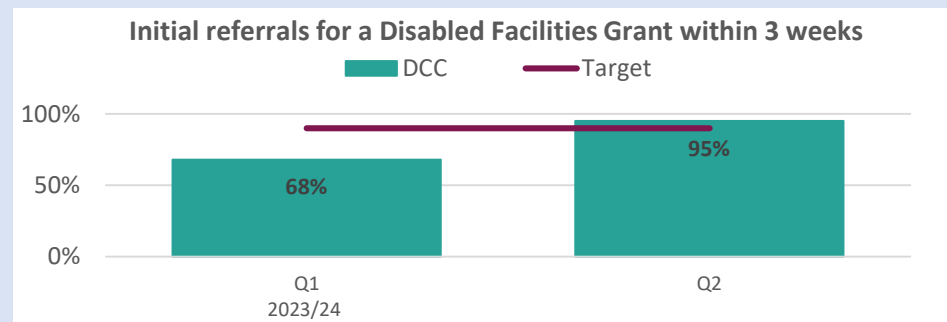
Care Connect

- Increase in customers this quarter as a result of the August free installation offer. Further winter marketing campaign offering free installation is planned to run from 1st November - 31st December 2023.
- Staff responded to 6456 emergency calls this quarter 6397 (98%) were responded to within 45 minutes.
- Telecare Services Association (TSA) Audit completed and Care Connect have been found to be compliant.



Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

- Significant improvement on last quarter due to implementation of new processes and allocating responsibility to dedicated team members for first contact.
- This is a new measure and back data is in the process of being collated.



Care Connect

- 79 Quarter two saw an increase in customers using the Care Connect Service with 212 new customers joining the Service due to the August offer of free installation. A further winter marketing campaign offering free installation is planned to run from 1 November-31 December 2023.
- 80 Out of a total of 6,456 emergency calls that staff responded to this quarter 6,397 were responded to within 45 minutes. However, 55 were responded to after 60 minutes due to a combination of staffing issues and location of properties.
- 81 Care Connect have completed their Telecare Services Association (TSA) Audit and the service have been found to be compliant with the requirements of the framework.

Disabled Facilities Grants

- 82 During quarter two, 95% of potential clients were contacted within three weeks of their initial referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant, which is 5pp above target and a 27pp increase compared to quarter one. New processes have been implemented, allocating responsibility to dedicated team members for first contact which has contributed to the increase in performance during quarter two. This is a new measure, and we are developing robust mechanisms for future monitoring.

Our Communities

Priority Aims:

Durham is a great county in which to live, with flourishing communities which are connected and supportive of each other. We aim to,

- ensure standards will be maintained or improved across County Durham's housing stock
- have towns and villages which are vibrant, well-used, clean, attractive and safe
- ensure people will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities
- ensure communities will be able to come together and support each other
- deliver new high-quality housing which is accessible and meets the needs of our residents
- ensure our rural communities will be sustainable whilst maintaining those characteristics which make them distinctive
- narrow the inequality gap between our communities
- build inclusive communities

National, Regional and Local Picture

- 83 Across County Durham there are approximately of 250,000 dwellings³. 63% are owner-occupied, 20% are social rented and 17% private rented.
- 84 Between April 2022 to March 2022, median house prices across the county were £125,000, consistently lower than the averages for the Northeast (£152,500) and England (£290,000). Although, since 2000, average house prices across the county have increased by 166% from £47,000 to £125,000, there is significant variation across the county.
- 85 57% of County Durham is classified as rural, with a further 32% classified as rural town and fringe⁴. 7% of the county's population (around 37,500 people) live in rural areas (0.3 people per hectare) and 37% live in rural town and fringe (2.7 people per hectare).⁵ Accessing opportunities across the county continues to be priority.
- 86 The county has good North-South connectivity both by road and rail travel and the improved A66 connects east to west. However, some areas have limited public transport options or major roads, especially to some of our more rural areas. Our large, rural geography means residents are often reliant on cars for commuting. The majority of those surveyed for the [Inclusive Economic Strategy](#) said they travel to work by car (80%); compared to only 5% via public transport.

³ [Durham Insight - Housing](#)

⁴ [Rural Urban Classification for LSOAs 2011](#)

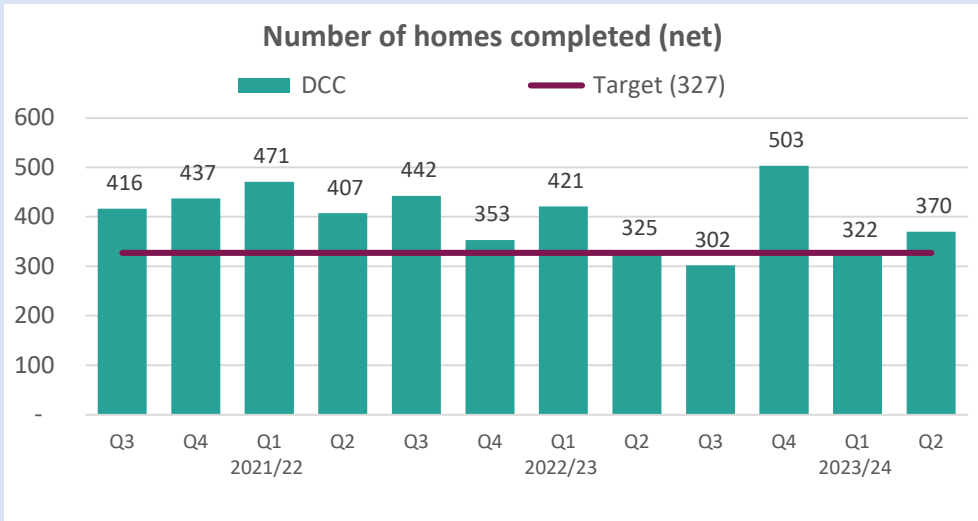
⁵ [Durham Insight - Rural](#)

Housing Delivery Dashboard

(quarterly data as at 30 September 2023)

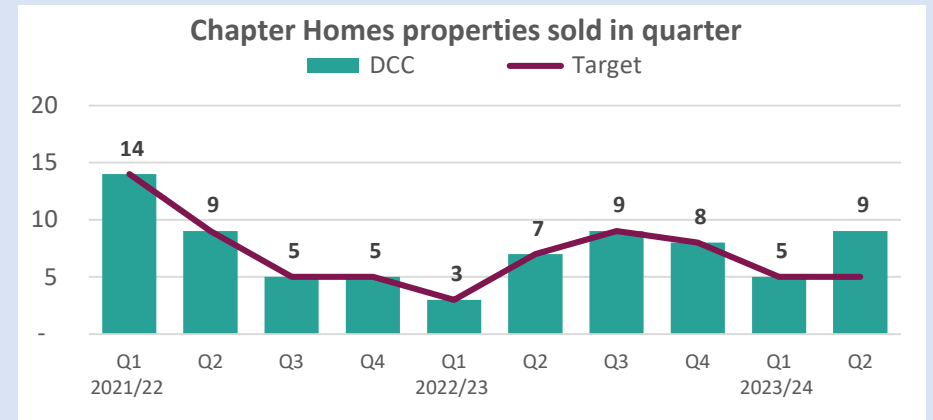
Net homes completed

- The County Durham Plan polices support the delivery of housing to meet identified need and ensure the right type of housing.
- Above target by 13% (43 completions) this quarter, with year-to-date position of 692 completions well on the way to hit annual target of 1,308.
- A number of larger construction schemes have seen quicker completion rates for some of their builds.



Chapter Homes

Despite wider economic issues of both cost-of-living and mortgage interest rates, Chapter Homes sales are in line with projections due to the quality and advertising of our homes.



Net homes completed

- 87 The County Durham Plan policies support the delivery of housing to meet identified need and ensure the right type of housing.
- 88 370 homes were completed during quarter two, which is 13% (43) above profiled target and 15% (48) above quarter one. This brings the total number of completions for this year to 692, which is on track to meet the annual target of 1,308. The increase this quarter is due to a number of larger construction schemes seeing quicker completion rates for some of their builds.

Chapter Homes

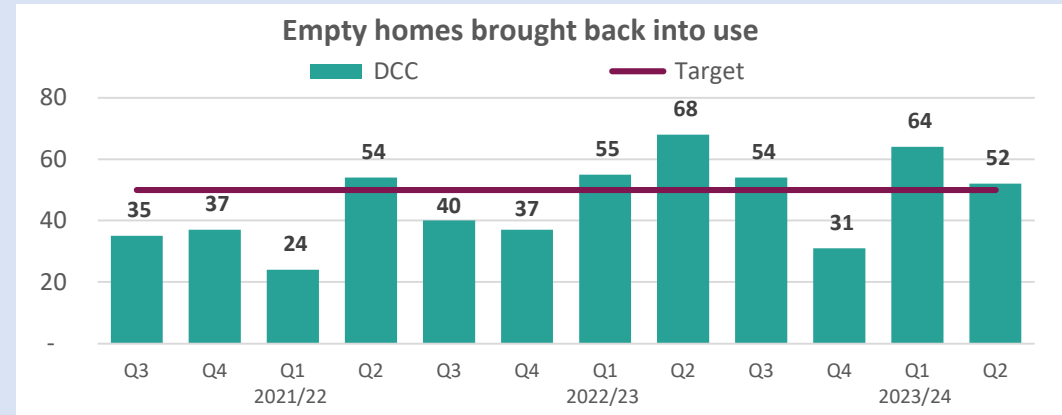
- 89 Nine sales were completed this quarter, which is encouraging given the wider economic issues of both cost-of-living and mortgage interest rates. This is due to our provision of well-designed homes and a focus on ensuring advertising is fully maximised. The year-to-date position of 14 sales puts us well on track to achieve annual target of 20 sales.

Housing Standards Dashboard

(quarterly data as at 30 September 2023)

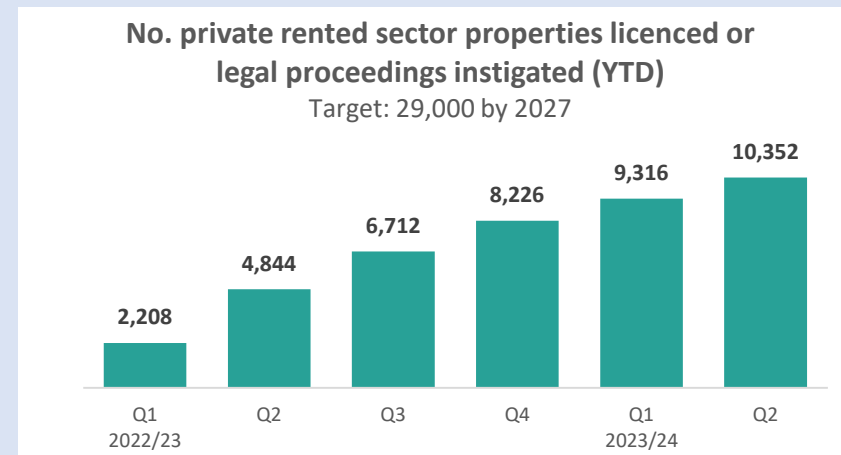
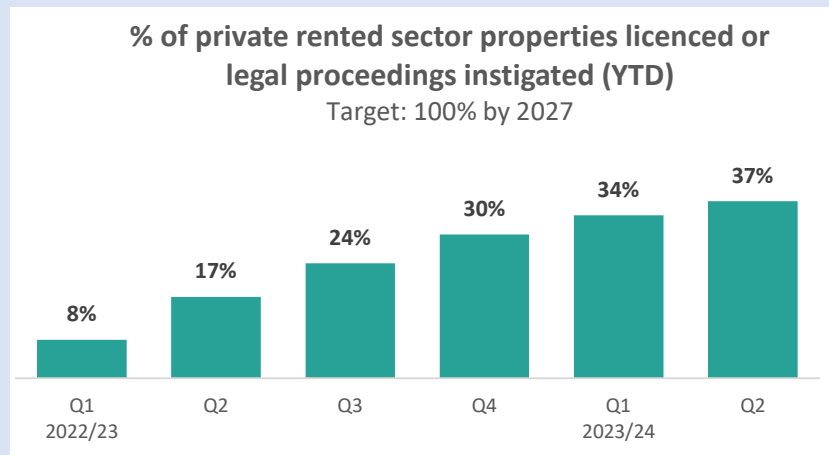
Empty Homes

- We continue to address empty homes in the county via negotiations, advice, financial assistance, working with registered social landlords and interventions via the Local Lettings Agency and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme
- Focus this quarter has been on identifying further empty properties via a review of council tax data.



Selective Licensing

- A further 1,782 (6%) applications currently being processed; 288 exemptions in place and 120 enforcement cases have either started or in process of being actioned, one of which has now lead to a successful prosecution.
- Tenures calculated via 2020 modelling have been refreshed that has provided a 98% confidence in the original modelling.
- Enforcement team continue to target all private rented sector modelled properties not yet licenced, concentrating on increasing checks through Land Registry.



Empty Homes

- 90 52 empty homes have been brought back into use as a result of local authority intervention, above the profiled target (50), however a decrease on quarter one (-12). During the quarter, the team have focussed on identifying further empty properties in the county through a review of recent council tax data, which has contributed to the decrease compared to quarter one. Empty Homes were brought back into use in several ways this quarter, 49 via negotiations, one following an enforced sale of a property and two via empty homes interest free loans.

Selective Licensing

- 91 10,352 (37%) of the 29,000 (approx.) modelled private sector properties are now fully licenced or have had legal proceedings instigated against them. A further 1,782 applications are currently being processed which equates to a further 6% of properties covered by the scheme. At the end of the quarter, 23 live temporary exemptions are in place and 265 family exemptions. 120 enforcement cases for not having a licence have either started or are in the process of being actioned, including:
- six prosecution files being progressed, one of which has now resulted in a successful prosecution
 - six notices of intent being issued
 - 30 police and criminal evidence interviews being scheduled.
- 92 An internal modelling refresh has been undertaken to verify the tenures calculated in 2020. To date, 20,500 properties have been verified against the 79,000 properties within a designated area that has provided a 98% confidence in the original modelling. Therefore, the enforcement team will continue to target all private rented sector modelled properties not yet licenced, concentrating on increasing checks through Land Registry.

ASB in Selective Licensing Areas

- 93 It has not been possible to report on the total number of ASB incidents (per 10,000) head of population for April-June 2023 due to a recording error on one of the IT systems used to record ASB. Discussions are ongoing with relevant teams to try and rectify the issue and a further update will be provided at quarter three.

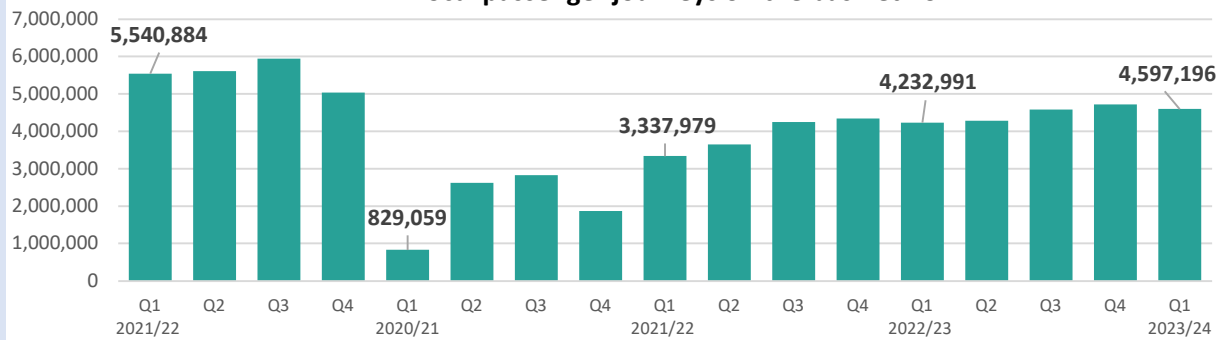
Transport Connectivity and Highway Maintenance Dashboard

(quarterly data as at 30 September 2023)

Public Transport Patronage

- Bus patronage remains lower than pre-Covid levels.
- We continue to work in partnership at a regional level with bus operators and other local authorities to implement the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

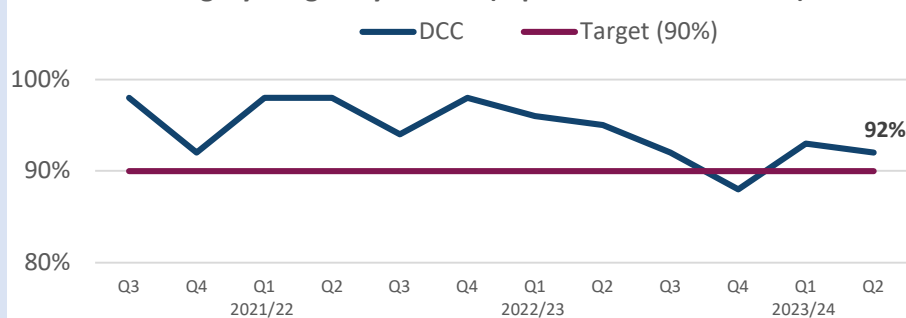
Local passenger journeys on the bus network



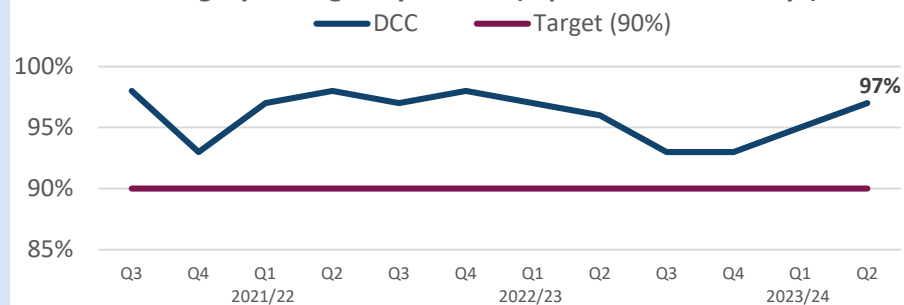
Highway Maintenance

Highways maintenance of defects across all risk categories is above or has almost achieved target.

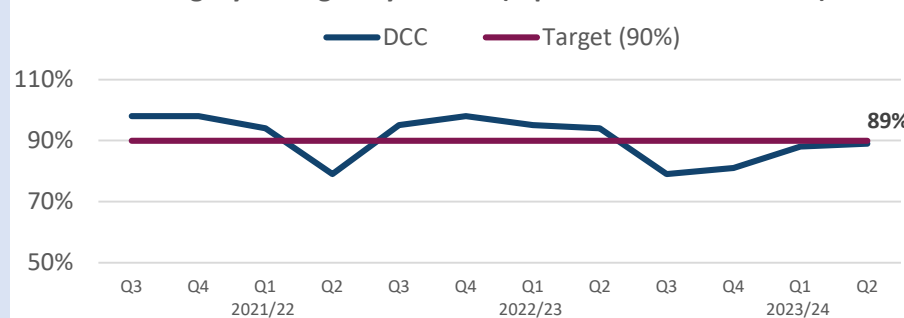
Category 1 highway defects (repaired within 24 hours)



Category 2.1 Highway Defects (repaired within 14 days)



Category 2.2 highway defects (repaired within 3 months)



Public Transport Patronage

- 94 Bus patronage remains lower than pre-Covid levels and is not likely to return to pre-Covid levels in the medium term. However, we continue to work in partnership at a regional level with bus operators and other local authorities to implement the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to encourage patronage growth.
- 95 Following the launched in May 2023 of a £1 single bus fare for under 22s on any bus service in the region, a regional wide multi-modal day ticket was launched in September 2023. Allowing unlimited travel by bus, Metro and Ferry across all of Tyne and Wear, Northumberland and Durham at a cost of £6.80. The existing equivalent, the North East Explorer ticket, costs £12.70 meaning passengers will save 46%.
- 96 Other initiatives within the BSIP to be developed include further new ticketing products, bus service improvements, bus priority measures to improve bus punctuality and journey times and updating bus stops and stations that have safety or accessibility issues.

Highways Maintenance

- 97 Highway defects are categorised on a risk basis and where there is a high number of defects over all categories, resources must be targeted at those safety defects likely to pose the greatest risk of harm. Category 2.2 highway defects pose the lowest level of risk to the public due to their hierarchy within the network based on footfall and location.
- 98 Following a downward trend at quarter three 2022/23 (79%) in Category 2.2 highway defects (within 3 months), this has improved at quarter two (89%) and is close to target (90%).
- 99 Performance for maintenance of Category 1 (within 24 hours) (92%) and Category 2.1 highway defects (within 14 days) (97%) continue to be above target (90%).

Data Tables

D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
				Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	Jul-Sep 23	76.2%	90%	73.7%	86%	81%	Yes	No

D = Direction of Travel	T = compared to target	C = compared to England average	G = Gap between our performance and England average
meeting or exceeding the previous year	better than target	Better than the England average	The gap is improving
worse than the previous year but is within 2%	Worse than but within 2% of target	Worse than the England average but within 2%	The gap remains the same
more than 2% worse than the previous year	more than 2% behind target	Worse than the England average	The gap is deteriorating

This is the overall performance assessment. Its calculation is dependent upon whether the indicator has an agreed target.

Key Target Indicator	Key Tracker Indicator
targets are set as improvements, can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the council and its partners. When setting a target, the D, C and G have already been taken into account.	no targets are set as they are long-term and / or can only be partially influenced by the council and its partners. Therefore, D, T, C and G are used to assess overall performance
better than target	Direction of Travel (D) is meeting or exceeding the previous year AND the gap with England (G) is improving
Worse than but within 2% of target	Direction of Travel (D) is worse than the previous year OR the gap with England (G) is deteriorating
more than 2% behind target	Direction of Travel (D) is worse than the previous year AND the gap with England (G) is deteriorating

Our Economy: summary data tables

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

Economic Growth KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	Jul-Sep 23	76.2%	90%	73.7%	86%	81%	Yes	No
					Inward investments secured	Jul-Sep 23	3	1	2			Yes	No
					Investment secured for companies	Jul-Sep 23	£2,640,000	£2,50,000	£2,390,000			Yes	No
					Occupancy of Business Durham floor space	Jul-Sep 23	90.2%	95%	96.1%			Yes	No
					Private sector employments per 10,000 population	2022	2,827	Tracker	2,795	4,133	3,212	Yes	No
					Private sector businesses per 10,000 population	2023	272	Tracker	274	417	269	Yes	No
					GVA per filled job	2021	£47,046	Tracker	£45,361	£61,310	£48,828	Yes	No
					Employment land approved and delivered	2022/23	13.32Ha	28.46Ha	5.51Ha			No	No

Business Support KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					Businesses engaged by Business Durham	Jul-Sep 23	281	250	278			Yes	No
					Businesses supported by regeneration projects	Jul-Sep 23	14	Tracker	25			Yes	No
					New businesses supported by CED Team	Jul-Sep 23	63	250	61			Yes	No
					Organisations involved in the Better Health at Work Award	Jun 2023	105	Tracker	87			No	No

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Employability and Skills KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					Jobs created or safeguarded due to Business Durham activity	Jul-Sep 23	384	375	346			Yes	No
					Jobs created or safeguarded through regeneration schemes	Jul-Sep 23	87	Tracker	128			Yes	No
					Registrations to employability programmes	Jul-Sep 23	484	Tracker	560			Yes	No
					Participants on employability programmes who progressed o employment / education or training	Jul-Sep 23	251	235	452			Yes	No
					Employment rate for 16-64 year olds <i>Confidence intervals +/-3.2pp</i>	Jul 22-Jun 23	71.8%	Tracker	72.4%	75.8%	71.2%	Yes	No
					Disability employment rate <i>Confidence intervals +/-6.9pp</i>	Jul 22-Jun 23	44.5%	Tracker	45.7%	56.9%	48.1%	Yes	No
					Residents with higher level skills <i>Confidence intervals +/-5pp</i>	2022	59.1%	Tracker	52.5%	66.4%	60.4%	Yes	No
					16-17-year-olds in an apprenticeship	Apr-Jun 23	7.3%	Tracker	8.5%	4.8%	7%	Yes	No

Cultural Offer KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					People attending cultural events ran and commissioned by CS&T	Jul-Sep 23	59,000	Tracker	65,782			Yes	No
					People attending council owned cultural venues (Killhope & town halls)	Jul-Sep 23	40,900	Tracker	39,266			Yes	No
					Average % occupancy of cinema screenings (Gala, Empire & BATH)	Jul-Sep 23	24%	20%	16%			Yes	No
					Average % yield of cinema screenings (BATH, Gala and Empire)	Jul-Sep 23	75%	100%				Yes	No
					Average % yield of theatre performances (BATH, Gala and Empire)	Jul-Sep 23	82%	100%				Yes	No
					Average % occupancy of theatre performances (Gala, Empire & BATH)	Jul-Sep 23	59%	65%	15%			Yes	No
					Council owned/managed heritage assets classed as 'at risk'	2022	6	Tracker	7			No	No
					Heritage assets 'at risk' categorised as 'Priority A' and/or in 'very bad condition'	2022	3	Tracker	3			No	No

					Active borrowers (libraries)	Jul-Sep 23	45,519	43,695	40,761			Yes	No
					Digital borrowers (libraries)	Jul-Sep 23	4,172	3,838	3,406			Yes	No

Visitor Economy KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					Visitors to the county	2022	17.91m	17.085m	15.77m			No	No
					Money generated by the visitor economy	2022	£1.04b	£760.5m	£826.68m			No	No
					Jobs supported by the visitor economy	2022	11,724	10,191	10,063			No	No
					Visitor attractions served by public transport	Dec 2022	67%	Tracker	new			No	No
					Tourism businesses actively engaged with Visit County Durham	2022	27%	Tracker	27.8%			No	No

Managing Money Better (MMB) KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					Households receiving energy advice from MMB Initiative	Jul-Sep 23	2	Tracker	146			Yes	No
					£s saved per household as a result of energy efficiency advice provided by MMB initiative	Jul-Sep 23	£115	Tracker	£177.41			Yes	No

Our Environment: summary data tables

Sustainable Transport and Active Travel KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					Cycling and walking levels	2022	65.6%	Tracker	67.7%	70.6%	67.5%	Yes	No
					Satisfaction with cycle routes & facilities (<i>confidence intervals +/-4pp</i>)	2022	52%	Tracker	54%			No	No
					Linear kilometres of appropriate design standards for Active Mode Routes		new		new			No	No
					Park and Ride passenger journeys	Jul-Sep 23	146,298	Tracker	104,309			Yes	No

Our People: summary data tables

Housing Vulnerable People KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					Care Connect customers	Jul-Sep 23	10,809	Tracker	11,040			Yes	No
					Care Connect calls answered within 3 minutes	Jul-Sep 23	99.59%	99%	99.8%			Yes	No
					Care Connect calls arriving at the property within 45 minutes	Jul-Sep 23	98%	90%	97.7%			Yes	No
					Potential clients contacted within 3 weeks of initial referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Jul-Sep 23	95%	90%	new			Yes	No
					Households prevented from homelessness and helped to stay in their home	Jul-Sep 23	2%	Tracker	5%	18%	9%	Yes	No
					Households prevented from homelessness and helped to move to alternative accommodation	Jul-Sep 23	8%	Tracker	26%			Yes	No
					Households where homelessness has been relieved, and the client moved into alternative accommodation	Jul-Sep 23	28%	Tracker	30%			Yes	No
					Households where there has been an acceptance of the main homeless duty	Jul-Sep 23	13%	Tracker	9%			Yes	No
					Successful move-ons from Local Lettings Agency accommodation at the end of their licence agreement	2022/23	80%	90%	new			Yes	No
					People aged 65+ with aids and assistive technologies in their homes		new		new			No	No
					Approvals on new housing sites of 10 units or more, a minimum of 66% of the total number of dwellings meet accessible and adaptable standards (building Regulations requirements M4(2)).	2022/23	71%	66%	new			Yes	No
					Approvals on new housing sites of 10 units or more, a minimum of 10% of the total number of dwellings meet a design and type for older persons	2022/23	16%	10%	new			Yes	No

Our Communities: summary data tables

Housing Delivery KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					Net affordable homes	2022/23	282	836	536			No	No
					Net delivery of new housing	July-Sep 23	370	327	325			Yes	No
					Chapter Homes properties sold	Jul-Sep 23	9	5	7			Yes	No

Housing Standards KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					Empty homes brought back into use as a result of local authority intervention	Jul-Sep 23	52	50	68			Yes	No
					Properties covered by Selective Licence Scheme that are licensed, or legal proceedings instigated	Jul-Sep 23	37%	100%	17%			Yes	No
					ASB incidents per 10,000 population within the Selective Licensing Scheme	Jul-Jun 23	212.97	224.28	261			No	No

Transport Connectivity KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					Satisfaction with ease of access (<i>confidence intervals +/-4pp</i>)	2022	73%	Tracker	77%			No	No
					Satisfaction with bus operators (<i>confidence intervals +/-4pp</i>)	2019	92%	92%	92%			No	No
					Households which can access key service locations using public transport		new		new			No	No
					Residents who can access employment sites by public transport		new		new			No	No
					Timetabled bus services no more than 5 min late or 1 min early		new		new			No	No
					Local passenger journeys on public transport	Apr-Jun 23	4,597,196	Tracker	4,232,991			Yes	No

Highways and Footways Maintenance KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog PI
					A roads where maintenance is recommended	2022	3.7%	Tracker	3.0%			No	No
					B roads where maintenance is recommended	2022	3.3%	Tracker	3.1%			No	No
					C roads where maintenance is recommended	2022	3.5%	Tracker	2.3%			No	No
					Unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended	2022	25.0%	Tracker	22.8%			No	No
					'Footways' structurally unsound	2020	22.5%	Tracker	20.9%			No	No
					Bridge condition: principal roads	2020	82.0%	Tracker	81.1%			No	No
					Bridge condition: non-principal roads	2020	81.0	Tracker	80.1			No	No
					Category 1 highway defects repaired within 24 hours	Jul-Sep 23	92%	90%	95%			Yes	No
					Category 2.1 highway defects repaired within 14 days	Jul-Sep 23	97%	90%	96%			Yes	No
					Category 2.2 highway defects repaired within 3 months	Jul-Sep 23	89%	90%	94%			Yes	No
					Highways Maintenance Backlog	2020	£171.2m	Tracker	£172.6m			No	No
					Satisfaction with highways maintenance. (confidence intervals +/-4pp)	2021/22	47%	46%	50%			No	No
					Footway maintained and repaired over and above the core programme		new	Tracker	new			No	No
					ASB enforcement action taken	Jul 22-Jun 23	6,069	Tracker	5,057			No	No

Glossary

Term	Definition
ACD	<p>Automatic Call Distribution</p> <p>Telephone calls are received either through our Automatic Call Distribution system, which routes calls to groups of agents based on a first-in-first-answered criteria, or directly to a telephone extension (non-ACD). Only calls received via our ACD system are included in our telephone statistics.</p>
AQMA	<p>Air Quality Management Area</p> <p>A geographical area where air pollution levels are, or are likely to, exceed national air quality objectives at relevant locations (where the public may be exposed to harmful air pollution over a period of time e.g., residential homes, schools etc.).</p>
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
ASCOF	<p>Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework</p> <p>measures how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to people (link)</p>
BATH	<p>Bishop Auckland Town Hall</p> <p>A multi-purpose cultural venue situated in Bishop Auckland market place. It offers regular art exhibitions, live music, cinema screenings and theatre performances, as well as a library service.</p>
BCF	<p>Better Care Fund</p> <p>A national programme that supports local systems to successfully deliver the integration of health and social care.</p>
CAP	<p>Customer Access Point</p> <p>A location where residents can get face-to-face help and information about council services. There are eight CAPs across County Durham.</p>
CAT	<p>Community Action Team</p> <p>A project team which includes members of our community protection service, planning, neighbourhood wardens and housing teams, who work alongside police and community support officers and fire and rescue teams and residents to tackle housing and environmental issues in a specific area by identifying local priorities and making best use of resources.</p>
CDP	<p>County Durham Plan</p> <p>Sets out the council's vision for housing, jobs and the environment until 2035, as well as the transport, schools and healthcare to support it (link)</p>
CED	Community Economic Development
CERP	<p>Climate Emergency Response Plan</p> <p>A community-wide call to action to help align all sectors on the actions required to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve our resilience to the impacts of climate change.</p>
CNIS	Child Not In School

Term	Definition
CRM	Customer Relationship Management system
CS&T	Culture, Sport and Tourism
CTR	Council Tax Reduction Reduces council tax bills for those on low incomes
DCC	Durham County Council
DEFRA	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs A ministerial department, supported by 34 agencies and public bodies responsible for improving and protecting the environment. It aims to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. It also supports our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries (link)
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payments Short term payments which can be made to tenants in receipt of the housing benefit element of Universal Credit, to help sort out housing and money problems in the longer term.
DLE	Daily Living Expenses Available for those whose circumstances have changed unexpectedly. Payments can be made for up to seven days to help with food, travel and some clothing (restrictions apply).
DoLS	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards A set of checks that are part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which applies in England and Wales. The DoLS procedure protects a person receiving care whose liberty has been limited by checking that this is appropriate and is in their best interests.
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme A confidential employee benefit designed to help staff deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting their home or work life, health, and general wellbeing.
EET	Employment, Education or Training Most often used in relation to young people aged 16 to 24, it measures the number employed, in education or in training.
EHCP	Education, Health Care Plan A legal document which describes a child or young person's (aged up to 25) special educational needs, the support they need, and the outcomes they would like to achieve.
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund Funding that helps to create economic development and growth; it gives support to businesses, encourages new ideas and supports regeneration. Although the United Kingdom has now left the European Union, under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, EU programmes will continue to operate in the UK until their closure in 2023-24.

Term	Definition
EHE	Elective Home Education A term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire, instead of sending them to school full-time.
ETA	Extension of Time Agreement An agreement between the council and the customer submitting a planning application to extend the usual deadline beyond 13 weeks due to the complex nature of the application.
FTE	Full Time Equivalent Total number of full-time employees working across the organisation. It is a way of adding up the hours of full-time, part-time and various other types of employees and converting into measurable 'full-time' units.
GVA	Gross Value Added <i>The measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.</i>
HSF	Household Support Fund Payments support low income households struggling with energy and food costs, or who need essential household items.
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office The UK's independent body's role is to uphold information rights in the public interest (link)
IES	Inclusive Economic Strategy Sets a clear, long-term vision for the area's economy up to 2035, with an overarching aim to create more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy (link)
JLHWS	Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy The Strategy (2023-28) supports the vision that County Durham is a healthy place where people live well for longer (link)
KS2	Key Stage 2 The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages'. At the end of each key stage, the teacher will formally assess each child's performance. KS2 refers to children in year 3, 4, 5 and 6 when pupils are aged between 7 and 11.
KS3	Key Stage 3 The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages'. At the end of each key stage, the teacher will formally assess each child's performance. KS3 refers to children in year 7, 8 and 9 when pupils are aged between 11 and 14.
LGA	Local Government Association The national membership body for local authorities which works on behalf of its member councils to support, promote and improve local government (link).

Term	Definition
L!NKCD	A programme that brings together a number of delivery partners to support people with multiple barriers to address these underlying issues and to move them closer to or into the labour market or re-engage with education or training.
LNRS	<p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies</p> <p>Propose how and where to recover nature and improve the wider environment across England.</p>
MMB	<p>Managing Money Better</p> <p>A service offered by the council which involves visiting residents' homes to carry out a free home energy assessment. In addition to providing advice on energy bills, the service can provide financial advice through referrals to Benefits advice or help with a benefits appeal and other services for advice on benefit entitlements.</p>
MTFP	<p>Medium Term Financial Plan</p> <p>A document that sets out the council's financial strategy over a four year period</p>
NESWA	<p>North East Social Work Alliance</p> <p>A social work teaching partnership made up of 12 north east local authorities and six Higher Education Institutes. The Alliance is one of several teaching partnerships across the country which were created to improve the quality of practice, learning and continuous professional development amongst trainee and practicing social workers.</p>
NQSW	<p>Newly Qualified Social Workers</p> <p>a social worker who is registered with Social Work England and is in their first year of post qualifying practice.</p>
NVQ	<p>National Vocational Qualification</p> <p>The NVQ is a work-based qualification that recognises the skills and knowledge a person needs to do a job.</p>
Oflog	<p>Office For Local Government</p> <p>The vision for Oflog is for it to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government, and support its improvement. Oflog is part of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities .</p>
PDR	<p>Performance and Development Review</p> <p>Is an annual process which provides all staff with the valuable opportunity to reflect on their performance, potential and development needs.</p>
PRS	<p>Private Rented Sector</p> <p>This classification of housing relates to property owned by a landlord and leased to a tenant. The landlord could be an individual, a property company or an institutional investor. The tenants would either deal directly with an individual landlord, or alternatively with a management company or estate agency caring for the property on behalf of the landlord.</p>
QoL	<p>Quality of Life</p>

Term	Definition
RIDDOR	<p>Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations</p> <p>A RIDDOR report is required for work-related accidents which result in a reportable injury. The definition of a reportable injury can be found here</p>
RQF	<p>Regulated Qualifications Framework</p> <p>The RQF helps people understand all the qualifications regulated by the government and how they relate to each other. It covers general and vocational in England, and vocational in Northern Ireland. Link</p>
SEN	<p>Special Educational Needs</p> <p>The term is used to describe learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for children to learn than most children of the same age. Children with SEN are likely to need extra or different help from that given to other children their age.</p>
SEND	<p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities</p> <p>SEND can affect a child or young person's ability to learn and can affect their;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ behaviour or ability to socialise (e.g., they struggle to make friends) ▪ reading and writing (e.g., because they have dyslexia), ▪ ability to understand things, ▪ concentration levels (e.g., because they have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) ▪ physical ability
SG	<p>Settlement Grants</p> <p>Help people stay in their home, or move back into housing after living in supported or unsettled accommodation (such as leaving care or being homeless). They provide help towards furniture, white goods, flooring, curtains, bedding, kitchen equipment, removal costs etc.</p>
SME	<p>Small to Medium Sized Enterprise</p> <p>A company with no more than 500 employees.</p>
Statistical nearest neighbours	<p>A group of local authorities that are similar across a wide range of socio-economic.</p> <p>Durham County Council uses the CIPFA nearest neighbours model which compares us to Northumberland, North Tyneside, Barnsley, Rotherham, Wakefield, Doncaster, Redcar and Cleveland, Wigan, St Helens, Dudley, Sefton, Sunderland, Wirral, Kirklees and Calderdale</p>
UASC	<p>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children</p> <p>Children and young people who are seeking asylum in the UK but who have been separated from their parents or carers. While their claim is processed, they are cared for by a local authority.</p>
UKSPF	<p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund</p> <p>Part of the government's Levelling Up agenda that provides funding for local investment to March 2025. All areas of the UK receive an allocation from the Fund to enable local decision making and better target the priorities of places within the UK that will lead to tangible improvements to the places where people work and live.</p>

Term	Definition
WEEE	<p>Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment</p> <p>Any electrical or electronic waste, whether whole or broken, that is destined for disposal. The definition includes household appliances such as washing machines and cookers, IT and telecommunications equipment, electrical and electronic tools, toys and leisure equipment and certain medical devices.</p>
Yield	Proportion of potential income achieved

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Meeting: County Durham Economic Partnership Board

Date & Time: 26 October 2023 10.00am

Venue: The Boardroom, New College Durham



Present:	Name	Organisation/Pillar Rep
	Glyn Llewellyn (GL)	Chair
	Alison Gittins (AG)	Durham Business Group
	Andy Broadbent (AB)	New College Durham (lead for People)
	Andy Kerr (AK)	DCC Head of Economic Development
	Claire Williams (CW)	Funding & Programmes DCC
	Cllr Elizabeth Scott (ES)	Durham County Council
	Dinah Jackson (DJ)	Rural Design Centre
	Glenn Martin (GM)	DCC
	Graham Wood (GW)	DCC Economic Development Manager
	Paul Marsden (PM)	Head of the Association of Secondary Schools
	Richard Baker (RB)	Durham University (lead for Innovation)
	Sarah Slaven (SS)	Business Durham (lead for Business Competitiveness)
	Sue Parkinson (SP)	CDEP Vice Chair
	Nicole Roe (NR) (Minutes)	Durham County Council
Apologies:	Ailsa Anderson	Engineering & Manufacturing Network
	Alan Smith	Believe Housing (lead for Inclusive Growth)
	Alison Clark	Durham County Council
	Amy Harhoff	Durham County Council
	Andy Bailey	Durham County Council
	Angela Brown	Durham County Council
	Duncan Peake	Raby Estates
	Kate Burrows	Durham Community Action (VCS Voice)
	Michelle Cooper	County Durham Community Foundation (VCS Voice)
	Reshma Begum	Federation of Small Businesses

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1.	Welcome and apologies	The chair welcomed all to the meeting and initiated round table introductions. Apologies were received and recorded	Chair	
2.	Chairs opening remarks	<p>The Chair noted that this was a very important time in the business of the CDEP Board, given that it is now charged with considering and taking ownership of the delivery plan for the Inclusive Economic Strategy. He emphasised the role of Board members in developing their relationships with other businesses, including through membership groups such as Durham Business Group, and ensuring that the IES and its delivery plan are widely understood through the Durham business community.</p> <p>AG highlighted that there is an opportunity to speak to the Durham Business Group members at an event on 14th November in New College Durham. GL and AG to discuss outside of the meeting.</p> <p>GL has met with a number of organisations who are impressed with what we are trying to achieve, and he reiterated how important it is that the board must work as one organisation to achieve this.</p>		
3.	Minutes of CDEP Board on 14 th June 2023	Minutes of 14 th June meeting were reviewed and agreed as a true record.		
4.	Matters Arising	There were no matters arising.		
5.	IES delivery Plan	<p>CW, GW & AK gave a joint presentation on the Inclusive Economic Strategy delivery plan. The object of this presentation was to provide an opportunity for the Board to consider the inform the Board and to request sign off the plan which was received with the papers in readiness to take to DCC Cabinet in November. This presentation would provide an opportunity for the Board to determine how best to hold delivery of the Plan to account. is to talk through the delivery of the plan and how the Board holds it to account and catch a flavour of the plan.</p> <p>CW delivered the first part of the presentation which covered the 5 P's (People, Productivity, Places, Promotion, Planet) and the actions to deliver across the first 2-3 years of the strategy. The Board agreed that the plan would be a live document and would be kept up to date to respond to changes in economic circumstances. It was noted that the strategy had been developed with partners and working groups that</p>		

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		<p>have met throughout the process alongside stakeholder events, consultations, and sustainability assessment with colleagues from the Environment Partnership, which had led to further material in relation to the Planet theme and the Climate Emergency Response Plan.</p> <p>The Board noted that the delivery plan covered each of the actions, and that they related back to the ambition of the IES. It also noted that partner has been identified to provide ownership and accountability to the Board for the actions identified. It was agreed that how the priorities can be made to link better together would become further defined throughout implementation.</p> <p>PEOPLE - GW presented this area of the plan. In terms of economic progress across the county, appropriately skilled workforces can be one of the biggest breaks on progress and development, as corroborated by feedback from businesses who reported that there has been significant improvement in this respect over the last 20 years but there is still lots to be done. It was further noted that activities which had been delivered as part of “business as usual” were coming to an end as the ESF programme winds down. The Technical Funding Group of the Board has now aligned, UKSPF resource and as a result a new model of employment support will commence in January. There will be no loss of support for residents in connecting them with the world of work and importantly the UKSPF provides. flexibility to work with business to upskill their current workforce.</p> <p>A focus on digital has emerge as part of the Local Skills Improvement plan – this is an intrinsic component of skills development and continues to be supported through mainstream delivery as well as through the specific funds available through UKSPF to improve numeracy and literacy.</p> <p><i>Comments & Discussion</i></p>		

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		<p>Board members emphasised the importance of ensuring that this was built into the education system to provide younger residents with knowledge and aspiration for their future direction. A Board member referenced that there was an increasing importance being attached to green skills as well as digital skills within the education sector. For example, in the building of a new campus, opportunities had been sought for pupils to be involved with builders to raise their understanding of low carbon technologies and processes.</p> <p>The Board recognised that there was currently a difficult economic with very low growth across the economy which required effort to remediate the situation. However, the development of the IES and its delivery plan provided the impetus for action to redress this</p> <p>A Board member expressed his support of the work being done and what is in development and recognised that the colleges and university are trying to work together across all the sectors/strands to support this. He cautioned the need to be conscious of timescales as March 2025, which sees the end of UKSPF funding, and the introduction of NEMCA. It was important that communications were clear and timely. The Vice-chair agreed and stated that this was not a concern unique to People and Skills but was echoed across all areas of IES delivery. However, whilst future provision was unclear, the approach which was taken by CDEP in terms of maximising the impact of investment by working across silos would bear fruit in any future funding regime</p> <p>PRODUCTIVITY – SS updated the Board.</p> <p>She highlighted that County Durham benefits from having a good network of organisations and providers involved in supporting businesses. This process has given us the ability to understand our collective direction of travel and the ability to work together to achieve this whilst remaining realistic in what we can achieve in the timescales.</p>		

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Page 29		<p>She highlighted that there are 4 main areas of focus within this agenda, and that there were significant developments in each – both in terms of what is being delivered but also in how collaboration and partnership working is maximising its effectiveness, She also stressed that work was underway to prepare the Partnership for the next round of the delivery plan, as part of an approach of being proactive rather than reactive. She discussed each in turn:</p> <p><i>Harnessing the power of our major employment sectors</i> - identifying sectors where County Durham performs well and where there is an opportunity to further develop, with a view to putting in place actions in place to drive this forward</p> <p><i>Providing excellent support</i> - There is excellent support for business, and we are building on what has gone before with European funding. Using the £8m of the UK Shared Prosperity fund we have been able to work with enterprising start-up in the county and be informed of how we can support them and integrating support to bring organisations together to strengthen buy-in and we are looking to join up and have a clear offer and this will be implemented in terms of contracting with different providers to deliver their support.</p> <p><i>Expanding the thriving innovation ecosystem</i> - The Partnership has benefited enormously from having Durham University and other key partners as part of the cross-cutting Innovation Working Group which has led to research for future delivery plans and how we can build understanding of the barriers constraining innovation. As a result, a project using the UKSPF to link with other universities in the Northeast to drive innovation has been commissioned and has commenced delivery.</p> <p><i>Driving good business practices</i> – we are keen to promote good business practices and are working with businesses with purpose and who play a part in the community to do this and recognise County Durham as a place of good employment.</p> <p><i>Comments & Discussion</i></p>		

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		<p>SS agreed to attend a meeting of the Durham Business Group to provide members with further information. A Board member reported that a partner in Clive Owen Accountancy had stated that they were not aware of this type of approach to productivity being taken elsewhere in the region and had welcomed it,</p> <p>SS advised that the Business Durham website promotes events and would be available to any Board member wishing to highlight any if that would be useful.</p> <p>PLACE – the presentation recognised that there has been huge amount of money/investment already made in place and that referenced ongoing projects i.e., £25m Town and Village Programme (£8m spent to date with £12m allocated and some remaining for allocation). Work is underway to consider other investment sources which equates to £90m direct funding. It would be important to consider we shape the visions and master plans of these towns and villages; instead of taking a purely planning led process, it would be important to put communities at the heart of the work. move away from master plans into strategic place plans. A rolling programme to look at existing master plans to see how we build the strategic place plans for the 14 settlements is now underway</p> <p>The presentation highlighted that one piece of work imminently going forward is the Durham City Vision which considers changes to high streets due to the move to online retail, and how to adapt to maximise p footfall.</p> <p>Unlocking employment land - onsite development will be the engine room of development over the next 2 years with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net Park Phase 3 – progressing well with the focus on delivery in the planned period on time and on budget. • Launch of Durham City Innovation District in Aykley Heads site - Phase 1 of a 15-month procurement programme to identify a partner to develop the site. 		

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 hectares of land allocated for new employment uses – this will need to be reviewed to see that we have the right amount of employment land in the right places and where future demand will be accommodated. <p>Improving physical connectivity is challenging, in part because of the rurality of the county and recent changes in national priorities. A connectivity strategy needs to be developed to ensure we have bus services at the right time of day to ensure functionality, maximising communication about journeys and piloting on demand bus service.</p> <p>Digital infrastructure – there are a number of programmes being delivered and are consideration is now being given to further potential activity, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how do we ensure home working is enabled for everyone especially those in social housing • How do we create digital hubs in rural settlements with high quality broadband and also good quality broadband for home working • Driving 5g innovation and 4g capability in rural areas <p><i>Comments & Discussions</i></p> <p>There was a general agreement that certainty was a prime prerequisite to giving businesses the confidence to invest in growth and that the delivery plan of the IES should serve to provide that certainty. Communicating it to businesses, and ensuring that it was delivered as promised, was therefore key and was a prime responsibility of the Board.</p> <p>Promotion Inward investment has a large focus in the plan, with Business Durham and Visit County Durham working hand in hand to achieve this. The priorities are:</p>		

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		<p>Clear Brand – a perception survey report had been carried out which recognised that place branding is crucial and speaks to the unique character of County Durham and is more than a logo.</p> <p>Visitor economy - Overnight stays -need to grow as overnight visitors spend a significant amount more than day visitors.</p> <p>Enhance cultural development – County Durham is the devolution lead for the NE on Culture and Tourism. Work is underway on portfolio development and ensuring that this is shaped for the whole of the northeast. It was recognised that screen industry partnerships presented significant opportunities for County Durham.</p> <p>Inward investment – promotion of the County to attract inward investment is being driven by a group drawn from across all areas of regeneration and growth.</p> <p>An Investment Plan was being developed, this being a clear investment pitch across county Durham to look across the range of capital projects and how they can contribute to the IES delivery, identifying the right funding sources. Further information would be presented to the next Board with the plan being launched ahead in Spring 2024 ahead of the Mayoral election.</p> <p>Board members commented on the need to address communication black spots in the connectivity framework and on the need to reflect how branding works with different audiences, citing as an example how international investors had been targeted with the “Passionate People Passionate Places” brand but recognising that in developing the application of any Durham brand, it would be important to consider how it would be applied to different audiences.</p> <p>.</p> <p>PERFORMANCE</p>		

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		<p>The Board discussed how to manage and monitor the actions in the Delivery Plan d It was recognised that the targets set were ambitious, but that these sit alongside gathering an understanding of how delivery is connecting with and affecting business and, in an economic sense, residents. In this connection, scorecards have been developed which consider geographic differences, but which provide a snapshot which will be updated on an annual basis.</p> <p>Board agreed that they were in agreement with the delivery plan, but needed to consider how we communicate this to the business and wider audience and how members of the board could use materials moving forward.</p>		
6.	Next Steps Options	<p>The Board signed off the plan and it can now be considered through the governance arrangements of Board members, including Cabinet at DCC, on that basis.</p> <p>The Board discussed next steps, considering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we continue to engage, and to engage with people we have not engaged with so far? • The role of CDEP Board in implementing the Plan • opportunities and how do we explore and exploit them <p>CW summarised with 3 options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuation of 4 thematic working groups focused on the pillars within the IES of People, Productivity, Place and Promotion 2. Form new CDEP IES Implementation Subgroup 3. Hybrid of 1 & 2. IES delivery/implementation subgroup supported by ad hoc groups focusing on specific activities/themes <p>There was agreement that that option 3 is most favourable, recognising that the Board owns and has responsibility for this strategy. A huge amount of work has gone into the development to date, and it was important not to lose the momentum we currently have. It was recognised that clear ownership was imperative and that the creation of an implementation sub-group, charged with driving this on behalf of the Board, would achieve this. The role of the Technical Funding Group who performed a similar function on behalf of the Board in the governance of UKSPF funding was cited as an example of how this was effective. To support this, it was suggested that existing</p>	Claire Williams/ Glenn Martin	

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		<p>groups be used on an ad hoc basis where this was appropriate to the subject matter, and a list of these had been developed. The approach that would be taken was to focus the themes/pieces of work on real time challenges and opportunities to drive the strategy forward, selecting themes which are pertinent and relevant at the time and ensuring the right people to help on that agenda are fully utilised.</p> <p>ACTION – SP to assist with the Development and Implementation sub-group of the Board, sit adjacent to the Technical Funding group and to replace the moribund Business, Enterprise, and Skills group.</p>		
4.	Business Conference	<p>SS advised that there was to be an annual business conference – focusing on the key themes of the IES – with the first planned for Spring 2024 around the green economy theme.</p> <p>Business Durham has volunteered to coordinate a small group to develop the conference. The Chair wished to be involved and the Board was asked to provide the details of any other interested parties to SS.</p> <p>RB suggested that the date may be useful to consider in light of the mayoral election as this may be an opportunity for the new mayor to be involved. SS will take this idea to the development group.</p>	Sarah Slaven	
5.	UKSPF Progress	<p>SP gave a brief background on the fund for those who do not have the previous information.</p> <p>Almost all of the allocated UKSPF funds has now been allocated. With c90% of the funding committed and we are on track to commit the remaining 10% over the next few months. It was noted that this compared favourably with other parts of the region where only approximately 66% of funds had been committed.</p>	Sue Parkinson	

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		<p>£13m has been allocated to the supporting local business agenda – including £8m to the productivity and growth programme, £3m into enterprise programme and £2m into the Durham element of the innovation activity which the University is leading on.</p> <p>A similar approach to the Communities and Place with £6.5M committed with £5m into a community infrastructure programme.</p> <p>People and Skills element commitments are £5M into employment support in County Durham and £4M into Skills Support.</p> <p>SP advised that she proposed to invite projects to attend future board meetings to inform on the detail of what is being delivered in each strand.</p>		
6.	Any Other Business	No other business was raised		
	Date and time of Next Meeting	10am 13 th December 2023 AB offered New College Durham as a venue		

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