



Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date **Monday 8 July 2024**
Time **9.30 am**
Venue **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

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

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Substitute Members
- 3 Minutes of the Special joint meeting held on 12 April 2024 and the meeting held on 22 April 2024 (Pages 3 - 20)
- 4 Declarations of Interest, if any
- 5 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties, if any
- 6 Strategic Place Plans
 - i) Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 21 - 30)
 - ii) Presentation by the Head of Economic Development and the Economic Development Manager (Pages 31 - 56)

- 7 UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update - Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 57 - 84)
- 8 Refresh of the Work Programme 2024/25 for Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Pages 85 - 106)
- 9 Minutes of the County Durham Economic Partnership Board held on 28 February 2024 (Pages 107 - 116)
- 10 Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Bradley
Director of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
28 June 2024

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

Councillor S Zair (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, B Moist, R Ormerod, 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 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 the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 12 April 2024 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Moist (Chair)

Members of the Joint Committee:

Councillors A Batey, R Crute, P Heaviside, G Hutchinson, C Lines, K Shaw, E Adam, J Elmer, D Nicholls, J Purvis, A Reed, D Sutton-Lloyd and P Jopling (substitute for M Currah)

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris

Also Present:

Councillor M Wilkes

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Abley, P Atkinson, G Binney, L Brown, B Coult, M Currah, C Kay, J Miller, P Sexton, A Simpson, A Sterling and Mr E Simons.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor P Jopling was substitute for Councillor M Currah.

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 County Durham's Visitor Economy

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

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy provided a detailed presentation which focused on the visitor economy overview, destination performance, regional comparisons and new product for 2024.

It was highlighted that Visit County Durham had been accredited as a Local Visitor Economy Partnership for County Durham and were recognised by Visit England and Government as one of the thirty nationally supported strategic bodies that provided strong local leadership in the visitor and tourism economy which was important and provided an opportunity to influence what Visit England do and the support they received.

The destination management plan (DMP) converts local, regional, and national market research and strategies into a county-based plan to grow the county's visitor economy. The plan was aligned to and embedded within the aims of County Durham's Inclusive Economic Strategy.

In 2022, 17.91 million visitors contributed £1.04 billion to the local economy, of which 91% were day visitors contributing 52% of spend (£544.75m) and 9% stayed overnight which had increased by 1% contributing 48% of all spend (£493.96m) which supported 11,724 jobs in the area. The Strategic Manager highlighted there were less visitors than in 2019 pre covid, but current visitors were spending more.

A breakdown of visitor spend and performance was provided which detailed 37% of visitor spend related to food and drink and 25% related to indirect spends. It was highlighted that the attraction breakdown list only showed the attractions that provided performance figures. Performance information indicated that the Dales had the highest number of overnight stays with the area having more camping and lodge locations.

Information was given on visitors to attractions within the county, but the Strategic Manager highlighted that this was not comparative data but only to understand where people were going. There were a high proportion of visitors from the North East, and those visitor who stayed overnight were from outside of the region but unfortunately definitive figures were not available.

Members were advised that the North East had a low proportion of international visitors and there were policies to drive visits into the region but this would take time.

County Durham did provide a quality accommodation offer with a number of 3* and 4* hotels, there were no 1* or 2* accommodation in County Durham. However, there was still not enough accommodation and there was a need to develop more. There was progress in the planning process, but this was developing slowly. The Visit County Durham (VCD) team responded to all planning applications.

The North East of England compares poorly to other regions in the Country but there was a massive opportunity with the North East Mayoral Combined Authority (NEMCA) to shift the position and to benefit the county more.

Members learned of the support given to young people to develop Durham Mustard which was now being sold in outlets such as farm shops throughout the county. The Team was committed to supporting local produce.

New products for 2024 were presented which included The Rising at Raby Castle, the new hall at Locomotion, the Faith Museum, Beamish developments, The Story and Northern Saints Trails. It was noted that new products take time to embed and workshops were arranged with stakeholders to amplify products.

A partnership approach was adopted for all work undertaken. Members learned there were 926 tourism businesses in the county with a further 500 businesses that contribute to tourism. The Strategic Manager highlighted that there were three people who supported partners giving them skills to market and develop their business; they also provided the most up to date legislation, and worked with travel partners such as Newcastle Airport; Port of Tyne.

Funding was received from government to develop and research but this funding was not for marketing. The Visit Britain/Visit England International Marketing team amplify messages in key markets. Information was given as to how Durham used national and local media sources such as the Manchester Evening News and the Times to highlight attractions in the county such as Raby Estate; Auckland Castle or Beamish. Publications such as Staycation with a readership of 250,000 highlighted festivals and events and encouraged people to visit the county.

The Strategic Manager advised that the team were in the final year of delivery of the Destination Development Partnership the funding received was used for co-ordinating improvements and proposed activity was discussed with regional partners such as the Campervan Strategy.

The devolution work was progressing and the Head of Culture Sport and Leisure at DCC was the lead officer. However, portfolio holder themes had not been identified as yet as there was work still to be done but the Strategic Manager expressed delight that County Durham was leading this portfolio.

Councillor R Crute referred to the area performance figures and noted the considerable contrast between day visitors and staying visitors. He believed that the lack of accommodation was a contributing factor and asked if they worked with self-catering units and holiday companies to promote their offer. He highlighted the conflict with regards to promoting coastal and other areas of the county as a tourist destination and the pressures relating to the local nature recovery strategy which needed to be resolved to achieve the right balance in promoting tourism and preserving nature. He suggested that Overview and Scrutiny look at the issue further and add to the work programme later in the year.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy agreed that there was limited coastal development and there was a number of empty buildings that could be brought back into use. She confirmed that the team looked at accommodation developments that would be suitable and not impact the coastal areas and continued to approach holiday companies and business annually. With regards to the local nature recovery strategy, she added that a meeting had been arranged with the strategy lead to discuss the impact on the visitor economy and they were currently involved with the development of a regenerative tourism framework for the North East and the local nature recovery strategy would be considered as part of that framework. The team had involvement with internal and external bodies such as North Pennines, Heritage Coast, National Landscape and the Seascape Project to ensure that proposals take into account environmental conditions.

Councillor J Elmer added that nature in County Durham provided opportunities for tourism, however the impact needed to be managed. The income from tourism was focused on overnight stays therefore more accommodation was needed especially on the east coast. He highlighted the constraints in relation to new accommodation and the planning process and applicants seeking to create accommodation, early engagement with the planning team and Visit County Durham who were consultees in the planning process was essential. With regards to the local nature recovery strategy, he noted that this was still work in progress and it would provide a long term guide and create opportunities to improve and expand nature areas, therefore it was vital that it was connected with the planning process and coordination with developers would provide opportunities to create accommodation to attract visitors who enjoy nature.

Councillor P Jopling agreed with Councillor J Elmer's comments regarding the difficulties in relation to planning matters. She referred to the new Combined Authority and queried whether funds would be available to work together as a region and produce televised advertisement campaigns as they had proven to be very successful and would showcase County Durham. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that portfolio details were being worked through and was confident that there would be opportunities for close collaboration around marketing and promoting the visitor economy in the region. She added that funds were available to develop the Place Brand for County Durham programme that was

currently being developed to attract inward investment and visitors into the county, ensuring alignment and promoting County Durham in the regional context.

Councillor D Sutton-Lloyd commented that he would like to see future presentations focus more on what was being done currently and less about the history. In response to queries with regards to the work being carried out to obtain the feedback data and local engagement, the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that a visitor survey was conducted every three years specific to County Durham, however this was very expensive and time consuming therefore the team were researching other cost-effective ways in obtaining visitor feedback on an annual basis. In terms of local engagement, various network events with local businesses were held to support collaborations and delivery of future ambitions.

Councillor D Nicholls commented on funding, data sharing and campervan infrastructure. He was stunned that Central Government did not provide funding for place branding and queried whether they gave a reason why funding was not allocated. With regards to data collecting, he noted that some organisations did not share data and queried whether they provided any reasons and what could be done to encourage data sharing. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy explained that the main reason why funding was not provided was that the programme was more about supporting and developing the industry and product as apposed to marketing. The majority of marketing investment was provided to Visit Britain which assisted in supporting the place brand programme. Protocols and criteria were very difficult to work through and they were currently in discussions with Visit Britain to ascertain what was acceptable in terms of image. With regards to collecting data, it was explained that some businesses were unable to share data due to sensitivity/confidentiality issues, data software and capacity issues. With regards to the campervan industry, she advised that this was a growing market and provided opportunities that would benefit the County and make use of facilities such as Park and Ride areas to offer overnight stays. The team had also approached pubs and hotels in the County to see if they would be willing to work with the motorhome club and offer overnight parking. It was noted that regulations in England were different to Scotland and other countries, however the strategy would encourage motor homes and improve the offer.

Councillor C Lines agreed that campervan tourism was something that needed to be looked at, however he was mindful that becoming too successful could put other tourists off so it would need to be carefully managed. He referred to Passionate People, Passionate Places and advised that he was involved in the launch to promote the North East which featured Stanhope and Durham City centre in the national TV advertisement. He was excited about the possible opportunity with the Combined Authority to campaign and showcase County Durham. He highlighted the sustainable value of internal tourism within the county and the North East with existing products and events and new initiatives and provided examples of park runs, heritage 100 walks which attracted hundreds of people and extra income for the parks and business in the County. He suggested there was an opportunity for

Visit County Durham to help secure one-off national events which attracted thousands of people and would showcase the region and boost tourism from further afield which could then lead to return visits to other areas of the County. Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that they supported internal campaigns aimed at local residents and provided content for County Durham News. Festivals and events were hosted on the Visit County Durham website which provided a platform. It was noted that Visit County Durham had supported sports initiatives, however they were reliant on people informing them of the events which they would be happy to support.

Responding to questions from Mrs R Morris in relation to targeted tourist groups, international transport and strategy plans with regards to Devolution, the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that the largest tourist groups visiting County Durham were couples over 45, who were also the largest spending group and the target market was to attract families. A lot of work had been done successfully as they were starting to see a balance in visitor profiles. With regards to international tourism, she was mindful that air travel had a major impact with regards to the environmental conversation and they supported the airport to be more sustainable and meet their net zero targets. The nearest gateway to USA was Manchester, which was challenging, however they worked with airlines and central government to try and secure more routes to the region. With regards to Devolution, Visit County Durham had always collaborated with Northumberland, North Tyneside, NewcastleGateshead Initiative, Sunderland and South Tyneside. It was noted that Durham had more visitor numbers than Northumberland, however visitors tended to stay longer in Northumberland.

Councillor J Elmer commented on accessibility across the transport networks in the county and noted there would be an opportunity for better transport planning integration with the new Combined Authority. He referred to the rights of way network and highlighted the poor quality of some footpaths that were not accessible which were really important to tourists visiting the countryside. He commented that styles should be replaced with kissing gates so that footpaths were accessible to people of all abilities to enjoy the countryside which would take little but vital investment. He noted that the Council had received a contribution of £73 million from the abandoned HS2 programme to be used on public transport and needed careful consideration on how the funding would be best used to be more attractive to tourists. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy provided an example of fully accessible footpaths at Derwent Reservoir. She then referred to the North Pennines Outdoor Mobility that offers five Trumper sites which hire mobility scooters to explore the North Pennines National Landscape, this allows people with accessibility issues to visit places which were not accessible in places and agreed that more investment in that area was required.

The Chair referred to the percentage of overnight stays and commented if that could be increased from 9% to 20% it would boost the tourist economy and County Durham's economy as a whole. He acknowledged that Visit County Durham only

has a small team, however asked if there could be a real drive with regards to the outstanding accommodation in County that were also attractions in themselves. He asked that the breakdown on visitor data be clearer as he was concerned that the information could be lifted and used by others. He noted that some of the data was not robust and agreed that in relation to the rights of way network footpaths needed to be upkept. He picked up on Councillor D Nicholls point with regards to the campervan infrastructure and advised that locations across the county should be considered and suggested the Riverside at Chester-le-Street already had the infrastructure in place close to the A1 motorway, cricket ground, restaurants, leisure facilities and the Northern Saints Trail and queried whether this was something that could be achieved internally.

Councillor A Batey was proud that the highest visitor attraction, Beamish Museum was in the area she represented, however was disappointed that the Riverside Park at Chester-le-Street did not feature on the list of attractions as a destination park in the north of the County and presumed that this was down to being unable to capture the data as Durham County Council no longer manage the car parks. She noted that park run visitor numbers were not being collated and highlighted that Riverside Park hosted an activity week in August 2023, that was joint funded with last years recorded figures totalling 33,000 visitors to that event alone. She was concerned that when searching the top 20 visitor destination in County Durham, Chester-le-Street did not feature at all and queried whether funding was directed differently to other attractions and reiterated her disappointed that data was not being captured in and around Chester-le-Street Riverside Park. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that they would revisit the data that was collected, however they would be unable to capture data of visitor numbers using parks. She suggested that they could look at events such as cricket test matches depending on whether the cricket club were capturing and willing to share data. She agreed that the attractions data should have been presented in a different format, however assured Members that Chester-le-Street was a priority destination and had a dedication page on the Visit County Durham website which listed hotel accommodation, attractions and places to eat.

Councillor K Shaw was concerned that attractions such as the DLI Collection which attracted over 30,000 visitors a year had been omitted as an attraction and there was no reference to The Story in the narrative detailing that the DLI Collection and DLI archives were brought together for the first time since 1969. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy explained that the figures were for 2022 and advised that DLI Collection figures were not provided and only figures that were received could be published. It was noted that The Story was a new product opening in June 2024 and visitor numbers would be shared and published.

Councillor G Hutchinson referred to the Heritage 100 walks and highlighted that many residents were not aware of the walks and felt that better promotion was needed. He agreed that accommodation, connectivity in the County and international travel routes were a big issues as tourists would then visit other parts

of the Country and County Durham were losing out. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that extensive promotion for all County Durham products were provided on dedicated channels and support County Durham News with content, however it was difficult to know where people receive their information. In terms of connectivity around the County, a transport report had been commissioned to look at connectivity from airports and public transport services to detail the length of time and level of difficulty to get to different parts of the County. It was noted that some areas of the County would be more challenging to resolve.

Councillor C Lines hoped that the newly elected Mayor of the Combined Authority would be successful in tackling the transport connectivity issues. With regards to the Heritage 100 walks, he clarified that all Councillors were invited to a workshop before the walks were rolled out, however there was a very low attendance and suggested that the Walk and Talk Trust update the presentation and circulate to all Members and share with the Visit County Durham Team. He also advised that park run statistics were available on the park run website for each location and the Riverside Park had listed 152,000 finishes over the 10-year period.

The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and advised that the Scrutiny Team had spoken to the consultation Lead Officers and were arranging for the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be presented with the consultation findings and provide Members with an opportunity to feed into the consultation as part of the work programme for the next municipal year.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted.

6 Any Other Business

The Chair reminded Members that a workshop for Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee was being held on 17 April at 1.00pm to focus on the Place Brand Survey.

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Monday 22 April 2024** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Moist (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors A Batey, R Crute, D Freeman, P Heaviside, G Hutchinson, C Lines, R Manchester, R Ormerod, K Robson, M Stead and A Sterling

Co-opted Members:

Mr E Simons

Also Present:

Councillor(s) V Andrews, P Atkinson, L Brown, J Charlton and B Coult

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Reed (Environment and Sustainable Communities) A Surtees and K Shaw and Mrs R Morris.

2 Substitute Members

There were no Substitute Members.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting and Special Joint meeting, both held 4 March 2024, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were not Declarations of Interest.

5 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

6 Selective Licensing Scheme

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and accompanying presentation by the Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager, Ted Murphy providing an update of the progress of the Selective Licensing Scheme (for copy of report and presentation slides, see file of minutes).

The report and presentation highlighted the relevant legislation that enabled the scheme, the scheme having gone live in April 2022, which provided the regulatory framework to allow for pro-active monitoring of the private rented sector and the opportunity for enforcement against poor landlords. It was explained that there was a multi-agency approach making the best use of a range of powers available, in addition to selective licensing, and that civil penalties could be used as an alternative to prosecution for Selective Licensing offences, including for not having a licence, non-compliance with licence conditions, or for improvement notices. Members noted that the teams continued to work proactively in the selective licensing areas to ensure all landlords obtained a license and comply with licence conditions, by making full use of both informal measures as well as robustly pursuing enforcement action. It was noted that the next steps included:

- Continuing identification of properties without a licence using various sources of data including Council Tax, Housing Benefit, and Tenancy Deposit data, with recent Fire Service data assisting in this regard.
- Intensive analysis of the areas with the least applications against modelling, including Esh Winning, Pelton Fell and Trimdon South.
- Landlords written to advise that they need to apply for a licence to avoid enforcement action.
- Delivery Plan - Enforcement and Compliance teams working through all Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in first 3 years of the scheme – targeted and intelligence driven.
- Review data in years 4 and 5 to consider areas that may be included in extension of the scheme.

The Chair thanked the Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager and asked the Committee for their comments and questions.

Councillor L Brown noted she was horrified that 15 percent of compliance inspections were found to be unsatisfactory and frightening that many were Category 1, which she understood to be representing a risk to life. She asked for clarity as to what a Management Order would entail.

The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted that were there was no realistic prospect of a property becoming licensed, then the Council could take over, receive rent, carry out repairs using the rental income with the remainder of the rent going to the landlord. It was noted Category 1 referred to most serious hazards, rather than 'risk to life'. Councillor L Brown asked how much that process cost the Council. The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted there would be some initial setup costs, with the in-house service managing any properties, reiterating costs incurred would be charged to the property via that offset rent.

Councillor B Coult noted she would like to see selective licencing across all areas of the County. She noted the lack of a national register of landlords and asked as to whether any lobbying of Parliament was being undertaken as it would help tackle rogue landlords. The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted there was no national register of landlords, noting that Officers at the Council can have a lot of work to try and ascertain the landlord of a property, through Council Tax records and Land Registry records, being successful in most cases. He noted the Renters (Reform) Bill that was with Government, and the proposed Property Portal would offer more choice for renters in terms of landlords.

Councillor R Crute noted that statistics at the recent Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee had noted a take up of only 43 percent. He asked as regards time limits, what would help in terms of take up either financial penalty or court action, and where the proceeds of fines would go, to the criminal justice system or back to the Council and into the selective licensing scheme. The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted that civil penalties could often be quicker than court action. He noted that both prosecution through courts and using civil penalties needed to be satisfied to a criminal standard. Fines from successful prosecutions go back into the justice system while civil penalty fines are ringfenced to use in private sector housing enforcement.

Councillor M Stead noted the scheme had begun in April 2022, and therefore there were now a number of compliant and non-compliant landlords. He noted that some could be holding out in order to get a longer term on their licence, it being for five years from time of being issued. He added this felt unfair for those that applied correctly and 'on-time'. He noted that around 16,500 landlords not complying amounted to around £8 million in fees not collected. The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted it was a quirk of the Housing Act, and that licences were for five years, even if the scheme ended in 2027. He noted that one would wish for higher application numbers and reiterated that penalty monies would be ringfenced as previously described. He noted that where landlords had not applied, the Council would write to them, giving them an opportunity to apply. He added that if they then failed to apply, the Council would look at each case in terms of civil penalties or court action as appropriate. Councillor M Stead asked if therefore some landlords could be delaying until the last minute, then apply and obtain a five-year licence.

The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted that some single property landlords may not be aware of the scheme, however, professional landlords, with a number of properties would be aware and therefore that could be an aggravating factor in deciding if a civil penalty or court action was the most appropriate action to take.

Councillor J Charlton asked what safety net was in place for those tenants where their landlord is prosecuted, to prevent the impact of that prosecution falling upon the tenant. The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted that in extreme circumstances, for example where there was a high level of disrepair, then the Council still had its duty in respect of homelessness. He added, where aware, the Council would pay close attention and work with tenants at threat from eviction or harassment.

Councillor P Atkinson noted there had been a big uptake within his area, Ferryhill. He thanked the Team who had come along to local PACT meetings, adding it had made a big difference for residents in the area. He noted selective licensing looked at the quality of properties and noted the issues, including anti-social behaviour (ASB), in some properties that remained outside of the scheme.

Councillor K Robson noted around 400 applications per month were being received and asked how long it would keep going at that rate, he noted he was of the opinion the scheme had been known about for a sufficient amount of time for landlords to come forward. He asked if there was expected to be a tapering down of numbers over the next 12 months as an example. The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager explained he expected numbers to remain consistent, and that enforcement cases would help promote the scheme and encourage more to come forward. He reiterated he would expect that the larger, professional landlords would know they needed to apply.

Councillor A Batey noted two areas within her Electoral Division and commented at her disappointment in the level of take up. She asked whether we were expecting a level around 70 percent by the end of the scheme. She noted that the reason in bringing in the scheme was through concern for tenants, and also the impact upon residents in cases of ASB and blight. She noted the work of the CAT Team in Grange Villa a few years ago, where the Team mapped all the properties, with only difficulties in locating landlords of two properties. She noted she felt there could still be better communications with residents as regard the number of prosecutions via PACT and Residents' Association meetings. She added that absentee landlords were not always overseas, many being within the area or region. She noted that while selective licensing was not able to be a panacea for the problems faced due to poor private landlords, she was still disappointed by the take up. The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted the team had worked hard in terms of take up, referring to work at Pelton Fell. He added that while it was not likely to be able to get 100 percent take up, he was confident of reaching 70 percent.

He noted that it was important for Members, tenants, landlords and residents to help provide information so that the team can follow up on any issues.

Councillor A Sterling asked what barriers there were in terms of take up by landlords, and whether the process of larger registered providers, such as Believe and Karbon Homes could help to provide a 'best practice' guide.

The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted there had been a number of reasons that had been put forward during the consultation on selective licensing, with many landlords not keen on the idea, also the fee being cited as an issue. He noted the good relationship with the registered providers within the county, noting they were regulated elsewhere, however, they did share best practice in terms of common issues such as damp/mould. Councillor A Sterling agreed that many smaller landlords could be frightened to tackle issues with their properties, and clear demonstration of how those larger registered providers dealt with such issues could be beneficial. The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted the council had developed a new landlord accreditation scheme, in partnership with the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) for those within non-selective licensing areas.

Councillor M Stead noted low uptake in a number of areas, including Pelton Fell, and suggested that Neighbourhood Wardens may be able to assist by knocking on number of the properties yet to sign up to ask who the landlord was. He added he felt that up to 60 properties a week was not an unrealistic target to help try to encourage greater take up. He added, for the reasons he had previously stated, that this would also make good business sense for the Council. The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted that there had been a number of 'door knocks' carried out within the LSOAs, and he would look at additional work in this regard in the future.

Councillor R Ormerod left the meeting at 10.17am

Councillor P Heaviside added he too was disappointed with the take up of the scheme in the Pelton Fell area. He noted, as a landlord, he had received a letter two years ago, making him aware of the scheme, noting 28 days to respond, and to have proof of compliance with necessary standards, such as electrical safety certificates, the authority was going to undertake action. He highlighted that he was tracked down through the deposit scheme and he asked for clarification as to how many landlords on the deposit scheme are not registered. The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager noted he would be able to find out, adding there had been a lot of advertising prior to the scheme coming into effect and reiterated that action would be taken after a number of letters were issued and if the circumstances are right then enforcement will take place. Councillor P Heaviside noted that the focus should be on those 'bad' landlords, noting those 'good' landlords that had paid and complied with the selective licensing scheme.

The Service Development and Intelligence Manager, John Kelly explained that 1,000 letters were going out this week and reiterated that all available data was looked at to locate landlord. He added around one in three of those registered had deposit protection. The Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager commented that those within selective licensing areas are still required to meet all the normal requirements in terms of letting a property, with the selective licensing scheme requirements being above and beyond those minimum requirements.

The Chair noted the feeling from the Committee was that the take up was not as they had hoped, and while acknowledging that not all areas covered by the scheme have low take up of the scheme there were some areas, as referenced by Members, that had lower take-up and these could be areas to target to help impact take-up figures.

The Chair noted that 15 percent of properties failing an inspection was a good indication of the poor state of many properties within the county and he felt that there was a need to focus efforts in this regard. He noted the 1,000 letters that were scheduled to go out, and noted this would be something for the Committee to follow up on, as well as landlords having insurance in terms of tenancy deposits.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted.

Councillor R Crute left the meeting at 10.24am

Councillor R Ormerod entered the meeting at 10.25am

7 Draft County Durham Housing Strategy

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and accompanying presentation by the Planning Development Manager, Graeme Smith providing an update of the development of the draft County Durham Housing Strategy (for copy of report and presentation slides, see file of minutes).

The report and presentation provided an overview of the responses received to the consultation on the Draft Housing Strategy, including the comments made by committee members at the Overview and Scrutiny workshop focusing on the draft strategy and the response within the draft strategy to those comments. The latest draft of the County Durham Housing Strategy and a draft Twelve Month Delivery Plan were also attached to the cover report.

Councillor V Andrews left the meeting at 10.31am

Councillor R Crute entered the meeting at 10.31am

The Housing Development Manager, noted the next steps in relation to the 12 Month Delivery Plan, noting aiming for dates for Cabinet and Council in July 2024, then with a more detailed five-year Delivery Plan to follow.

The Chair thanked the Housing Development Manager and asked Members for their comments and questions.

Councillor A Batey thanked the Officer for their very important presentation. She noted a number of developments that were within her Electoral Division, near the A693, as well as within Consett and the impact this had upon the traffic on the A693 and commented that there were also events taking place at Beamish Museum which added to traffic on that particular road. She asked as to whether when planning new developments, the potential impact upon the road network was assessed and asked what could be done to improve the situation. She added that there was also a lack of public transport in this particular area, therefore Members were unable to point to public transport as an alternative.

The Housing Development Manager noted that there were a number of elements when looking at new developments and their impacts, firstly through strategy and looking at the Infrastructure Development Plan, part of the wider County Durham Plan (CDP). He added that at a high level, any new development would be assessed alongside all development from the CDP and associated traffic flows to ascertain whether there was a need for infrastructure upgrades. He noted another element was through individual planning applications, if a larger development, then colleagues from Transport and Highways would provide input on any issues. He noted he would speak to Councillor A Batey as regards her specific issues outside of the meeting. Councillor A Batey noted another issue was housing development on brownfield sites and ensuring that those developments link to public transport, both near destinations and those further away. The Planning Development Manager added he would pick that matter up with Transport colleagues.

The Chair thanked the Housing Development Manager and noted a lot had been taken on board with the development of the Delivery Plan, providing more clarity on how priorities would be achieved and timescales. He noted that an area that was of particular interest to Members was the affordable housing targets, adding that Councillor J Rowlandson had provided assurances in relation to the delivery of 500 council houses as part of the Delivery Programme.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted with members comments on the draft strategy shared with the Service Grouping.

Councillor C Lines left the meeting at 10.59am

8 Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and accompanying presentation by the Head of Planning and Housing, Michael Kelleher providing an update on the Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (for copy of report and presentation slides, see file of minutes).

The Head of Planning and Housing noted that the contribution to the strategy from the former Head of Housing Solutions, Lynn Hall and former Housing Manager, Marie Smith should be noted, and he expressed his gratitude for their dedication and hard work over the years.

The report and presentation provided an overview of the update on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2029) and the report included feedback from the second phase of consultation, taking into consideration comments made by Members of the Committee at its meeting on 18 December 2023.

Councillor C Lines entered the meeting at 11.10am

The Head of Planning and Housing noted next steps included: an aim to have the finalised strategy to Cabinet and Council in July 2024; the establishment of a Homelessness Forum with partners and stakeholders; and the development of a five-year delivery plan.

Councillor K Robson left the meeting at 11.14am

Councillor M Stead noted he felt that 150 Local Lettings Agency (LLA) properties was not enough and asked if the Council was looking to purchase more, given the cost of renting properties rather than owning them, referring to costs he had heard from another Local Authorities area of around £4,000 per week. The Head of Planning and Housing explained that the Authority was looking to purchase more properties, with a bid having been submitted in respect of government funding for a further 12, which would, including those approved last year, be 40 more. He reminded Members of around 500 new build properties and other LLA acquisitions, noting two to three years ago the Council was at zero properties, now 150 and this would continue to grow. In terms of the costs referred to, he suspected the £4,000 referred to would include full wrap-around care, however, he noted that Durham would pay up to £700 per week for rent alone, however, he agreed it was better if the Authority own the properties via the LLA.

Councillor A Batey added her thanks to that of the Head of Planning and Housing to both L Hall and M Smith for all their work and noted she was sure the whole Committee would agree.

The Chair agreed and asked that thanks be passed to the former Officers. He added that he was pleased to see the draft strategy before Members alongside the review of Durham Key Options (DKO), this would help give greater control back to the Local Authority.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted with members comments on the draft strategy shared with the Service Grouping.

9 Quarter Three Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24

The Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which provided details of the forecast outturn position for quarter three revenue and capital for Regeneration, Economy and Growth (REG) as at 31 December 2023 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Councillor K Robson entered the meeting at 11.20am

The Chair asked as regards the size of the County Durham economy, whether it was around £8.7 or £9 billion. The Strategy Team Leader, Gemma Wilkinson noted that when updating on GVA the latest figure had been around £9 billion, adding that she would check colleagues as to the latest figure available and then ensure that it was circulated.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

10 Quarter Three 2023/24 Performance Management Report

The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive Officer which provided 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 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Gemma Wilkinson, Strategy Team Leader presented the report and provided a summary of the main messages regarding performance for the Service Grouping, noting progress to date and areas that were being addressed.

Councillor R Crute noted some confusion in respect of the Selective Licensing scheme registration figures.

He noted the figures provided at the last meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had been 43 percent, with figures referred to today being 41 percent within the housing report and 39 percent within the performance report. He asked for clarity and consistency in reporting of figure to scrutiny. The Strategy Team Leader noted some lag within the performance reporting, being to the end of quarter three, with the other reports being more up-to-date figures from the service. She added she would check as regards those figures being reported at Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. The Service Development and Intelligence Manager noted that one figure was finalised at the end of quarter three, the other being a more up-to-date figure within quarter four. Councillor R Crute thanked Officers and asked for clarification, noting the variance between the figures. Councillor M Stead agreed with Councillor R Crute and asked for updated figures to be reported back to the Committee. The Chair noted the point raised by Councillor R Crute and M Stead. Councillor R Crute noted that each of the thematic Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be looking at setting their workplans in June and July.

Resolved:

That the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter three performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of challenge be noted.

11 Special Joint Meeting

It was noted that there would be a Special Joint Meeting of the Committee with the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, looking at Regional and Local Transport policy and delivery, to be held 6 June 2024 at 9.30am.

**Economy & Enterprise
Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

8 July 2024

Strategic Place Plans



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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This cover report accompanies the presentation to Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee and provides an update on the established Strategic Place Plans. Specifically, this report;
 - (a) Sets out the pilot approach to Strategic Place Plans;
 - (b) Highlights the Spennymoor case study and it's alignment with the Strategic Place Plans model;
 - (c) Outlines the delivery of future Strategic Place Plans and the factors influencing the order of delivery.

Executive Summary

- 2 Strategic Place Plans (SPPs) have replaced Masterplans in line with the principles and priorities of the Inclusive Economic Strategy & its Delivery Plan (approved by Cabinet December 2022 & November 2023 respectively) and subsequent report to Economy & Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny in January 2024 setting out the process to be applied.
- 3 The SPP process is underpinned by the co-development principle within the Inclusive Economic Strategy. Central to this methodology is empowering local communities to be at the heart of shaping the future of their towns and villages, collaborating with local people, businesses and stakeholders to establish shared visions for each place. This agreed vision will then be the foundation on which spatial, investment and action plans will be developed to create SPPs.

Recommendation(s)

- 4 Members are asked to note
 - (a) the ongoing development of Strategic Place Plans
 - (b) progress with the Spennymoor Case Study set out in the accompanying presentation.

Background

- 5 The Strategic Place Plan pilot phase includes the development of plans in Durham City, Shildon and Spennymoor as reported previously.
- 6 A significant change from the previous suite of masterplans, Strategic Place plans are built around an agreed local area vision, established with communities through a process of Co-design. Strategic place Plans also include spatial plans, reflective of core components of previous plans and linking in with the established policy framework of the County Durham Plan. However, in line with the approach adopted for the Inclusive Economic Strategy, each Strategic Place Plan can also include a Delivery Plan and Investment Plan.
- 7 Spennymoor has been included as a Strategic Place Plan pilot phase following the allocation of £20 million of funding to the town by Government through the Long-Term Plan for the Towns. Appendix 2 details the key milestones for the programme mapped against the agreed phases of Strategic Place Plan development and provides an early case study of Strategic Place Plan development.
- 8 Future pilot SPPs will continue with Durham City and then Shildon/ Newton Aycliffe subject to resource and a review of the development and implementation of the three pilot plans. With co-design at the heart of the Strategic Place Plans process, the recent realignment of the Area Action Partnerships to the Economic Development Function provides opportunities to support / accelerate the engagement and visioning aspects of the process.
- 9 Factors for consideration in order of developing plans for the remaining towns is attached in Appendix 3. As with the initial pilots, awards of external funding may impact on the scheduled Strategic Place Plan order of delivery.

Background papers

- [Adoption of the Inclusive Economic Strategy, Cabinet Report December 2022](#)
- [Adoption of the Inclusive Economic Strategy Delivery Plan Cabinet Report November 2023](#)
- [Masterplan Activity in County Durham, Report to Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee January 2024](#)

Other useful documents

- None

Author(s)

Graham Wood

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Julie Anson

Tel: 03000 262008

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

Pilot Strategic Place Plans are being taken forward utilising existing resource with some elements of capacity funding provided by external funding programmes. Future financial implications for the delivery of the full programme to be assessed once Area Action Partnership capacity to support the co-design phase is assessed.

Once completed, Strategic Place Plans will identify priorities for the delivery of schemes. They will not however guarantee funding for the projects identified.

Consultation

Co-design is central to the Strategic Place Plan programme. Details of the engagement programme for to each Strategic Place Plan will be agreed with the Council's Corporate Communications Team and the Council's Consultation Officers Group.

Future consultation mechanisms will be enhanced in line with the IES principles of co-development and following lessons learned as part of the Spennymoor pilot process.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

Strategic Place Plans underway at present include significant multi-disciplinary input from existing staffing resources across the Council. Through the presence of external funding and /or specific programme requirements this may be supplemented by specialist external input.

With the recent realignment of the Area Action Partnerships to the Economic Development Service, consideration is currently being given to the use of existing staffing resource to support the co-design elements of the next round of plans.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

Detailed risk assessments will be undertaken at the individual project level.

Procurement

Any specialist input to the development of the Strategic Place Plans will be secured in accordance with the Council's procurement rules and procedures.

Spennymoor case study



DLUHC 3 Themes Brief

- 11 Public engagement events;
- Family Fun Day 1000+;
- Street engagement
- 1100 Students Whitworth Park Academy & Primary Schools
- Online Survey
- Enabled open conversations
- Produced observations

Shape vision

- Led by Urban Foresight
- Spennymoor Town Board developing draft 10 Year Vision
- Facilitated by DCC

Consult

- Public engagement/ co design responses received formed draft vision
- Use of social media, questionnaire, public event(s)

Adopt

- Refine 10 Year vision based on public engagement
- Spennymoor Town Board
- Cabinet adopt the vision

Delivery Plan

- Develop 3 Year Investment Plan based on adopted vision utilising first £6 million
- Owned by Spennymoor Town Board
- Adopted by Cabinet

Factors for consideration in prioritisation

The below is the current thinking on factors to take into account

Level of deprivation

- Applying indices of deprivation to help identify highest areas of need

High Street vacancies

- Targeting the areas with the highest number of high street vacancies

Age of the existing masterplan

- Prioritising areas that have the least up to date masterplans

Settlement size

- Take in to account place size and number of residents impacted

Strategic impact

- Consider the wider catchment area and focus on district centres first

Opportunities and challenges

- Identify places with specific issues that mean they are more likely to attract funding, or have specific issues to address

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Strategic Place Plans

Strategic Place Plans (SPP) Background

Page 32

- Strategic Place Plans have replaced Masterplans in line with principles and priorities of the Inclusive Economic Strategy (Approved by Cabinet November 2023)
- Economy & Enterprise Overview Scrutiny considered approach to SPP in January 2024
- Central to this methodology is empowering local communities to be at the heart of shaping the future of their towns and villages, working with local people, businesses and stakeholders to establish shared visions for each place. This agreed vision will then be the foundation on which spatial, investment, and action plans will be developed to create SPP

Strategic Place Plans

Strategic Place Plan

* As required

Strategic Place Plans

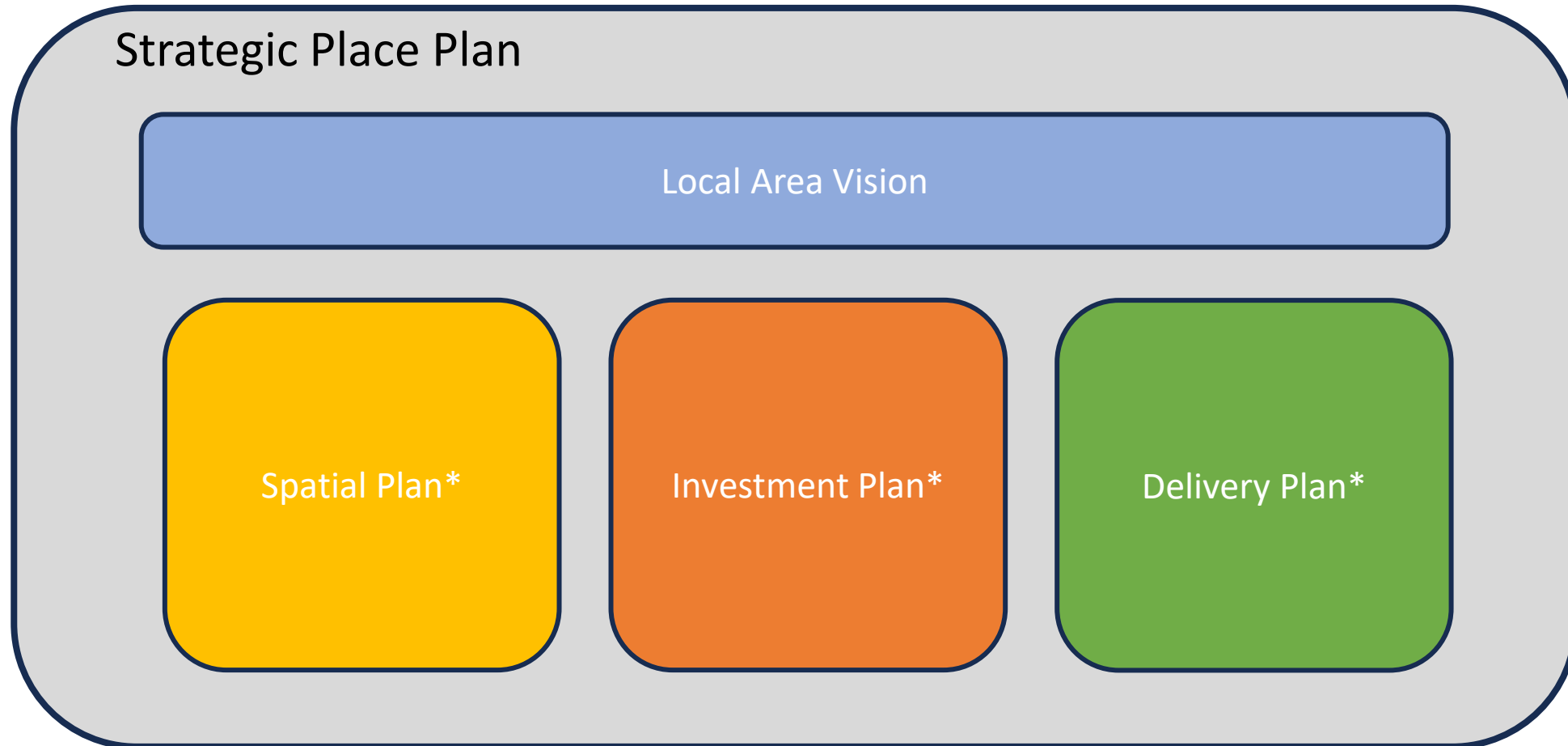
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Strategic Place Plan

Local Area Vision

* As required

Strategic Place Plans



* As required

Strategic Place Plans - process

Page 36

Open
brief

Shape
vision

Consult

Adopt

Delivery
Plan

Strategic Place Plans - process



Open brief

- Direct engagement with Local people and stakeholders to define what they want for their area.
- Open conversation to highlight challenges and constraints
- Wide range of engagement tools

Strategic Place Plans - process

Page 38



Open brief

- Direct engagement with Local people and stakeholders to define what they want for their area.
- Open conversation to highlight challenges and constraints
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Shape vision

- Led by DCC working group
- Stakeholder group develop draft vision
- Developed through a series of workshops
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Strategic Place Plans - process



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- Refine vision based on public engagement
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Strategic Place Plans - process



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Consult

Consult

- Public engagement/co design based on the draft vision
- Use of social media, questionnaire, public event(s)

Adopt

Adopt

- Refine vision based on public engagement
- Cabinet adopt the vision

Delivery Plan

Delivery Plan

- Develop a delivery plan based on adopted vision
- Owned by stakeholder group
- Adopted by Cabinet

Strategic Place Plans - Pilots

Page 42

We are undertaking three pilot SPPs to help us refine the approach, understand the resources needed, and timescales involved.

Spennymoor

- Area chosen due to £20 million Funding allocated directly by the government to Spennymoor through the Long Term Plans for Town programme
- Requirement to submit an Investment Plan to government by 1 August 2024
- £250,000 Govt Capacity funding being used to trial the Strategic Place Plan approach
- Detailed example case study is provided, demonstrating process and progress

Shildon and Newton Aycliffe

- Areas chosen due to National Heritage Lottery Fund committing to starting a 10-year journey with County Durham that will transform the area's heritage, through its new Heritage Places initiative
- Requirement to submit a Strategic Place Plan which will support NHLF bid
- Progress - First Stage Bid for Development Phase Funding additional £250,000 to scope out strategic heritage place priority projects – Submission mid July

Durham City

- Area chosen as detailed in the Inclusive Economic Strategy, agreed by Cabinet December 2022 to create a new vision for the City and delivery framework
- Following a slightly refined process with draft brief underway due to the complexities of the city and partners
- Progress - Engaging internal officers and external stakeholders with alongside existing networks to create a draft City vision and delivery framework

Spennymoor Long Term Plans for Towns (LTPT)

SPP case study

- LTPT backed by £1.1 billion overall, aims to drive the regeneration of 55 towns around the United Kingdom over the long-term through £20m Town Plans.
- **LTPT Will bring together community leaders, businesspeople, and local bodies to forge their town's future together**, alongside the funding needed to deliver for their communities in the long-term.
- Longer-term funding certainty; building local partnerships; having a clear plan for delivery; joint working between central and local government; and involving people and communities from the outset
- Plan should include a 10 year vision and a 3 year investment plan as an annex
10 year vision should be a long-term, strategic document. It should be backed by insights gained through engagement with local people, to create buy-in with the public

10

OUR
PRIORITIES
2
GROW
THE
ECONOMY

OUR LONG TERM PLAN FOR TOWNS

EMPOWERING LOCAL TOWNS TO:

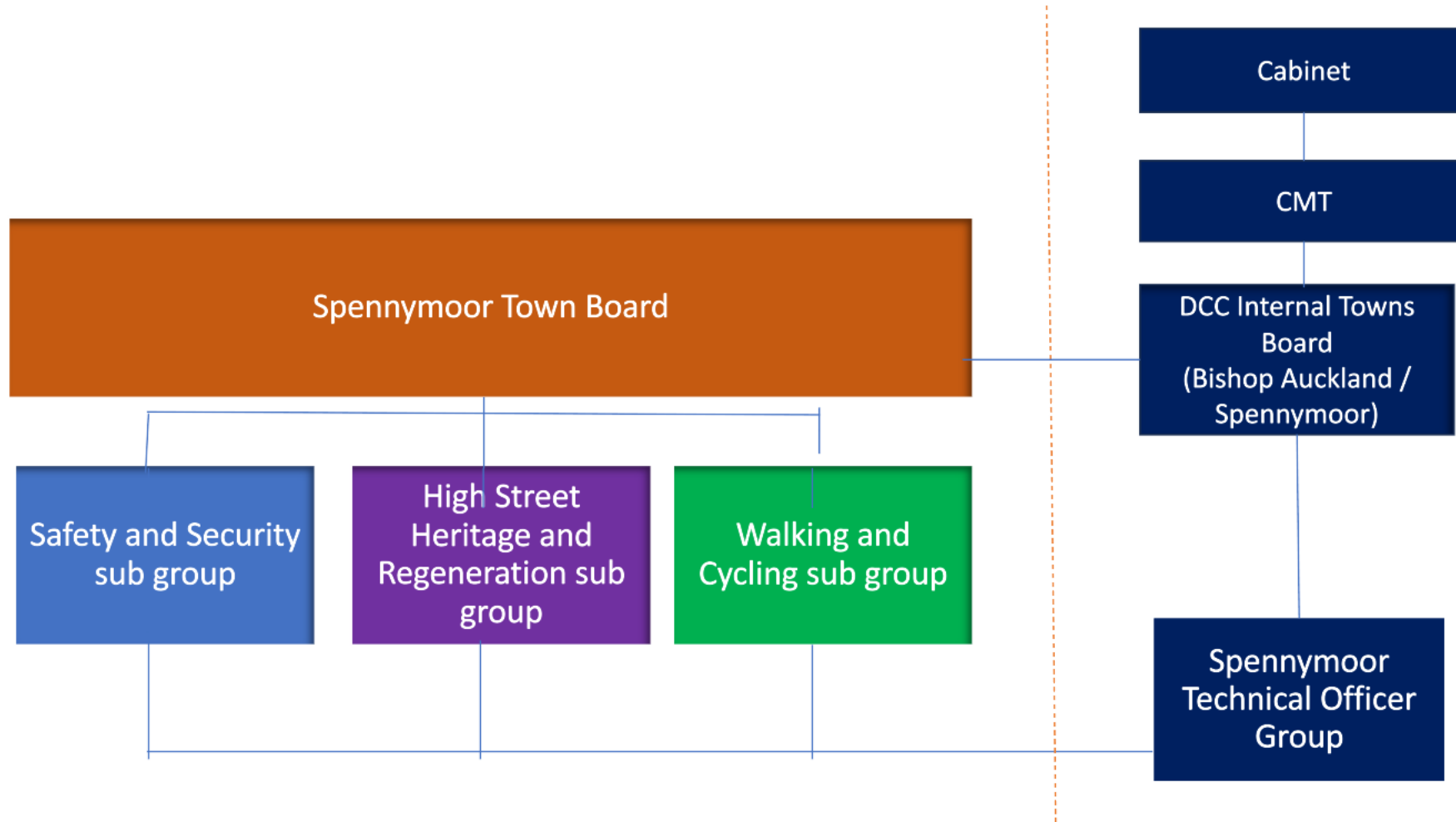
TACKLE CRIME &
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

ENHANCE TOWN CENTRES
& HIGH STREETS

IMPROVE TRANSPORT
AND CONNECTIONS



Spennymoor case study



Spennymoor case study

- Town Board was a requirement to shape co design of the Spennymoor Vision alongside the community and its stakeholders, supporting process of ongoing engagement
- Membership drawn from business, public and Community & Voluntary Sectors
- Specific LTPT requirements around role of Elected officials
- Board operations supported by 3x working groups aligned to programme themes. Populated by board members, local members and other key stakeholders
- DCC inputs – existing and potential, co-ordinated through Technical Officer Group

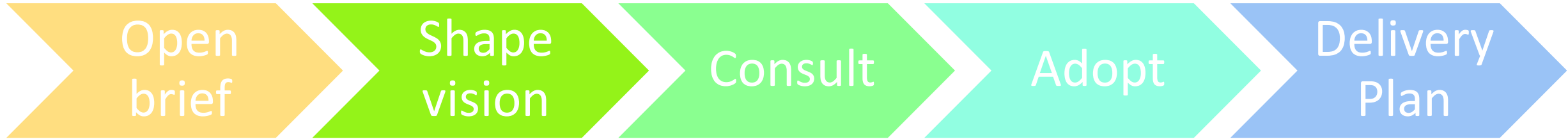


Spennymoor case study – fit with SPP model

The DLUHC LTPT Programme Guidance requires a focus on three themes:

- Highstreets, Heritage and Regeneration
 - Transport and Connectivity
 - Safety and Security
- This provided basis of the open brief, however other SPPs will have greater flexibility
 - Stakeholder group size and representation for SPPs will have further flexibility as opposed to the Spennymoor pilot due to the LTPT Funding/ Key Themes
 - Reviewing the SPPs Model in line with the Spennymoor Approach will aid lessons learned

Spennymoor case study



DLUHC 3 Themes Brief

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- Family Fun Day 1000+;
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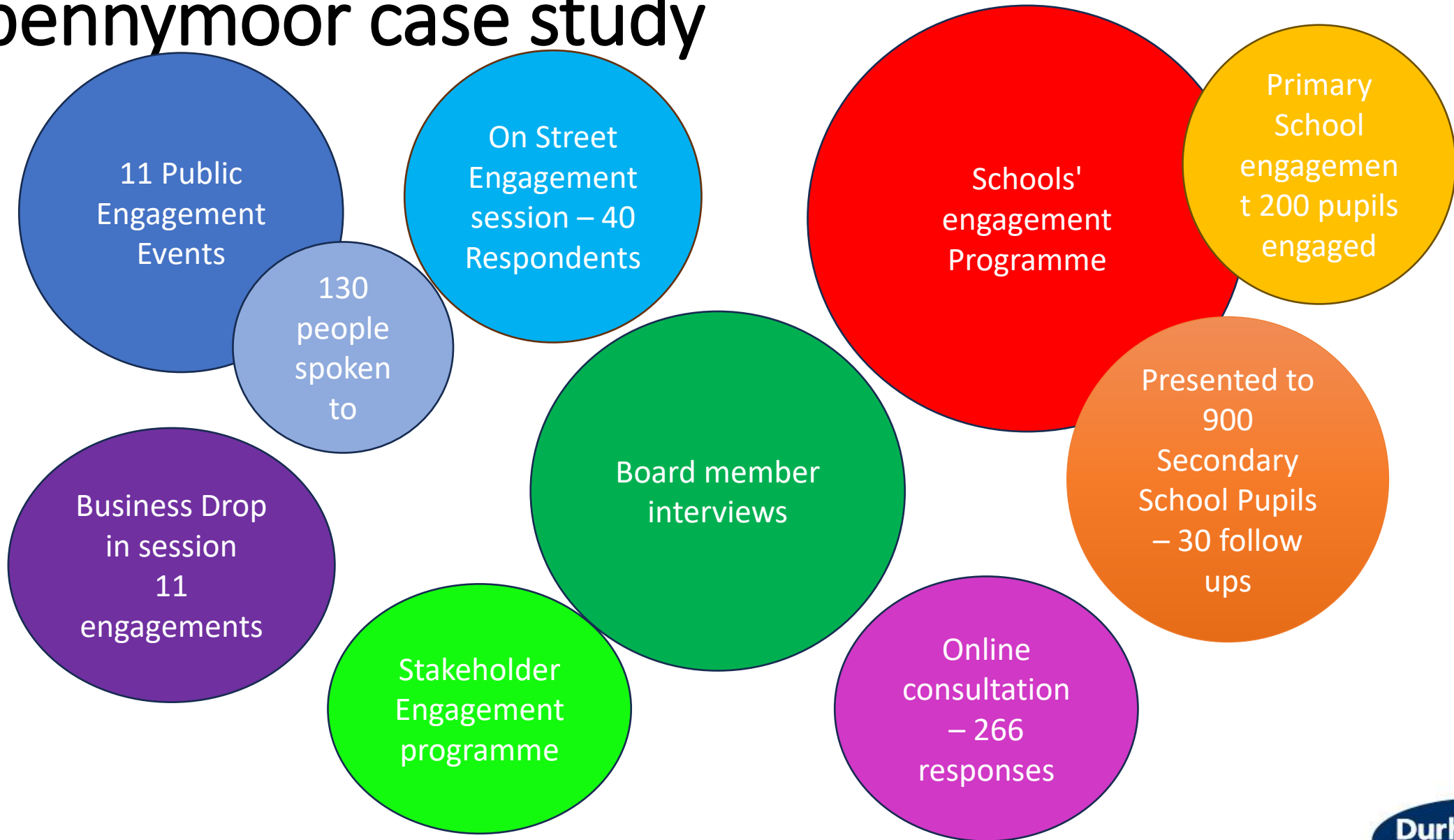
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Spennymoor case study



Spennymoor case study

Timeline

Spennymoor Long Term Plan for Towns		Jan-24	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
		Key Milestones and Tasks							
Governance/Reporting	Brief Local Members (ongoing)	31.1.24							
	ED MT / REG MT / CMT / Cabinet								
	Delegated Decision							w/c 29/7	
Pilot SPP Inception Steps	Production of baseline indicators report - DCC								
	Formation Multi-disciplinary Spennymoor Technical Officer Group								
	Mapping of Community Assets and DCC Land								
	Stakeholder Mapping	26.1.24							
	Communications Plan	29.1.24							
	Webpage (Econ Dev and Comms) - Ongoing		12.2.24						
	Recruit and Advertise Chair and Town Board								
	Recruit and Advertise Spennymoor LTPT Officer	23.1.24							
Open Brief	Procurement - Tender, Evaluation, Appointment of consultant (to support Co Design Phase Workshops)	24.1.24			10.4.24				
Direct Engagement 'Open Conversations' various Tools	Stakeholder Sessions								
	Online Survey								
Shape Vision Led by Town Board & DCC	Establish Spennymoor Town Board & Deputy Chair - 1st Meeting w/c 18.3.24, ongoing meetings			18.3.24	*	*	*	*	*
	Assess Stakeholder Priorities & Aspirations for the 3 Year Town Investment Plan						30.6.24		
	Draft 10 Year Vision and 3 Year Investment Plan, 250 word vision statement							1.7.24 15.7.24	
Consult Revisit Stakeholders	Share and consult on draft vision								
Adopt Refine Vision based on public engagement	Refine and Review draft and sign off Head of Service							22.7.24	
Delivery Plan Owned by Board and DCC	Submit 10 Year Vision and 3 Year Investment Plan								1.8.24

Spennymoor case study

Page 50

Developing the Investment Plan

- Reviewing the community responses has enabled a review of possible interventions for consideration by the Board and inclusion into the Investment Plan
- A Matrix evaluation tool has been developed for the Town Board to support decision making on interventions they may wish to include in the town plan. It is designed to be a useful tool to aid discussion, ensure all aspects of a project are considered and to allow for evidencing a method for decision making if and when scrutinised
- The Matrix includes aligning IES and DLUHC LTPT Themes and “on Menu Interventions”.

Spennymoor case study

Developing a SPPs requires additional data

- Town Centre survey – annual vacancy assessment scheduled with Spennymoor prioritised to fit submission timelines
- Retail and Leisure Gaps and Capacity Study has been commissioned and a report will be available by early July.
- A series of car park surveys have been commissioned to assess car park usage across the town
- Asset & investment mapping – identifying public assets and known planned investments to support the vision submission
- Spatial priorities/ opportunity sites.

Allocating Resources

- There are a series of routes available for seeking and allocating funding:
 - Seek government /other funding – eg Levelling Up Fund bids, devolution
 - Windfall / government funding – eg Stronger Towns /Long Term Plan for Towns / Lottery Heritage Places
 - Deliver where possible with in-house resource
 - Seek Council funding through the budget setting process

Delivery of future Strategic Place Plans

- The ongoing pilots will help refine the approach and determine the exact need for resource and timescale for delivery of each one
- The transfer of the Area Action Partnerships to Economic Development will allow an assessment of the role and resource they can play in developing SPPs
- Future cabinet report will be needed to identify resource and future programme
- Consideration is being given to creating a matrix approach to guide decisions on the programme of future delivery of SPP

Factors for consideration in prioritisation

Page 54

The below is the current thinking on factors to take into account

Level of deprivation

- Applying indices of deprivation to help identify highest areas of need

High Street vacancies

- Targeting the areas with the highest number of high street vacancies

Age of the existing masterplan

- Prioritising areas that have the least up to date masterplans

Settlement size

- Take in to account place size and number of residents impacted

Strategic impact

- Consider the wider catchment area and focus on district centres first

Opportunities and challenges

- Identify places with specific issues that mean they are more likely to attract funding, or have specific issues to address

Questions?

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Economy and Enterprise

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8 July 2024

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update



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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report provides 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 and delivery.

Executive summary

- 2 The Government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in April 2022, as a replacement for the previous European funding arrangements. County Durham has been given a UKSPF allocation of £30,830,618 and an additional £2,803,077 allocation for Multiply – a new adult numeracy programme. Durham County Council (DCC) has been identified as the Lead Local Authority for this funding. Grant is available across three financial years 2022/23 to 2024/25 and can be used to deliver activities under three investment priorities: Communities and Place, Supporting Local Businesses and People and Skills.
- 3 The County also has a further capital allocation of £3.5m through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), a rural top up to UKSPF providing capital grants to address the challenges that businesses and communities in rural areas face.
- 4 To secure the UKSPF allocation, the Government required Lead Local Bodies to develop and submit Investment Plans for approval by 1 August 2022. These investment plans were approved by Government in early December 2022. An Addendum to this was submitted for the Rural England Prosperity Fund at the end of November, and approval of this was received on 6 April 2023.

- 5 Through the County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP) arrangements a wide programme of engagement with a broad range of local and regional stakeholders took place to develop the UKSPF Investment Plan. This was supported by a robust evidence base, which identified local challenges and opportunities which were used to inform and prioritise activities that should be funded using UKSPF, as set out within the Investment Plan.
- 6 The council, as the lead local authority for the UKSPF, Multiply and REPF programmes in County Durham, is responsible for:
- the funding received from Government;
 - allocating the funding (based on the priorities described in the Investment Plan submitted to DLUHC);
 - managing calls for projects and commissioning activities;
 - entering into local funding agreements and contracts with projects;
 - managing and monitoring successful project delivery against objectives and targets;
 - overseeing monitoring, financial claims and other reporting requirements to projects and delivery partners and reporting progress to Government and partners;
 - and ensuring the funding is used in accordance with public spending guidelines and regulations.
- 7 The County Durham Economic Partnership Board (CDEP) has strategic oversight of the programme and has delegated to its Technical Funding Group (TFG) the responsibility of supporting and advising the council on delivery and management of the UKSPF Investment Plan. The Technical Funding Group is chaired by the vice chair of the CDEP Board and includes representation from DCC and key external partners across the three investment priorities. Its membership includes public, private and VCS representatives from the lead authority, local businesses/business support providers, the voluntary sector, education and skills providers, employment experts and providers, and housing representatives. The TFG has met on a regular basis and has been key to the implementation of the UKSPF Programme in County Durham.
- 8 Through effective oversight, governance, and management of the UKSPF programme the full grant of £34,349,306 has been committed to projects (93% is committed to approved projects in delivery, with a further 7% to projects in the final stages of development).

- 9 Currently funding from UKSPF, Multiply and REPF is only confirmed until the end of the current financial year, March 2025. There is therefore a potential gap emerging between UKSPF and any future funding programmes, this presents a significant risk to the ability to continue to deliver vital activities to support the economic development and regeneration of our communities and businesses.

Recommendation(s)

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

Background

- 11 County Durham has a UKSPF allocation of £30.8 million, this is predominantly a revenue grant scheme, with an element of capital funding, and is a replacement for previous European funding programmes following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. The new UKSPF allocation starts at a 90:10 revenue to capital split in 2022/3 which changes to a minimum 80:20 by 2024/25.
- 12 The overarching aim of UKSPF is to build '*pride in place and increasing life chances*' through three core investment priorities: communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.

UKSPF and Rural England Prosperity Fund Implementation

- 13 The UKSPF Investment Plan, which is used to guide investment decisions, was developed through significant engagement with a broad range of local and regional stakeholders. It's underpinned by a robust evidence base, which was developed to identify local challenges and opportunities, included a key statistical data set, feedback from the recent Big Econ-versation, and mapping priorities with the County Durham Vision and Inclusive Economic Strategy - as well as evidence on areas of best practice. Partner engagement also helped identify gaps in provision, looking at what could be done differently and whether there were opportunities to work more collaboratively. This approach has informed the way activities have come forward with partner input helping to co-design activities and maximise synergies across different priorities, which has led to new ways of working to deliver maximum impact under UKSPF.
- 14 The UKSPF Investment Plan aims to harness the opportunities presented by the fund to address economic disparities, uplift communities, and create inclusive economic growth through new and innovative ways of working than previous delivery, fostering more joined up activity and new collaborative partnership delivery. Particular

examples of this include the new Productivity and Growth Programme and Enterprising Durham Framework, which provides new holistic and integrated partnership support at all stages for businesses to start-up, sustain, thrive, and grow in County Durham.

- 15 Since the UKSPF Investment Plan was submitted the Inclusive Economy Strategy has been approved and a Delivery Plan for the strategy has been developed, setting out the actions to be taken in the first two to three years of the Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) to support the achievement of our strategic ambitions. This process and the timing of the strategy and plan has allowed UKSPF to be flexed to deliver a number of the key actions identified in IES delivery plan and address gaps in activities.
- 16 The UKSPF Prospectus also allows UKSPF to be committed through a range of delivery routes and lead local bodies have flexibility over how they deliver the funding, including using a mix of competitive calls for projects (which is the default approach set out in Cabinet Office Grants Standards), procurement, commissioning or delivering some activity through in-house teams.
- 17 This flexibility has been utilised across the Programme and with support from the TFG significant progress has been made to allocate UKSPF, with a range of projects approved and in delivery in line with the Investment Plan. A list of these is attached at Appendix 2. The table provides an outline of the projects that have been approved and shows the key outputs and outcomes that they will deliver.
- 18 Against the grant funding allocation of £34,342,919, (£30,830,618 UKSPF and £3,512,301 Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), £34,349,306 has been committed to projects to date. This can be seen in the table below.

Investment Priority	Current Investment Plan Allocation	Approved/committed
Supporting Local Business	£14,234,434	£14,060,145
Communities and Place	£6,547,281	£6,751,100
People and Skills	£9,650,000	£9,583,929
Rural England Prosperity Fund	£3,512,301	£3,431,108

Management and Administration	£398,903	£398,903
Total	£34,342,919	£34,225,185

- 19 Of the £34,349,306, 93% is committed to approved projects in delivery. A further 7% (£2,324,775) is due to be approved shortly to projects in development. A summary of the activity across the three UKSPF Investment Priorities and REPF is set out below.

Supporting Local Business

- 20 Given the time constraints to deliver activity in Year 1 of UKSPF (2022/23) and the need to avoid duplicating European funded business support programmes that will still be delivering until June 2023 – the Year 1 allocation of funding focused on preparing for the delivery of activities in Years 2 and 3. To prepare this groundwork for future years delivery, two research and facilitation projects were commissioned.
- 21 The first piece of research was **Understanding Rural Durham**, a project to better understand the particular needs of the County’s rural businesses and the extent to which they differ from the needs of those within and near to urban centres. The findings from this work have been used to inform the development of subsequent UKSPF projects.
- 22 The second piece of work was research and facilitation to prepare the ground for creating an integrated partnership delivery approach to supporting enterprise and business start-up in County Durham, known as the **Enterprising Durham Framework**. The recommendations - developed through a series of workshop discussions, an online survey, and in-depth interviews with a range of stakeholders - have been taken forward and are described below.
- 23 **Business Productivity and Growth** - An open call for a partnership project to deliver a business productivity and growth programme, also incorporating REPF funding, to deliver a grant scheme to micro and small rural enterprises was launched in January 2023. Three expressions of interest to deliver the funding were received, and following assessment and consideration by the TFG an application from Business Durham working with Delivery Partners UMi and RTC North has been approved. The Durham Productivity and Growth Programme was launched in September 2023 and has already engaged with 86 businesses.
- 24 The programme is delivered through an integrated partnership approach and is a comprehensive initiative designed to elevate

productivity and foster growth, providing long-term investment and strategic assistance to businesses located in County Durham. By working in partnership with a number of business support providers, this collaborative approach ensures that businesses have access to a wealth of expertise, resources, and support all in one place. Following an initial meeting and diagnostic assessment, businesses are seamlessly referred to the appropriate programme support channels. This process will be illustrated in the example given in the presentation that accompanies this report.

- 25 **In-TUNE** - A joint call with the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) was launched in February 2023 to deliver Innovation and R&D activity. The In-Tune project, led by Durham University working with Newcastle University, Northumbria University, Sunderland University and CPI, was approved in August 2023. Durham County Council have agreed a Co-operation Agreement with NTCA and have contracted with Durham University on their behalf. The project had a successful launch and is in delivery, targeting innovation and commercialisation support across the North of Tyne and County Durham areas to support business productivity, innovation, and spin-out formation.
- 26 **Enterprising Durham Implementation** – The Enterprising Durham Framework recommended that ‘Business Durham and North East Enterprise Agencies Limited (NEEAL) should now lead the discussion to formalise the model for an integrated partnership’. The TFG were supportive of this approach and DCC commissioned Business Durham through a ‘direct delivery’ approach, working with NEEAL as delivery partner, to develop and deliver a programme of enterprise and animation across County Durham, with a wide range of other partners. The Delivery Plan for this activity has recently been approved and will deliver across three themes – Enterprising People; Enterprising Start Ups and Enterprising Places. This method of delivery is an innovative and new way of delivering start up support in the County, moving from a ‘my customer’ approach to an ‘our customer’ approach which has been strongly welcomed by the Partnership.
- 27 **Innovation activities** – work continues to develop and procure a range of schemes that will support increasing innovation and R&D of County Durham businesses which are key areas that have been identified through the IES Delivery Plan process by the Productivity and Innovation Working Groups. These include targeted sector growth plans; a sector-led innovation challenge and brokerage activities to increase the uptake of national innovation programmes.
- 28 Activity currently underway includes a Durham University **SME Internship Programme** where skilled students/graduates are placed into full-time internships with County Durham SMEs who wish to move

into new markets and develop new products, thereby improving their innovation. The placements are for a period of up to 3 months. A **Changing Innovation Mindsets** programme is being developed by Durham University which will develop a Capability Opportunity Motivation – Behaviour (COM-B) model which will assess the innovation performance across the County; map current offers and activity using key data; collect data and research the motivational drivers of innovation activities; analyse the evidence to identify opportunities for modifying engagement behaviours and innovation mindsets. This will lead to tailored recommendations being made for actions and interventions to extend the reach and uptake of innovation support across all levels in County Durham. In addition, CPI are developing a transformative **Deep Tech Inward Investment Strategy** in order to bring these types of companies into County Durham. The first of three **Targeted Sector Growth Plans** focused on Advanced Manufacturing has been procured, with two others focused on the county's key sectors of Life Sciences and Green Tech due to be procured shortly.

Communities and Place

- 29 In line with the Investment Plan, activities have been developed around the intervention areas of Town Centre vitality, Community Infrastructure, Arts / Culture and Creativity, Place Branding, Volunteering and Social action and Cost of Living. Within Year 1 the UKSPF supported initiatives that complemented the council's Towns and Villages programme, supporting activity that drives footfall and revitalising towns and village centres.
- 30 **Community Infrastructure** - This project aims to increase community resilience and sustainability through a 'co-design' process with communities. The co-design programme will run alongside a delivery programme for Community Infrastructure Framework, led by the council's Economic Development Service, and is focused on investment in and access to community assets and buildings. The co-design process helps to understand the needs and opportunities for community assets, identify potential interventions, and inform the delivery of investment in these assets. This will ensure that funding mechanisms are designed to ensure accessible delivery to local civil society and community groups, with a particular focus on those groups across rural Durham. This will ensure that communities define investment in their areas whilst also retaining an economic development focus. The delivery of the Community Infrastructure project, which incorporates a significant investment of REPF, also has volunteering opportunities and social action as a cross cutting activity and uses County Durham Together's vision and governance throughout its implementation.

- 31 **Place Branding** - Investment has been made into a Place Branding project, led by Visit County Durham, which will enable the development of a brand for County Durham, building on perceptions research that is currently being undertaken. The place brand will target audiences essential for economic success, ensuring the county has a strong identity both within the region and beyond, whilst providing a competitive edge for securing investment. The new brand will be based on a sound knowledge of existing external perceptions of the county from both a business and visitor perspective, internal perceptions of the county and a strong understanding of the strengths of County Durham as a place in which to live, visit and work.
- 32 **Town Centre Vitality** - A project has also been developed and approved which will deliver a series of cultural engagement events across the County for the next two years, including celebrations for Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe 75th anniversaries. Running alongside the events will be a programme of specialist markets and a pilot wayfinding project to enhance the visitor experience and enhance the vitality of town centres by encouraging people to dwell longer and return.
- 33 **Place Labs** – Place Labs are local cultural hubs that support communities to develop creative programmes, practice, and places. They were originally designed as part of the Durham 2025 UK City of Culture bid with further pilot activity and concept development undertaken using DCMS funding in 2022 and 2023. The UKSPF funding will support the transition of 3 pilot place labs (Durham City, Peterlee & Durham Dales) into full operation and the feasibility and set up of 3 further place labs in Stanley, Shildon, and a virtual/digital place lab.
- 34 **Poverty Alleviation** – Led by the council’s Poverty Action Steering Group and informed by the overarching vision of the Poverty Action Strategy and Plan, a UKSPF proposal has recently been approved which will build upon the significant work already successfully delivered and has been developed in response to the evidence and need and demand that has been identified but cannot be funded by the council moving forward. Within the project are activities to address Food Poverty, Welfare Advice and guidance, Financial inclusion, Fun and Food School Holiday activities. These activities will be informed through purchasing of datasets and research resources and co-ordinated with other UKSPF projects by a Poverty Action Co-ordinator.

People and Skills

- 35 When the UKSPF Prospectus was issued and investment plans submitted, government guidance stated that UKSPF could not fund this investment priority until Year 3 (2024/25). One caveat to this was that

UKSPF could be used to support Voluntary and Community Service (VCS) organisations that were currently delivering European funded activity and that was likely to remain a UKSPF funded priority, and the organisation would be placed at risk due to the funding ending. Provision was made within County Durham Investment Plan for the continuation of existing European funded VSC activity 'at risk' in Years 1 and 2 as follows:

- Year 1 - Reaching Out Across Durham (ROAD), delivered by Groundwork North East and Cumbria.
- Years 1 and 2 – ROAD and VCS elements of the Durham Works Programme.

- 36 On 23 March 2023, the government removed its restriction that UKSPF could only be spent in Year 3 (2024/25) for non-Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) People and Skills activity. This enabled lead authorities to allocate UKSPF to any people and skills intervention to an individual organisation, partnership, or any delivery partner during the early years of the fund.
- 37 The transition from European funding to UKSPF for People and Skills is particularly challenging, representing a significant reduction and change in how employability and skills support is provided. In order to minimise the disruption - and lay foundations for the future evolution of the service - the focus has been on maintaining the existing successful partnership delivery infrastructure and expertise in the County and continuity of service delivery across the sector. Consequently, the council's Progression and Learning function, who have led a delivery partnership for employment support since 2015 using European funding, are continuing to lead on the delivery of the Employment Support and Skills Support in County Durham. These projects will be delivered in partnership with VCS delivery partners and other subcontractors. These activities will dovetail with the ending of European Social Fund activity in December 2023.
- 38 **Employment Support** - The Employment Support project in County Durham has been designed to ensure that residents opportunities in the labour market are improved, and to support the ongoing growth of the County's economy. Delivery will focus on three areas of activity. Firstly, individual Key Worker support provision for economically inactive adults; inactive adults with learning difficulties and disabilities; those with poor mental health; and those from other key vulnerable groups. Secondly, support for employers to give them the confidence to create jobs for people furthest from the labour market and to retain existing staff who may have developed support needs or require assistance with workplace progression. Thirdly, support for those who

are in work but whose jobs are vulnerable as a result of low pay, zero hours, or temporary contracts for example.

- 39 **Skills Support** - The Skills Support in County Durham project forms part of a co-ordinated approach to improve skills across the county, in order to contribute towards higher levels of economic inclusion, productivity and economic growth. This project will complement existing activity and will specifically focus on:
- Improving literacy and verbal communication skills of individuals through a new 'Communicate' programme.
 - Upskilling and retraining employees through flexible skills support programmes.
 - Providing skills support for individuals who are experiencing skills barriers to their progression and who reside in areas impacted by increased levels of deprivation and/or rural isolation.
- 40 **Careers Framework** - In addition to the provision of ongoing services, the flexibility afforded by UKSPF has allowed the development of a new careers offer in direct response to long identified gaps in provision. This was developed through the IES Delivery Plan process, and a paper was presented to the TFG on the 25th September, which agreed that a piece of work would be commissioned to create an innovative approach to support the Careers Education, Information and Guidance (CEIAG) offer for all ages across County Durham. Through this work, the current CEIAG offers will be researched and all stakeholders will be brought together to share views and discuss ways in which the CEIAG offer could be improved. A report will be produced which will set out the findings and highlight what a new 'Careers Framework' could offer for County Durham residents.

Multiply

- 41 In addition to the main UKSPF programme, the government allocated £2.8m to County Durham to deliver the Multiply programme. This project is delivered by DurhamLearn and 11 partners aims to enhance adult numeracy skills, recognising their critical role in daily life and employment. The project offers targeted support to adults needing to improve their mathematical abilities. The project seeks to deliver engaging, flexible, and learner-led programs, particularly targeting high-deprivation areas where participation in basic skills is low, working with community organisations, employers and schools to engage those hardest to reach.
- 42 The Multiply project employs a multifaceted approach, including bespoke learning programs, flexible learning formats, community

outreach, and collaboration with primary schools. Significant outcomes include increased participation, enhanced workplace numeracy skills, progression to further education, increased confidence and better support for children's education.

REPF – Tourism Assets and Infrastructure Improvements

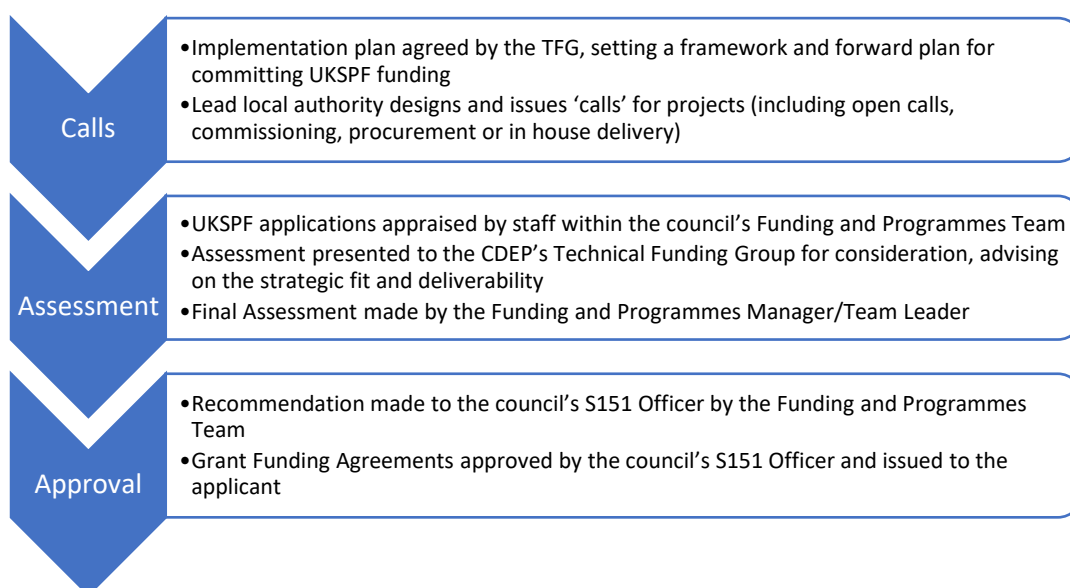
- 43 In addition to the REPF that has been approved within wider UKSPF investments, an open call was launched in July 2023 for projects to deliver capital investments to develop, extend, restore, or refurbish local tourist assets and infrastructure to improve visitor experiences. The minimum grant request was £50k, with a maximum of £100k. A total budget of £600k was allocated for this call.
- 44 23 Expression of Interest (EOIs) forms were received by the deadline of 14th August 2023. These EOIs were assessed, and the TFG were presented with the findings. Of the 23, 9 EOIs were signposted to the Business Productivity and Growth Programme as they did not sufficiently align with the call criteria regarding tourist assets or infrastructure.
- 45 Following a period of project development undertaken by the UKSPF Team with the project applicants, 9 Full Applications were received totalling £760,703 by 17th November 2023 and assessments and prioritisation on these were concluded by 21st December 2023.
- 46 The prioritisation exercise resulted in seven applications being approved totalling £608,578, this was slightly above the call value of £600,000. One project has subsequently withdrawn however, with £532,773 committed to approved projects in delivery, the remaining balance has been reallocated within the programme.

Governance

- 47 Government guidance recognises a role for local partners in the governance of UKSPF. It specifies that “comprehensive and balanced local partnerships will be a core component of how the Fund is administered locally and will form an essential part of monitoring and reporting for the Fund over the funds 3 year duration” and that “once (investment) plans are approved, partners should be asked to provide advice on strategic fit and deliverability – taking care to avoid conflicts of interest. This will ensure that Fund investments complement other activities in the area and meets Fund and local objectives.”
- 48 Over the past 20 years, the County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP) has regularly fulfilled this role in developing funding

programmes. The partnership's membership has been enhanced, with broader representation to reflect the guidance, including all the local MPs, and a CDEP+ model has been established for the purposes of UKSPF.

- 49 The purpose of the CDEP+ Board is to advise, support, challenge and influence the delivery of UKSPF and REPF in County Durham.
- 50 The Board advise on the design, commissioning, and performance management of UKSPF and REPF in County Durham. Specifically, it is responsible for advising on the strategic fit and deliverability of UKSPF and REPF investment activities during the programme period - taking care to avoid conflicts of interest. This ensures that UKSPF and REPF investments meet both the fund and local objectives by complementing other activities and opportunities in County Durham.
- 51 At an operational level, it has been agreed that this function is delegated to the Partnership's Technical Funding Group. It acts on behalf of the CDEP+ Board, to provide technical advice on strategic fit and deliverability and reports to the Board on a six-monthly basis.
- 52 These working arrangements allow the Board and its TFG to fulfil the roles expected of it, whilst recognising that assessing and approving applications for funding lies within the remit of the Lead Local Authority.
- 53 Within the council, the Lead Local Authority function is being undertaken by its Funding and Programmes Team within the Regeneration, Economy, and Growth (REG) directorate, utilising its considerable experience of delivering many externally funded regeneration programmes. It leads on managing and monitoring the UKSPF programme, and committing funding in line with the process outlined below:



Performance Management and Monitoring

- 54 DLUHC requires regular reporting to update on commitments, spend and achievement of outputs and outcomes. All progress reports and plans need to be signed off by the lead local authority Chief Finance Officer.
- 55 Building on experience of delivering other externally funded programmes, the Funding and Programmes Team has established programme management systems to manage and monitor the UKSPF. In addition, the team has developed robust monitoring and audit arrangements, including implementation quarterly claims and collating audit documentation (checking invoices and bank statements). Internal Audit are also engaged with the team and will be carrying out an assurance visit in early 2024. This will be completed before the year end reporting is submitted to Government.

Evaluation

- 56 DLUHC have set out their plan for evaluation of the UKSPF at a National Level. This includes undertaking Randomised Control Trials using appropriately selected projects; an intervention led evaluation looking at specific types of projects; a place based evaluation, using a sample of Local Authority areas; and a National Programme level evaluation. The Employment Support in County Durham project has been selected as part of the intervention led evaluation and the County Durham programme as a whole has been chosen as a place based case study.
- 57 County Durham partners are keen to learn from the approach that has been taken with the UKSPF in County Durham and have therefore decided to undertake a local longitudinal evaluation. In particular, this evaluation will provide an understanding of the wider benefits the approach has achieved for County Durham, in particular how that has been impacted by:
- (a) exploiting synergies between areas of activity;
 - (b) the use of a 'Theory of Change' model (Why, Who, How, What?);
 - (c) using the partnership approach to lever in additional funding streams, or to influence "asks" for future funding;
 - (d) maximising return on investment (including the return on the investment of partner time); and

- (e) taking full advantage of the combined involvement of key public, private and third sector partners throughout design and implementation.

Continuation of UKSPF

- 58 The future of UKSPF is unclear beyond the end of this current financial year. Lack of confirmation on the continuation of this funding and the amount local areas will receive poses a significant risk to the ability to deliver current UKSPF funded activities like employment support to residents and business growth activities. This impact will be felt as early as Summer 2024 as projects start to prepare for curtailing activity without any confirmation of future funding, and with any gap between funding regimes and the programmes they support will potentially result in the people, expertise, infrastructure and synergies between them being lost.
- 59 A significant number of the actions in the IES are currently being delivered through utilising the County's allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Funding. The CDEP has worked together as a partnership to ensure that UKSPF funding is being used effectively, joining up delivery to maximise collaboration and impact for the county's communities and businesses. Developing and mobilising these new approaches to delivery has taken considerable time and effort from partners and we are already seeing the benefits that are starting to flow from this. A gap in funding or funding reduction would jeopardise our ability to deliver on the ambition and actions identified in the Inclusive Economic Strategy.
- 60 The CDEP is advocating for at least a one-year bridging allocation to allow UKSPF funded activity to be continued. It has been lobbying for continuation funding of at least a year to be confirmed as soon as possible. This would safeguard investment into local areas to avoid the risk of losing expertise and project infrastructure, but more importantly avoid a gap in activity and support for County Durham residents and businesses.

Conclusion

- 61 The UKSPF presents a significant investment to support the development of the county's economy and delivery of its Inclusive Economic Strategy.
- 62 Considerable progress has been made in committing UKSPF resources in line with the Investment Plan, including delivering against the priorities within the county's Inclusive Economy Strategy and addressing several of the council's main objectives.

63 Strong governance and performance managements arrangements are in place to implement the programme, utilising the partnership arrangements through the County Durham Economic Partnership, and supported by the council's Funding and Programme team.

Background papers

[E&EOSC Paper, UKSPF Update, 6 November 2023](#)

[Cabinet Paper, UKSPF, 13 July 2022](#)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Durham County Council as Lead local authority has received a grant determination letter and Memorandum of Understanding setting out Fund requirements and obligations from DLUHC for UKSPF.

The council must comply with subsidy control rules for administering and awarding grant funding through UKSPF. The granting of public subsidies to private enterprise is now regulated by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (UK-EU TCA). It will be important to ensure that UKSPF and REPF funding as implemented adopts and follows the subsidy control rules in any payment to projects.

Internal rules relating to grant and procurement (in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which remain in force) will also need to be followed.

Finance

In 2022-23 and 2023-24 the UKSPF allocations were paid in advance. We will claim for all other resource spent by 31 March 2025 with the final UKSPF return. As with the recent Future High Street and Stronger Towns Funds we have received a grant determination letter and Memorandum of Understanding setting out Fund requirements and obligations.

No formal requirement exists for matched funding for UKSPF, however the emerging investment plan should demonstrate alignment with existing funding and care will be taken not to create further funding pressures.

Consultation

The Prospectus set out the requirements for broad inputs from stakeholders into both the development of the UKSPF Investment Plan and REPF Addendum and ongoing management and implementation of programme. A strong partnership approach has been adopted, through the existing CDEP+ arrangements. In the development of the Investment Plan broad stakeholder engagement took place, with partner events held in July and October 2022, as well as thematic working groups. The consultation material from the recent Our Big Econversation has also informed the evidence base used to develop the UKSPF Investment Plan and REPF addendum. Stakeholder engagement is ongoing through the CDEP+ Board arrangements and its Technical Funding Group.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The implications of the Public Sector Equality Duty are identified as a cross cutting theme throughout the UKSPF. All project proposals in appraisal will review the assessment impact and whether they have a positive or neutral impact on the duty.

Climate Change

The Net zero agenda is a further cross cutting aspect of UKSPF and REPF. Supporting businesses and communities work towards net zero has emerged as priorities within the areas of focus for funding. It is expected that some of the interventions will contribute positively to the net zero. All project proposals in appraisal will be asked to provide evidence on environment impact and longer-term sustainability.

Human Rights

None identified.

Crime and Disorder

None identified.

Staffing

The administration of UKSPF requires additional staffing input. The Prospectus identifies up to 4% of the programme allocation is available to support administration of the programme and proposals for administration were developed alongside the investment plan. Staff have been appointed within the Funding and Programmes Team to manage and monitor the programme using a more modest budget than 4% would allow.

Accommodation

N/A.

Risk

Overall, there is a significant risk that there will be considerably less funding going forward to support locally managed and delivered jobs and growth activity across County Durham by comparison with previous years.

There are also risks associated with the delivery of the UKSPF/REPF programme. Guidance published by the Government set out the headline criteria for the scheme, including the responsibilities of the council in managing the grant. This includes eligibility, delivery, and monitoring processes. Other risks include fraud however through a robust application

process projects can be assessed before grant is awarded. The council has a successful track record in managing and delivering externally funded programmes over the last fifteen years and the UKSPF/REPF programme implementation will build on these processes.

Procurement

Activity delivered through UKSPF could include a mix of direct delivery, procurement, and commissioned services. Corporate procurement colleagues are engaged in the process to ensure the council delivers funding in-line with the Fund's procurement guidance. As the Lead local Authority, the council must ensure all proposed investment is compliant with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and must follow the council's constitution and grant rules, processes, and procedures where relevant.

Appendix 2: UKSPF Implementation

Investment Priority - Supporting Local Business

Investment Plan Focus

- Activities that increase productivity within the county, providing a broad business support offer, strengthening the local business ecosystems, and providing support at all stages for businesses to start, sustain, grow, and innovate. This includes social enterprise development linked to community wealth building;
- Fostering of innovation and growth including creating business accelerator programmes, incubators, and workspace provision;
- Green technology and support for decarbonisation, recognising the County's climate change emergency. There will also be a focus on nurturing the county's sector specialisms and clusters, such as advanced manufacturing and engineering, as well as those sectors typically not as well supported under previous funding.

Implementation

Project Period	Name of Project	Project Sponsor	Project Summary	UKSPF	Stage	Key Outputs	Key Outcomes
Year 1 Jan 23 – Mar 23	Enterprising Durham Framework Development	Lead Authority procured activity – Contractor - Ideas for Change Consulting Ltd	To carry out a research and facilitation piece of work to prepare the ground for creating an integrated partnership delivery approach to supporting enterprise and business start-up in County Durham	Revenue £58,171	Delivery completed	1 Feasibility Study produced	n/a

Year 1 Feb 23 – Mar 23	Understanding Rural Durham	Lead Authority procured activity – Contractor - University of Newcastle upon Tyne	To commission a piece of research work to understand better the particular needs of the County's rural businesses and address gaps in knowledge and update baseline on the needs and opportunities within the rural economy	Revenue £29,199	Delivery completed	1 Feasibility Study produced	n/a
Year 2 & 3 Jun 23 – Mar 25	Durham Productivity & Growth Programme	Durham County Council (Business Durham) led consortium with RTC and UMi	To provide a single coordinated package of support for businesses at all stages of their development to sustain and grow, to be delivered in collaboration with identified delivery partners.	£8.16 million (Rev and Capital) of which £1.617m is REPF)	In delivery	900 Businesses supported 250 Businesses receiving grants	193 Jobs created
Year 2 & 3 Apr 23 – Mar 25	In-TUNE Innovating Together – Universities in the North-East	Durham University led consortium	A collaborative regional project led by Durham University in partnership with Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland Universities and CPI to deliver targeted innovation and commercialisation support across the North of Tyne and Durham areas supporting business productivity, innovation, and spin-out formation.	£2 million	In delivery	121 Businesses receiving support 75 potential entrepreneurs supported	125 organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity

Year 2 & 3 Sept 23 – Mar 25	Enterprising Durham Framework Delivery	Durham County Council (Business Durham) led consortium with NEEAL	New integrated and coordinated package of support for entrepreneurs, start-ups, and social enterprises, through the early stages of development and growth.	£3,167,999	In delivery	600 people engaged 300 potential entrepreneurs supported	150 new businesses created 100 jobs created
Year 2 & 3 Jan 24 – Mar 25	SME Internships Programme	Durham University	The purpose of the Internships Programme would be to place up to 25 skilled students/graduates into full-time internships with local SMEs for periods of up to 3 months.	£175,000	In delivery	20 businesses receiving non-financial support 25 businesses receiving grants	6 businesses with improved productivity 10 businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes
Year 2 & 3 Jan 24 – April 24	Deep Tech Inward Investment Strategy	CPI	A project to develop a transformative deep tech inward investment strategy in order to bring these types of companies into County Durham.	£30,000	In delivery	1 Feasibility study	
Year 2 & 3 Jan 24 – Mar 25	Changing Innovation Mindsets in County Durham	Durham University	A project to develop a COM-B model to change innovation mindsets in County Durham	£89,775	In delivery	1 Feasibility study	
In development: Proposals to support business space infrastructure and further activity to support innovation and R+D.							

Investment Priority - Communities and Place

Investment Plan Focus

The County Durham UKSPF Investment Plan proposed the following areas of focus under the Communities and Place Investment Priority:

- Investment to support improvements to town centres and high streets, stimulating vitality in these areas. Improvements to community and neighbourhood infrastructure will also be prioritised, including measures to increase community resilience, address digital exclusion and improve green infrastructure at a local level.
- Support for the wider promotion of the County, building on the work undertaken to support the County of Culture programme, raising the profile of the County, and its culture, tourism and heritage offer to encourage people to visit and explore the area. This will be supplemented with activities that support local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, including events.
- A strong community spirit exists within the county, building on this a focus of activity is to support impactful volunteering and social action projects, particularly those that maximise impact by delivering community infrastructure and environmental improvement schemes, while also mobilising and engaging people to help improve access to employment and provide wider health and well-being benefits. Capacity building to support the delivery of this will be built in. This activity will also include a focus on preventative activities for young people to address NEETs.

Implementation

Project Period	Name of Project	Project Sponsor	Project Summary	UKSPF	Stage	Key Outputs	Key Outcomes
Year 1 Apr 22 – Mar 23	Towns and Villages activity	Durham County Council (Economic Development)	New and enhanced public realm space at Spennymoor New build community centre at Lowes Barn Recreation Ground	Capital £607,021	Delivery completed	1 Facility supported 220m2 public realm created or improved 3,908m2 commercial buildings	45 Volunteering opportunities supported 37 Jobs safeguarded

			Targeted business support in improving their retail premises			developed/ improved	
Year 1 Oct 22 – Mar 23	Winter Wonders	Durham County Council (Culture, Sport, and Tourism)	To deliver a programme of cultural engagement projects and performance events in 12 towns/villages across County Durham	£58,008	Delivery completed	33 Local events supported	5219 people reached
Year 2 & 3 Sept 23 – Mar 25	Community Infrastructure	Durham County Council (Economic Development)	This is an integrated package which includes a number of elements proposed which will be developed and delivered as part of a partnership framework, with a key focus on improving community resilience ensuring sustainability and viability.	£5,239,275 (of which £1.3m is from REPF)	In delivery	37,500 people reached 60 volunteering opportunities supported 25 facilities supported	50 jobs safeguarded 15% increase in take up of energy efficiency measures 60 volunteering numbers as a result of support
Year 2 & 3 Oct 23 – Mar 25	Place Branding	Durham County Council (Visit County Durham)	This project will develop a place brand for County Durham that will target audiences essential for economic success, ensuring the county has a strong identity both within the region and beyond, whilst providing	£200,000	In delivery	500 organisations receiving non- financial support	5% increase in visitor numbers

			a competitive edge for securing investment. The project will also undertake stakeholder engagement and include Brand Activation.			1,000 people reached	
Year 2 & 3 Sept 23 – Mar 25	Town Centre Vitality	Durham County Council (Culture, Sport, and Tourism)	This project will deliver a series of cultural engagement events across the County including celebrations for Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe 75 th anniversaries. There will also be a programme of specialist markets and a pilot wayfinding project to enhance the visitor experience and enhance the vitality of town centres by encouraging people to dwell longer and return.	£349,000	In delivery	13 neighbourhood improvements undertaken 12,830 people reached 27 Local Events supported	114 community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes supported Increased footfall of 5,600
Year 2 & 3 Jan 24 – Mar 25	Place Labs	Durham County Council (Culture, Sport, and Tourism)	Place Labs are local cultural hubs that support communities to develop creative programmes, practice, and places.	£565,237	In delivery	9,300 people reached 30 organisations receiving grants 134 local events supported	15 community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support as a result of support 268 volunteering

							opportunities created 150 increased visitors
Year 2 & 3 Feb 24 – Mar 25	Poverty Alleviation	Durham County Council (Resources – Transactional and Customer Services)	A package of activity covering a range of poverty alleviation measures including co-ordination and investment in data and research to inform the targeting.	£998,000	In delivery	13,400 people reached 24 volunteering opportunities supported 9 local events supported	13,400 more users of facilities
Year 2 & 3 Dec 23 – Mar 25	REPF Rural Tourism	Range of project sponsors	This is a call for capital projects to develop, extend, restore, or refurbish local tourist assets and infrastructure to improve visitor experiences.	£532,773	In delivery	4,000 more visitors 27 volunteering opportunities supported 8 tourism assets created or improved	10,445m2 of land made wheelchair accessible 4,000 people with improved perception of attractions and improved experience

Investment Priority - People and Skills

Investment Plan Focus

- Providing a broad employment support offer, supporting inclusivity through tailored support, particularly for young people and adults from vulnerable groups to address their barriers to work and who have become disengaged from the labour market.
- There will be a focus on activities to increase basic skills, which will also provide wrap around support to enhance and complement the Multiply programme offer.
- There will be a broad skills support offer for the workforce, including skills support for redundancy. The offer will be adaptable to respond to sector pressures as identified through the emerging Inclusive Economic Strategy and meet the needs of growth sectors, aiming to address skills shortages. This will include for example, provision for green skills and those needed within local carbon sectors.

Implementation

When the UKSPF Prospectus was issued government guidance stated that funding for this investment priority could not start until Year 3 (2024-2025). One caveat to this is that UKSPF could support VCS organisations currently delivering ESF activity that would be at risk due to funding ending, and where it is a priority for this activity to continue. Provision was made within County Durham's UKSPF Investment Plan for the continuation of existing ESF funded VCS activity 'at risk' in Years 1 and 2.

On 23 March 2023, government changed this original guidance, removing the restriction that UKSPF could only be used in Year 3 for non-VCS delivered activity and activity has now been advanced into Year 2 (2023/24) to avoid gaps in provision of employment and skills support.

Project Period	Name of Project	Project Sponsor	Project Summary	UKSPF	Stage	Key Outputs	Key Outcomes
Year 1 Jan 23 – Mar 24	ROAD Continuation	Groundwork NE & Cumbria	The project is to engage and support those who are hardest to reach across the county in breaking down barriers to employment and	Revenue £465,139	Complete	89 economically inactive people engaging	24 people gaining a qualification 49 people with reduced

	(previously funded through ESF)		to move participants closer to the labour market			29 volunteering opportunities	barriers to participation
Year 2 & 3 Jan 24 - March 25	Employment Support in County Durham	Durham County Council (Progression and Learning)	A project to ensure that residents improve their opportunities in the labour market and support the ongoing growth of the County's economy.	£5,120,000	In delivery	1450 economically inactive people engaging 900 people receiving support to sustain employment	800 people reporting increased employability 150 people sustaining employment for 6 months
Year 2 & 3 Oct 23 – March 25	Skills Support in County Durham	Durham County Council (Progression and Learning)	A co-ordinated approach to improve skills across the county, in order to contribute towards higher levels of economic inclusion, productivity and economic growth.	£4,000,000	In delivery	1300 people supported to participate in education 750 people supported to engage in life skills	300 people in employment 986 people with reduced barriers to participation
Year 2 & 3 March 2024 – March 25	Careers Framework	Lead Authority/Business Durham procured activity – Contractor – to be confirmed	Through this work, the current CEIAG offers will be researched and all stakeholders will be brought together to share views and discuss ways in which the CEIAG offer could be improved.	£79,905	In delivery		

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**Economy and Enterprise
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



8 July 2024

**Refresh of the Work Programme
2024/25 for Economy and
Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

Report of Helen Bradley, Director of Legal and Democratic Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (E&E OSC) with an updated draft work programme for 2024/25.

Executive summary

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

Recommendations

- 5 The E&E OSC is recommended to:

- a) Receive and comment on the proposed draft work programme for 2024/25 (copy attached at appendix 2).
- b) Agree the E&E OSC work programme for 2024/25 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues.
- c) Consider identifying a topic for future light touch review activity.

Background

- 6 Scrutiny Committees adapted to the change during the pandemic and some of these adaptations have become a part of business as usual for the committee such as briefing reports being used to provide information to members of the committee and the more recent addition of informal information sessions. The E&E OSC work programme is refreshed annually and takes into consideration the priorities of the Committee and areas identified by the service.
- 7 The current overview and scrutiny committees work programmes are informed by:
 - County Durham Vision 2035
 - Council Plan
 - Cabinet's Notice of Key Decisions
 - Partnership plans and strategies
 - Performance and budgetary control data
 - Changes in government legislation
 - Key questions for improving performance
 - Local priorities.
- 8 The County Durham Partnership agreed a Vision for County Durham 2035 which sets out strategic direction and what we would like to achieve over the next 15 years and is written around three broad ambitions for the people of County Durham.
 - More and better jobs
 - People live long and independent lives
 - Connected communities
- 9 Each ambition contains a number of objectives together with some council specific objectives. Following the refresh of the Council Plan in February 2024, it is now structured around five themes which reflect our contribution towards achieving the three ambitions within the Vision for County Durham as well as the council's own improvement agenda:
 - Our Economy

- Our People
- Our Communities
- Our Environment
- Our Council

Council Plan 2024-2028

- 10 The Council Plan is the primary corporate planning document for the County Council and details Durham County Council's contribution towards achieving the objectives set out in the Vision for County Durham 2035 together with its own change agenda. It aims to provide a readable and accessible summary for members, partners and the public of our priorities for the county and the main programmes of work that we will undertake to help achieve these priorities. The Plan will now be refreshed each year to reflect the integration of corporate and financial planning.
- 11 Both the Vision for County Durham and the Council Plan are structured around the three ambitions for the county and our own improvement agenda. The 'Our Council' theme captures the corporate initiatives the Council has identified and wants to undertake to achieve the ambitions within the vision:
- a) Our resources will be managed effectively
 - b) Create a workforce for the future
 - c) Design our services with service users
 - d) Use data and technology more effectively
 - e) We will build an inclusive and welcoming employee culture
- 12 The key themes which apply to the E&E OSC are 'Our Economy' and 'Our Communities' with the relevant ambitions detailed below:

Our Economy

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

Our Communities

- a) People will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities
- b) Standards will be maintained or improved across County Durham's housing stock
- c) Delivery of new high-quality housing which is accessible and meets the needs and aspirations of our residents
- d) Our town and villages will be vibrant, well-used, clean, attractive and safe

Current Work Programme

13 During 2023/24 the E&E OSC prioritised items to be considered at formal meetings of the committee due to the size of the work programme. The committee also hosted a number of workshops providing an opportunity for members to inform various strategies and plans as well as an informal information session. In addition, the committee has undertaken budgetary and performance monitoring, responded to consultations in relation to various plans and strategies and questioned the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder. The committee has also received various overview and progress monitoring reports. The work of the committee in 2023/24 is detailed below.

- **Consultations**

- County Durham Housing Strategy
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

- **Workshops**

- Housing Strategy
- Inclusive Economic Strategy Delivery Plan
- Tourism offer in County Durham
- New Place Brand for County Durham

- **Areas of overview and monitoring activity**

- Key Strategic Sites in the county

- Inclusive Economic Strategy Draft Delivery Plan
- Major Programmes/Projects REG Service Grouping
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund and delivery of programmes in County Durham
- Selective Licensing Scheme
- Supported Housing Improvement Programme
- New Council Homes Delivery Programme
- Masterplan activity within the county
- Skills Delivery and supporting the Inclusive Economic Strategy
- Questioned the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder in relation to the New Council Homes Delivery Programme

- **Informal Information session**

- Selective Licensing Scheme

- **Budgetary and performance monitoring:**

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

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

- County Durham Visitor Economy
- Regional and local transport policy and delivery
- Destination Management Plan for County Durham
- Fuel Poverty

Areas for Consideration in the E&E OSC Work Programme

15 Members of the E&E OSC are asked to agree the proposed draft work programme for 2024/25 that has been prepared and is attached at appendix 2. The draft work programme is very comprehensive drawing on topical areas across the remit of the committee and it should be noted that it is also flexible.

16 Paragraphs 13 and 14 of the report identifies the activity undertaken by the committee during 2023/24. The committee is asked to consider areas for inclusion in the work programme for 2024/25 in light of the

current Council Plan and the Vision for County Durham 2035. Appendix 2 of this report sets out a draft work programme for consideration.

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

Conclusion

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

Background papers

- [Council Plan 2024-2028](#)
- [County Durham Vision 2035](#)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Climate Change

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

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

Procurement

Not applicable

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Appendix 2

<p>Overview and Scrutiny Draft Work Programme 2024/25</p> <p>Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Lead Officer: Stephen Gwilym</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Officer: Diane Close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and Better Jobs • Connected Communities 	<p>Note:</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Review – A systematic six-monthly review of progress against recommendations/action plan</p> <p>Scrutiny/Working Group – In-depth review/light touch review</p> <p>Overview/progress – Information on an issue; opportunity to comment, shape, influence, progress with a scrutiny review</p> <p>Informal Information Sessions - Presentation via Teams on areas that fall within the remit of the committee</p> <p>Briefing Reports – Reports for information on areas within the remit of the work programme</p> <p>Performance/Budget – Ongoing quarterly monitoring performance reports/budgets</p>
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Item	When	How Considered	Who	Outcome	Comment
O/S Review		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to E&E • Informal Information Sessions • Briefing report to E&E Members via email 			
Scrutiny/Working Group (light touch/in-depth review)					
To be confirmed	TBC	To be discussed at committee on 8 July 2024			

Overview/Progress					
Strategic Place Plans	E&E OSC 8 July 2024	Report/Presentation to E&E OSC	<p>Andy Kerr, Head of Economic Development (REG)</p> <p>Graham Wood Economic Development Manager (REG)</p> <p>Mike Allum Strategy and Delivery Manager (REG)</p>	Members will receive detail of progress in relation to the development of SPPs, detail of governance arrangements, the process for identifying priorities, the process for allocating resources, timescales for delivery, process for roll out across the county, detail of responsibility for the development of the plan and delivery of priorities and any detail in relation to specific projects.	Members will be aware of the development of this new approach, the governance arrangements and the processes in place to determine priorities, the allocation of resources, roll out and timescale for delivery.

<p>Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) – Delivery Plan</p>	<p>Special E&E OSC February 2025</p> <p>Date TBC</p>	<p>Report/Presentation/Delivery Plan to E&E OSC</p>	<p>Andy Kerr Head of Economic Development (REG)</p> <p>Claire Williams Funding and Programmes Manager (REG)</p>	<p>Members will have had the opportunity to comment on progress made in the delivery of actions within the IES Delivery Plan.</p>	<p>The Committee will have scrutinised and commented on the delivery of actions within the Plan.</p>
<p>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan</p>	<p>E&E OSC 3 March 2025</p>	<p>Report/Presentation/Delivery Plan to E&E OSC (Invite to members of the S&S OSC)</p>	<p>Michael Kelleher Head of Planning and Housing (REG)</p> <p>Emma Regan Housing Team Leader (REG)</p>	<p>Members will be aware of the progress made in relation to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan.</p>	<p>Members will have had the opportunity to comment on progress made in relation to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan.</p>

County Durham Housing Strategy Delivery Plan	E&E OSC 3 March 2025	Report/Presentation/Strategy to E&E OSC	<p>Michael Kelleher Head of Planning and Housing (REG)</p> <p>Mike Allum Strategy and Delivery Manager (REG)</p> <p>Graeme Smith Housing Delivery Manager (REG)</p>	Members will be aware of the progress made in relation to the County Durham Housing Strategy Delivery Plan.	Members will have had the opportunity to comment on progress made in relation to the County Durham Housing Strategy Delivery Plan.
Selective Licensing Scheme	E&E OSC 18 Dec 2024	Report/Presentation to E&E OSC (Invite to members of the ESC OSC and the S&S OSC)	<p>Michael Kelleher Head of Planning and Housing (REG)</p> <p>John Kelly</p>	The Committee will be aware of how the scheme is progressing in those areas of the county to which the scheme applies.	Members will have received current data including detail of: the number of properties fully licenced by the scheme; number of application in system;

			<p>Service Development and Intelligence Manager</p> <p>(REG)</p> <p>Ted Murphy Building Safety and Housing Standards Manager</p> <p>(REG)</p>		<p>resourcing of the scheme; number of inspections undertaken and enforcement action.</p> <p>The Committee will continue to monitor the progress of the scheme.</p>
New Council Homes Building Programme	E&E OSC 4 Nov 2024	Report/Presentation to E&E OSC	<p>Michael Kelleher Head of Planning and Housing</p> <p>(REG)</p> <p>Graeme Smith Housing Delivery Manager</p> <p>(REG)</p> <p>Ian Conway</p>	Members will have received an update on the progress of this programme and will have had the opportunity to provide comment.	The Committee will be aware of the progress made in the delivery of the programme and will have commented accordingly.

			Programme Lead (Council House Build)		
Supported Housing Improvement Programme	E&E OSC 18 Dec 2024	Report/Presentation to E&E OSC	<p>Michael Kelleher Head of Planning and Housing (REG)</p> <p>Emma Regan Housing Team Leader (REG)</p> <p>Callum Aitchison Supported Housing Project Co-ordinator</p>	The Committee will be aware of the progress of the programme in monitoring and supporting non-commissioned supported housing providers across County Durham.	Members will receive detail of progress following an overview of the programme provided to members in December 2023 including findings from reviews and inspections undertaken.
Industrial/employment sites in County Durham	E&E OSC 11 Sept 2024	Report/Presentation to E&E OSC	<p>Andy Kerr Head of Economic Development (REG)</p> <p>Sarah Slaven</p>	Members will be aware of the various employment and industrial sites within the county, the mix of industries and employment opportunities, detail	The Committee will have considered information providing detail of the location of sites, mix of industries,

			<p>Managing Director Business Durham</p> <p>(REG)</p> <p>Kerry Walker, Business Growth Director</p> <p>(REG)</p>	<p>of pipeline of sites and DCC's future plans.</p>	<p>employment opportunities, pipeline of sites, the use of brownfield sites, DCC future plans for the county and targets for the delivery and growth of these sites.</p>
<p>UK SPF and delivery of programmes across the county</p>	<p>E&E OSC 8 July 2024</p>	<p>Report/Presentation to E&E OSC</p>	<p>Andy Kerr Head of Economic Development (REG)</p> <p>Claire Williams Funding and Programmes Manager (REG)</p>	<p>Members will be aware of the various funding currently available to the county and the delivery of the various programmes/projects as a result of the available funding.</p>	<p>Members will be aware of current available funding, the projects identified within the county to receive that funding, targets/outcomes in relation to those individual projects and the resulting delivery of the identified projects.</p>

Major Programmes/Projects (REG Service Grouping)	E&E OSC 4 Nov 2024	Report/Presentation to E&E OSC	<p>Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG)</p> <p>Susan Robinson Head of Corporate Property and Land (REG)</p> <p>Tony Forster Strategic Programme Manager (REG)</p>	The committee will be aware of the process for the management of DCC major programmes and in particular the budget and delivery of specific projects identified by the committee in advance of the meeting.	Members will have received information on the management of REG major programmes, including detail in relation to REG specific major projects identified by the committee in advance of the meeting.
Skills development in County Durham	E&E OSC 3 March 2025	Report/Presentation to E&E OSC	<p>Andy Kerr Head of Economic Development (REG)</p> <p>Graham Wood Economic Development Manager</p>	The Committee will be made aware of work undertaken by DCC in working with Partners in the county to ensure that skills training in the county meets the requirements of employers and tackle any identified skill gaps.	Members will have received information on work undertaken by DCC and partners to develop the required skills in the county and tackle any identified skill gaps. In

			(REG) Representatives from the Business Forum and FE colleges will be invited to attend.	The committee will also have had the opportunity to comment on the delivery of actions within the IES Delivery Plan that relate to skills development.	addition, they will also receive detail of the delivery of specific projects identified within the IES Delivery Plan.
County Durham Economy - Performance	Special E&E OSC February 2025 Date TBC	Report/Presentation	Andy Kerr Head of Economic Development (REG) Claire Williams Funding and Programmes Manager (REG) Gemma Wilkinson Strategy Team Leader John Mitchell	The committee will be aware of the performance of the County Durham economy linking to the macro- economic data within the IES performance framework.	Members will have received and considered relevant performance management information linking to the macro-economic data within the IES Performance framework.

			Research and Consultant Officer		
Transport Regionally and Locally – policy and delivery	Special Joint E&E OSC & ESC OSC Date TBC	Report/Presentation to E&E OSC and ESC OSC	<p>Mark Jackson Head of Transport and Contract Services (REG)</p> <p>Cathy knight Integrated Passenger Transport Manager (REG)</p> <p>Dave Lewin Strategic Traffic Manager (REG)</p> <p>Peter Ollivere Strategy, Partnerships and commissioning</p>	The Committee will scrutinise transport management regionally and locally including the emerging priorities from NEMCA.	Members will receive information on the progress of various transport plans and strategies regionally and locally including progress with the BSIP, detail of public transport provision locally, plans to reduce car usage, the emerging priorities from NEMCA, available funding and the development of the ULEV charging network.

			(REG)		
Tourism and County Durham's Visitor Economy	Special Joint E&E OSC and ESC OSC Date TBC	Report/presentation to E&E OSC and ESC OSC	Alison Clark Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism (REG) Michelle Gorman Managing Director (VCD) (REG)	The Committee will be aware of changes as to how we promote the tourism offer, current performance and future performance targets, projects to develop the tourism offer, progress in the delivery of actions within the Destination Management Plan and progress in the delivery of the Sustainability Plan.	Members will receive detail of ongoing work undertake to promote the tourism offer, detail of performance in relation to targets, progress in relation to the delivery of actions within the Destination Management Plan and progress in the development of the Sustainability Plan.
Leisure Transformation Programme	Special Joint Meeting with ESC OSC (ESC OSC lead committee) Sept 2024 Date TBC	Report and presentation to E&E OSC and ESC OSC	Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG) Alison Clark Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism	The Committee will be aware of the current position regarding the delivery of the programme and will continue to monitor the progress and	Members will receive a progress update on the delivery of the Leisure Transformation Programme, having

			(REG)	further development of the programme.	previously fed comments into the various consultation stages.
New Place Brand for County Durham – Phase 2	Workshop with ESC OSC September Date TBC	Workshop with ESC OSC members	Alison Clark Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism (REG) Michelle Gorman Managing Director (VCD) (REG)	Members will have been involved in the development of the new Place Brand for County Durham.	Members have provided comments via a workshop on feedback from the Perceptions Survey. Members will have an opportunity to contribute and feed into Phase 2 of the Place Brand development.
Briefing Report					
Housing – Role of DCC, the Housing Forum and mechanisms for engagement with Social Housing Providers	October/November 2024	Briefing report to E&E OSC	Michael Kelleher Head of Planning and Housing (REG)	Members will have confirmed: the role of DCC in relation to Housing; the role of the Housing Forum and the various mechanisms by which DCC officers	Members will be reminded of DCC's housing role, receive detail of the role of the Housing Forum in the county and other

				engage with the various Social Housing Providers in the county.	mechanisms by which DCC officers engage with Social Housing Providers in the County.
Visits					
FE colleges providing training programmes	Date/s TBC	Visit to be undertaken by members of the E&E OSC	Andy Kerr Head of Economic Development (REG) Graham Wood Economic Development Manager (REG)	Members of the Committee will see 'first hand' the delivery of training programmes within the county.	Members will have the opportunity to visit FE Colleges who are delivering various training programmes resulting from UK SPF funding.
Performance/Budget					

Performance Quarterly reporting	Sept 2024 Nov 2024 March 2025	Report to E&E OSC To be circulated to members	Gemma Wilkinson Strategy Team Leader (Resources)	To provide Members with progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework	Summary information to Members
Budget Outturn Report Quarterly reporting -	Sept 2024 Dec 2024 April 2025	Report to E&E OSC To be circulated to members	Ed Thompson Finance Manager (Resources)	Detail of budget	Summary information to Members
CDEP Minutes					
Minutes of the CDEP	Dates TBC	Minutes to be circulated to members for information	Partnership Team	Members will be kept updated on the activity of the partnership	The Committee will be aware of activity undertaken by the partnership

Meeting: County Durham Economic Partnership Board

Date & Time: 28th February 2024 1.00pm

Venue: Hybrid meeting – Believe Housing, Spectrum Business Park, Seaham



Present:	Name	Organisation/Pillar Rep
New College		
	Glyn Llewellyn (GL)	Chair
	Ailsa Anderson (AA)	Engineering & Manufacturing Network
	Alison Clark (AC)	Head of Culture, Sport & Tourism, DCC
	Alan Smith (AS)	Believe Housing (Lead for Inclusive Growth)
	Andy Bailey (ACB)	Durham County Council
	Andy Kerr (AK)	DCC Head of Economic Development
	Duncan Peake (DP)	Raby Estates
	Kate Burrows (KB)	Durham Community Action (VCS Voice)
	Michelle Cooper (MC)	County Durham Community Foundation (VCS Voice)
	Reshma Begum (RB)	Federation of Small Businesses
	Richard Baker (RBaker)	Durham University (Lead for Innovation)
	Sarah Slaven (SS)	Business Durham (Lead for Business Competitiveness)
Also, in attendance		
	Angela Brown (ABrown) (minutes)	Durham County Council
	Helen Riddell (HR)	Public Health, DCC
	Linda Wilson (LW)	New College Durham
Online Via Teams		
	Alessandra Coda (AC)	Metro Dynamics
	Kevin Fenning (KF)	Metro Dynamics
	Sue Parkinson (SP)	CDEP Vice Chair
Apologies:		
	Alison Gittins	Durham Business Group

	Amy Harhoff	Durham County Council
	Andy Broadbent	New College Durham (Lead for People)
	Cllr Elizabeth Scott	Durham County Council
	Kirsty Wilkinson	Public Health, DCC
	Paul Marsden	Head of the Association of Secondary Schools

Item No.	Subject	Discussion and Decision	Lead Officer(s)	Timescale
1.	Welcome and apologies	GL welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies for the meeting were noted		
2.	Minutes of CDEP Board meeting on 13th December 2023	Minutes of 13 th December 2023 were agreed as a true record of the meeting		
3.	Matters Arising	There were no matters arising.		
4.	Chair's Opening Remarks	GL informed the Board that the economy is currently challenging, and he would like to know what the reflection is from Board members given that this is directly relevant to our obligation to deliver the IES. The Chair also suggested he would like a Board discussion in the future on zero growth in the economy. He reported that BD/CDEP had held its first business conference yesterday on the Green Economy, with excellent speakers and around 80 businesses in attendance. There were encouraging comments from those attending. SS agreed that she heard all positive comments from people who had attended, there were workshops on the afternoon which were all very well attended. We need to keep the momentum going, Tony Cleary from Lanchester Wines was the keynote speaker and was very complementary about the Northeast and developments here		
5.	Place Branding – Alison Clark	Alison Clark presented on Place Branding <i>Questions/Comments</i> GL felt that this gives us a plan of where we are. He asked if this was just for UK? AC replied that as we go into devolution, we will be part of a		

Item No.	Subject	Discussion and Decision	Lead Officer(s)	Timescale
		<p>really strong and vibrant Northeast Brand which works both globally and nationally.</p> <p>AA asked if there are any plans to maybe work with school children as their view of the world will be what will be going on in 20 years' time? AC replied that one consulting group is working with children in the Northeast.</p> <p>SP agreed that there is a need to differentiate County Durham, but that differentiation has to harmonise with what Visit Britian are doing, Visit England are doing and what the North East are doing, but equally to recognise that Durham is a multi-central location with a mixture of environments in its various settlements, and thus the Brand needs to be relevant to all without being so universal as to be bland. AC mentioned that this is the reason they are taking this piece of work to lots of places to make sure they get an understanding on what others think of us, as without this understanding then the place branding does not make sense, so we need to talk to young people and different groupings.</p> <p>DP felt that the perception for research is very interesting there are a few hard to hear messages in there. We are doing things in Co Durham, so it is quite positive piece of work and there is chance to blow those perceptions and start to disseminate the message of what is happening in the area. We should start to identify some ambassadors to get the message out to show it is a great place to invest/live etc.</p> <p>ACB felt there are challenges as Durham City is not York City; York has multiple opportunities to keep a visitor busy for whole week in York City whereas Durham is spread across the County in different areas which requires access to transport. He questioned whether this work focused on Durham City? AC confirmed that this relates to the whole of Durham County, the city by itself not being enough.</p>		

Item No.	Subject	Discussion and Decision	Lead Officer(s)	Timescale
		<p>SS said we need to view this as positive information as we know there is a whole lot more to County Durham than what people think, it gives us useful information of how to sell Durham; something which historically has not been as well done as it could have been</p> <p>HR built on SP's remarks, mentioning that community networks need to harness the next stage of the project and it should be shared with that group.</p> <p>RB asked if we had the demographics of the people that were surveyed, AC did not have it to hand but said the proportion were of sample relate population. DP asked if it was spread across the country and AC confirmed it was.</p> <p>RBaker mentioned that the University have a lot of data and recommended that it be coordinated as he felt that there were significant opportunities.</p> <p>AK agreed and questioned whether there was sufficient capability to exploit them all. He suggested that the key lay in getting the right messages to the right audiences. KB suggested by way of example that a focus on micro businesses and also volunteer led social enterprise/action would need bespoke message about social drive, as this is a driving force beyond pure profit with this audience, and messages need to recognise this. AC agreed</p>		
6.	County Durham Investment Framework – Andy Kerr/Kevin	<p>AK introduced the presentation from the Consultants in relation to the County Durham Investment Framework</p> <p><i>Questions/Comments</i></p>		

Item No.	Subject	Discussion and Decision	Lead Officer(s)	Timescale
	Fenning/Alessandra Coda	<p>SP mentioned that first page showed a range of capital projects from Industry sector but felt that the University Intune project was not a capital project – did the document therefore concentrate just on capital projects with this one exception.</p> <p>KF replied that these were the projects which had been put forward by DCC colleagues. SP suggested that harmonisation between capital and revenue projects would be helpful – either to include revenue investment priorities or not, but not to do so selectively without justification,</p> <p>MC said that, on a cursory glance, she suggested that brown land availability should be highlighted. She also suggested that the priorities of the VCS are not represented in the document, specifically in terms of people and skills</p> <p>AK drew a distinction between the Investment Plan and the IES delivery plan, and MC agreed that SP has raised a valid point in that the purpose of the investment plan needs to be clear and that there is a need talk to communities</p> <p>DP accepted everything MC had said and reminded everyone that the investment plan is a pitch deck and needs therefore to have resonance with its audience (i.e., investors)</p> <p>AA was supportive but felt that the plan could concentrate things that make us different from other areas.</p> <p>DP said he thought that existing businesses where really important but the opportunity to grow the visitor economy as a whole should not be disregarded. He saw this document as a pitch deck to attract business to inward investment.</p>		

Item No.	Subject	Discussion and Decision	Lead Officer(s)	Timescale
		<p>AS agreed, that it was important to have absolute clarity on the purpose of the document.</p> <p>RBaker felt that the document warranted further study but that on first reading he felt that a list of successful Durham startups would be helpful. KJ felt that the inclusion of projects that support SMEs would be valuable, and KB felt that a rural dimension was missing. HR felt that the need to improve health should also be reflected</p> <p>.</p> <p>AK said it was a live document and it will be constantly updated, and that the timing is crucial, as it was important to have something in place before a new Mayor is elected. This puts Durham in a good position to influence the NEMCA plans</p> <p>ACB whether the forthcoming elections would cause a delay because of Purdah, but AK advised that this was not the case</p> <p>AC mentioned that because of the way Local Authorities are working in NEMCA, including with the involvement of Durham County Council, work was going on behind the scenes</p> <p>SS said that the capital focus of the document created a risk around deliverability of the IES since this required core revenue funds. She suggested that, as County Durham partners, we need to influence how revenue activity is funded across the region. She said that partners need to be speaking as one voice as a County.</p>		

Item No.	Subject	Discussion and Decision	Lead Officer(s)	Timescale
7.	State of the County - All	<p>GL asked for updates from Board members in relation to the 'State of the County'</p> <p>RB said the quarterly survey to measure confidence has fluctuated up and down with nothing being consistent apart from the fact it is consistently below 2022 levels. Confidence is starting to pick up, demonstrating some growth ambition, but labour costs and the retention of staff are a challenge,</p> <p>AA said one of the biggest issues is skills displacement, stating that a number of inward investors don't currently have appropriately skilled people to deliver, which is fuelling displacement and as a result firms are holding back on investment</p> <p>MC reported having hosted the Bank of England Community Breakfast, bringing together members of the community with the Monetary Policy Unit, at which the message given to the BoE was that high interest rates meant that the standard of living in communities was challenging. MC also reported that issues of skills displacement were prevalent and also that the award of grants to community and voluntary sector organisations was at a higher-than-normal level, and this without the effect of public sector cuts fully being recognised. It was clear that funding is becoming less available at the very time that demand for it is increasing.</p> <p>KB reported that, in some sampling they had recently carried out, 82% of respondents said contracts they receive do not cover contractual minimum wage levels, which is causing obvious issues.</p> <p>AS reported similar findings including in pressure in the jobs market. As part of the not-for-profit sector, they find general overhead costs a challenge, and a particular issue facing the social housing sector is the cost of rectifying issues of damp and mould caused through condensation in an aging housing stock.</p>		

Item No.	Subject	Discussion and Decision	Lead Officer(s)	Timescale
8.	UKSPF & DIG Update – Sue Parkinson	<p>SP discussed the paper circulated. She suggested that there was now a need to formally advise the County Strategic Partnership of the issues raised in it, so that the Board could play its part in ensuring that County Durham's issues were properly represented. GL agreed. KB mentioned that she shared these concerns and had already raised these with AK.</p> <p>SP mentioned if we do not use this partnership for what it is the sum being more than the parts then what is the point? We need to understand and make sure that the right people are having the right conversations using the same voice</p> <p>AK pointed out that within the Combined Authority, discussions were taking place on a variety of fronts. SS advised that the particular issues facing the south of the Tyne had already been articulated by partners from Durham and Sunderland and agreed that the CDEP was an appropriate vehicle to help take this forward. AS reminded the Board</p> <p>that the NE Housing partnership was also a relevant vehicle for discussion. SP reinforced the point that the partnership needs to ensure that our voice is heard at a partnership level and also that individual partners are speaking as one</p> <p>RB reported that she has met with mayoral candidates and relayed the need to take account of elements of best practice, which she believes is being heard by senior stakeholder groups.</p> <p>SS mentioned that where activity uses Shared Prosperity Fund, given lead times this will start to come to an end in the next six months. It was therefore imperative that we ensure that there are measures in place to allow seamless delivery of the IES in those circumstances, which makes this work particularly pressing. It was agreed that the Chair write to the Chair of the CSP setting out the CDEPs concerns and seeking her support in raising them at appropriate levels.</p>		

Item No.	Subject	Discussion and Decision	Lead Officer(s)	Timescale
9.	Any Other Business	<p>It was reported that New College Durham had won a prestigious Association of Colleges Beacon Award, and the Chair passed on the Board's congratulations.</p> <p>ACB mentioned that the Safer Durham Partnership Strategy is being renewed and will be going to SDP Board in middle of March. He will make sure this Board is sighted on the consultation. The Chair thanked him.</p>		
	Date and time of Next Meeting	5th June 2024 @ 1pm Venue TBC		

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