

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 6 July 2012** at **10.00 am**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor A Naylor (in the Chair)**

#### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors J Armstrong, B Arthur, J Cordon, B Graham, P Jopling, R Liddle, J Rowlandson and M Williams

#### **Co-opted Members:**

Mr A Kitching

#### **Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Carr, J Moran, C Potts, Andy Turner, M Wilkes and A Willis and Mrs O Brown, Mrs A Harrison and Mr D Lavin

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor E Tomlinson

#### **A1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 12 March 2012 and 29 March 2012 were agreed by the Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **A2 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors B Arthur, P Jopling and R Liddle declared an interest in Item 9 as Board Members of East Durham Homes and Dale and Valley Homes.

#### **A3 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

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

#### **A4 Media Relations**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Diane Close referred Members to the recent prominent articles and news stories relating to the remit of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for copy of slide see file of minutes), namely the support for businesses from Durham County Council (DCC) to provide quality office accommodation; the report of the Committee's Working Group looking at "Improving Employment Opportunities of Young People (18-24)" being considered by Cabinet; development of 400 homes and a business park to regenerate Barnard Castle; and creation of 120 jobs at the Social Resource Centre Head Office at Ferryhill, a community company that helps vulnerable people.

#### **Resolved:**

That the presentation be noted.

#### **A5 Quarter 4, 2011/12 Performance Management Report**

The Chair introduced the Head of Strategic Programmes and Performance, Andy Palmer who was in attendance to speak to Members in relation to the Quarter 4, 2011/12 Performance Management Report (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Strategic Programmes and Performance reminded Members of the changes in performance reporting with target and tracker performance indicators and noted that the developments since the Quarter 3 report were the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Workshop looking at the performance framework and reporting; specific performance indicators relating to the Capital Programme; issues with Tourism; and, as reported within the media relations item, development plans for Barnard Castle, showing that while Durham City was an economic driver it was not the only place for development.

The Committee learned that the key achievements in Quarter 4 were:

- The 100% Decent Homes Standard being maintained for Durham City Homes (DCH) together with Dale and Valley Homes (DVH) and East Durham Homes (EDH) surpassing their year end targets.
- The number of private rented sector properties having been improved by Local Authority intervention had exceeded year end targets.
- Good progress regarding the "whole town" approach to regeneration, with projects at Stanley, Seaham North Dock and various sites at Bishop Auckland and Newton Aycliffe.
- Significantly increased support for Tourism businesses.
- Additional support in tackling homelessness in light of Welfare Reform (£1.8m to improve temporary accommodation), noting no major increase in presentations.
- Phase 1 of the capital refurbishment of business sites being complete, surveys and designs for Phase 2 underway to be completed March 2013.

The Head of Strategic Programmes and Performance explained that key performance issues going forward were:

- The number of empty properties being brought back into use as a result of Local Authority intervention was 44 against a target of 80, noting the poor performance during the Housing Renewal service restructure in Quarters 1-3.
- The processing of major planning applications had shown a slight increase in performance, though was still below target. Moves to an integrated Planning IT system, consolidation of offices and a project managed approach through Planning Performance Agreements were steps being taken to increase performance.
- The percentage of bus services running on time was 88.1% with the target being 95%. It was explained that it was thought that there may have been traffic issues in Quarter 3 at Durham bus station and at Bishop Auckland which may have been due to local road network issue.
- Deletion of a key action from the Council Plan, following the Appeal of the Bradley Opencast site, the proposed access improvement works to the A692 corridor have been withdrawn.

Member noted the Tracker Indicators set out at paragraph 9 of the report in relation to the continued rise in the number of 18-24 year olds claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). It was added that the Committee had looked at the issue and the Council had an Apprentice Programme in place (County Durham Apprenticeship Programme), and also was a partner in delivering the Government's "Work Programme" in relation to employment. The Committee learned that Child Poverty was also increasing and that there was a slight delay in the signing of contracts between the Government and Hitachi, with Hitachi beginning to engage with local Colleges and supply chain manufacturers.

The Head of Strategic Programmes and Performance concluded by highlighting the key risks, those included the loss of Area Based Grant (ABG) funding; the worsening condition of Seaham North Pier and the ramifications for economic regeneration in the area; worsening private housing stock condition; and diminishing capital resources and depressed land values impacting upon the deliverability of major projects and town initiatives within proposed timescales.

The Chair thanked the Head of Strategic Programmes and Performance and asked Members for their questions.

Members asked questions relating to the youth unemployment, major planning applications, Seaham North Dock, progress at Spennymoor and Hitachi. The Head of Strategic Programmes and Performance reminded Members of the work of the Committee looking at youth unemployment and the mitigation steps being taken by planning services. Members noted that the potential risk at Seaham North Pier had been highlighted and the Council would liaise with the North Dock Company and the Environment Agency accordingly. Members noted that they would be informed of progress on the North Dock opening, delayed from the end of June 2012. Councillors were informed that the Economic Regeneration Manager was working on an Investment Plan for Spennymoor, and that all of the 12 major settlements would be addressed similarly, with reports to go to Cabinet.

The Head of Strategic Programmes and Performance concluded by noting that the delay in signing the Hitachi contract had not detracted from the process of identifying skills that were required, working with local Colleges on initiatives such as advanced apprenticeships and on issues such as securing further European funding.

The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Stephen Gwilym referred to Appendix 5 which gave feedback relating to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board workshop session that had looked at the issues around performance indicators and reporting to Committee.

Members noted that the overall response had been fed back to Cabinet, with each thematic group receiving feedback at the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **A6 Overview of Homelessness Strategy**

The Chair introduced the Core Team Manager, Housing Solutions, Andrew Burnip, who was in attendance to give a presentation to Members in relation to the progress of the Homelessness Strategy (for copy see file of minutes).

The Core Team Manager reminded Members that the duty for Local Authorities to provide a review of housing need and publish a 5 year strategy, a consequence of the Homelessness Act 2002, with a Strategy being in place by 2003, refreshed for 2008 – 2013. Members noted the three main strategic objectives in this regard:

- To prevent homelessness by delivering prevention and housing options focused service across County Durham that delivers advice and assistance to all in housing need.
- To ensure that sufficient, appropriate and affordable accommodation is available for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- To support people who are homeless or who are at risk of repeat homelessness.

It was explained that an exercise had been undertaken to bring together services so that they were now offered from 2 locality based offices, and overall there had been a 30% reduction in front line staffing. Members learned that this had resulted in smarter working practises being developed, with increased focus on quality assurance through procedures that encompassed excellent client care, good supervision, identifying training needs and robust audit arrangements. The Core Team Manager added that ensuring a consistency of service had proven challenging, however the measures put in place were working well.

The Committee learned that the Homelessness Action Partnership (HAP) had been re-launched, now comprising of 3 locality based forums supported by the Core Team, with the Chairs being representatives from the Third Sector. It was noted that this was augmented by a Third Sector Forum that comprised of those from the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) as well as Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Councillors noted that there was an allocation of £30,000 for each of the local forums in order to meet local needs such as food banks; training materials relating to drug and alcohol misuse; and offsetting bad debt via options such as Credit Unions.

Members noted that in some cases, those with debt may need to have conditions set such that they save for a period in order to try to service the debt and DCC was running a pilot scheme to help provide quick access to a credit union, with support and finance advice.

The Core Team Manager added that there was ongoing work with RSLs in respect of delivering DKO via digital television and access via smart phones, which had generated 26,000 hits in the last 3 months, or 155 bids of which 8 were successful. Councillors noted that a pre-eviction protocol was in place with RSLs where DCC could contact those tenants and see what could be given.

Members were also informed that there was an Under Occupation Officer looking at issues of large and older houses that may only have a single tenant. Councillors were informed that a process of mapping the impact of Welfare Reform was also being undertaken.

The Core Team Manager noted that the smarter working practices put in place were not simply in order to deal with reduced budgets; measures put in place were also designed to improve performance and consistency of service. Members learned that there were activities such as the appointment of Prevention Champions, 400 staff over 30 organisations including people such as Probation Officers and Health Workers that may be better placed to detect the early signs of problems with tenancies. It was added that a "Think Family" approach was being undertaken, looking at assessing and addressing the wider needs of some tenants and the Family Wise and Family Intervention Project (FIP) were able to access some European Social Fund (ESF) monies to help those most in need. Councillors were informed of a Vulnerable Adults Protocol that was in place to help make those people's tenancy sustainable long term. It was added that there was a housing options "wizard" on the housing solutions website that offered advice to tenants and prospective tenants.

The Committee were informed of a Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) grant of £400,000 that was being used to help tackle homelessness, with many preventions tools being made possible including amongst others: a bond guarantee scheme for those looking to rent in the private sector; a prevention fund offering up to £400 to help with arrears or fees to stop an eviction; the "Remain Safe" scheme, formally ran by Developing Initiatives Supporting Communities (DISC) now operated by the Safe Durham Partnership (SDP). It was noted that in effect, through the SDP, DCC's Direct Services would be carrying out the works to harden security at properties with the budget now being solely used for equipment rather than split between equipment and staffing costs. The Core Team Manager added that there were also specialist Debt and Welfare Rights Advisors together with funds relating to mortgage rescue and repossession. Councillors learned of the Discretionary Housing Payment Protocol, a Government grant that Local Authorities can use to help individuals, with £177,000 being issued last year. Members noted that the amount now available would be £333,000, with a top up of £100,000 from DCC.

The Core Team Manager explained that the Authority must be able to provide temporary accommodation and after Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for County Durham, a mapping exercise was carried out to ascertain what provision each of the pre-LGR District Authorities had in place resulting in an options appraisal and an invitation for tender for a Holistic Temporary Accommodation and Support Service (HTASS) being issued.

Members noted that there was funding within the Regeneration and Economic Development (RED) and Adults, Wellbeing and Health (AWH) budgets for 3 years providing 22 units for temporary accommodation with support.

The Committee learned that the turnaround for temporary accommodation was 3 working days, with a Joint Protocol in place for 16/17 year olds offering up to 16 “crash pads”, 5 of which are ring fenced to Children and Young People’s Services (CYPS) and that this, in reducing the use of Bed and Breakfast type accommodation, had effected a cost saving. The Core Team Manager explained that there were 200 “Lets” with support allocated within the private rented sector (PRS) and that there was links to new “Night Stop” provision, which was brought in-house, offering up to 3 week provision rather than 3 nights. Councillors noted that “Step Forward” supported housing offered 14 2-bed properties with help with transitional move-on, to ease problems of the of “bed blocking”. It was added that there was support regarding tenancy conversion, with 9 months support and that Housing Solutions funding for this was allocated for 3 years.

Councillors were informed of various accommodation provided including: “The Fells” a £1.8 million “Places for Change” project funded through the Homes and Community Agency (HCA); a new YMCA facility at Chester-le-Street and a £500,000 extension to Stage 2 of the supported housing scheme at Shotton Colliery.

Members were asked to note that there were several proposals in development including: “No Second Night Out” a scheme to prevent rough sleeping, with DCC as the lead Authority; an Adults facing Chronic Exclusion (ACE) pilot scheme with The Cyrenians; and the regional “Through the Gate Plus” service working with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and DCLG to help those exiting prison to access short stay accommodation for up to 14 weeks.

The Core Team Manager concluded by noting that performance in relation to homelessness had noted a 12% increase in the number of preventions over the period 2008 to 2012 and a 30% reduction in the number of acceptance of homelessness. The Committee noted that there was also a 19.2% reduction in the number of homelessness applications and that a “rough and ready” figure for the cost of each application was around £5,300. It was noted that the cost per prevention for DCC was in the order of £230, equating to a non-cash saving of around £1.4 million for 2011/12.

The Chair thanked the Core Team Manager and asked Members for their questions.

Councillors questioned the number of presentations versus acceptances and asked about issues such as forces and ex-forces personnel having access to support and the role of DCC and partners in providing advice in response of Welfare Reform changes.

The Core Team Manager explained that the raw numbers of presentation versus acceptances could be misleading as the presentations included all enquires “through the door”, even phone calls where advice is given. Members were informed that DCC worked in parallel to organisations such as St. Peters Court at Sacriston, supporting in kind, helping to move people on to their own accommodation.

The Core Team Manager noted that issues relating to the Durham Key Options (DKO) allocations policy and changes such to support service personnel may be highlighted in the upcoming agenda item.

Members were informed that issues of Welfare Reform were being looked at and the impact of reduced benefit for under-occupancy would remain to be seen, whether people would be prepared to move to properties with less bedrooms to remain in receipt of benefit or “stay and pay” to remain at their current property. Councillors noted that a number of RSLs were starting to offer “shared units” and that Government had set out a transitional protection regarding a “bedroom tax”, albeit for 9 months.

Councillors explained that the Core Team within DCC Housing Solutions has staff to look at issues such as mortgage rescue and loan funds, however noted that although a 5% impact from Welfare Reform could equate to a need for 2 full-time equivalents to cope with demands upon the service. Members understood that this would be albeit working in partnership with colleagues from the Welfare Rights Team in supporting people, together with issuing self-help toolkits for individuals and RSLs to help them help their tenants.

**Resolved:**

That the presentation and report be noted.

**A7 Update on the work of the County Durham Economic Partnership**

The Chair introduced the Chair of the County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP), Ken Jarrold who was in attendance to give Members and update in relation to the work of the CDEP.

The Chair, CDEP thanked Members for the opportunity to speak and noted that it was timely in that his second, 3 year term as Chair of the Partnership would end 31 July 2012. The Committee noted that the successor to the role of Chair of the CDEP was Professor Brian Tanner of Durham University, a Physics Professor, a Director of Kromek (a NETPark company) and also the recipient of the Queen’s Award for Enterprise Promotion 2012.

Members were informed that the Chair, CDEP wished to highlight the successes of the CDEP; the issues associated with the state of the economy in general; the role of the CDEP moving forward; and the Work Programme of the Committee linking into that role.

Councillors were reminded that the economic position over the last 6 years had worsened, despite the efforts and hard work of all those involved in the economic partnership. It was noted that 2 indicators that highlighted this were the number of those in receipt of JobSeekers' Allowance (JSA) having increased over that period from around 7,500 to approximately 16,000 and that youth unemployment had roughly doubled in that 6 year period.

The Chair, CDEP noted that the Council’s Regeneration Statement was a powerful guide and would benefit from its refresh and that also the Business, Enterprise and Skills Strategy was another important document that also highlighted that a key focus must be to make an improvement to the employment rate in County Durham. Members were asked to note the positive contribution to the CDEP on regeneration issues linked to transport, planning, highways and tourism and the healthy state of the Partnership, with mention of County Councillor E Tomlinson, who is Chair of the CDEP’s Rural Working Group.

The Committee was reminded of the increased participation of the private sector over the last 6 years at the CDEP and paid tribute to Sue Parkinson, Vice-Chair, CDEP and Chair of the Business and Enterprise Working Group. It was added that whilst the public sector was the largest employer within the County, the manufacturing industry was the second largest and representation from the industry within the CDEP was welcomed.

Members noted that, as mentioned within the Committee's recent report on Increasing Employment Opportunities of Young People (18-24) activities such as the "Learning the Business" scheme and the DCC Apprenticeship scheme were welcome boosts, however, as resources continued to reduce there was a challenge to be able to fund all the activities in the future. It was noted this was an area for the CDEP together with partners, including the Council's Corporate Director of Adults and Children Services Rachael Shimmin, in her role within the Children's Trust, to work together on.

The Chair, CDEP explained that the Work Programme of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee was welcomed by CDEP, most notably the focus on youth employment and on the issue of Welfare Reform, both of which were key in tackling the poor economy including the reduced purchasing power within the economy.

The Chair, CDEP concluded by noting that it had been a privilege to live and work in County Durham for the last 15 years, in previous roles within the NHS and as Chair of the CDEP.

Members thanked the Chair, CDEP for his positive contributions and engagement with the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function and noted that he would be a tough act to follow in his role as Chair of the CDEP. Councillors asked whether the impact of the loss of the Regional Development Agency (RDA) had been felt, and what the future may hold for the region. The Chair noted that the loss of the RDA had been a huge loss, in respect of the funding that flowed through the RDA into the region. It was added that the formation of the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) was welcomed, though there could be difficulties with 7 separate Local Authorities working together and that the LEP funding and support was significantly less than that of the former RDA. The Chair, CDEP noted that the incoming Chair, Professor Brian Tanner, would continue to support the CDEP and may be able to offer insight into new technologies and businesses that could help the region in the future.

#### **Resolved:**

That the information provided during the discussion be used to help identify any additional areas of focus for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme for 2012-2014.

#### **A8 Durham Key Options - Lettings - Policy Changes**

The Chair introduced the Senior Policy Officer, Regeneration and Economic Development, David Randall, who was in attendance to speak to Members in relation to the proposed changes to the Durham Key Options (DKO) Letting Policy (for copy see file of minutes).

The Senior Policy Officer referred Members to the report within the agenda papers noting that the proposals were for the 9 Bands within the Lettings Policy to be reduced to 5 Bands, A to E, with the new Band E to represent those adequately housed.



It was added that this would represent around 8,000 of the 19,000 within the DKO scheme, 37% being owner/occupier, 15% being Council lets, 16% being Housing Associations and the remaining 32% being the private rented sector. Members noted that while there was provision within the Localism Act to remove Band E it had been agreed to retain Band E for County Durham as it would allow harder-to-let properties to become occupied.

The Committee noted that there were around 500 people within the existing Band F (June 2012), the reduced preference Band for those with rent arrears or in cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB). It was noted that Officers and Partners would be reviewing this Band, with around 50% to move from the reduced preference Band, though there could be grounds for disqualification from the register where 8 weeks rent or mortgage was in arrears.

Members learned that there would be a few changes to priority groups, with priority transfers for high demand properties, temporarily moving some into Band A for up to 12 months in order to free up those in-demand properties, linking to Bands B and C regarding stock issues and under-occupancy. The Senior Policy Officer added that in respect of Armed Forces, since the report within the agenda papers was printed, guidance from Government has been published with higher preferences for those serving in the Armed Forces, those injured whilst serving, the spouses and civil partners of those killed in service and members of the Reserve Forces. It was noted that while this was not thought to represent a large number of people, Government guidance did not seem to stipulate any time limits on qualifying for such increase preference so the situation would be monitored accordingly.

The Committee noted that there would also be increase preference for those offering a "positive contribution" though full-time employment addressing a skills gap within the County; those volunteering; and those in training that would provide further people to plug the identified skills gap. Members were reminded of the homelessness duty of the Authority and that partners had agreed to amend this as such to allow the time given to bid for a property would be reduced from 12 weeks to 4 weeks, unless the person was in an established vulnerable group.

The Senior Policy Officer concluded by explaining that DKO partners were consulting with their tenants and applicants as regards the proposed changes until the end of August 2012.

Members appreciated that in parallel to this, the Council's Housing Solutions Core Team would consult with Third Sector organisations and that when both were completed, the final version of the DKO Lettings Policy would be prepared and a report would be submitted to Cabinet in November 2012 and to the various Partner Board meetings in addition.

The Chair thanked the Senior Policy Officer and asked Members for their questions.

Members raised issues such as occupation of "aged persons bungalows" and "aged people areas" and an increased priority for those moving from situations of under-occupancy to more suitable accommodation.

The Core Team Manager noted that in the cases of specific properties Members could approach Officers with details; however in general, issues of subletting or ASB would be dealt with as a matter of breaches of an individual's Tenancy Agreement. It was added that also it was shown that having a mixed range of ages within an area was preferable and that as mentioned, the new threshold of 8 weeks rent arrears would give greater flexibility in dealing with nuisance tenants.

The Core Team Manager noted that in relation to priority for those wishing to move from properties in an under-occupancy situation; those in Band B would still need to bid and while there were quotas in place, though the situation would need to be monitored.

#### **Resolved:**

- (i) That additional information in relation to Armed Forces Personnel and "Positive Contribution" be circulated to Members of the Committee.
- (ii) That the Committee endorse the proposed DKO consultation questions.
- (iii) That a further report outlining the results of the Durham Key Options Lettings Policy consultation exercise be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

#### **A9 Stock Options Appraisal - Update**

The Chair introduced the Housing Stock Option Appraisal Project Manager, Marie Roe, who was in attendance to give a presentation to Members in relation to the progress of the Stock Options Appraisal (SOA) Project (for copy see file of minutes).

The SOA Project Manager reminded Members that there had been a significant amount of consultation in regards to the SOA, representing 19,000 properties within the County, and that Councillors would be updated on progress since the last presentation to Committee in February 2012.

Members were reminded that at Cabinet held on 14 December 2011, 3 key recommendations had been made in relation to the changes in the subsidy for Local Authority housing provision in England; a review of the Housing Management Arrangements; and options for stock transfer. Councillors noted that the membership of the Project Board reflected the high level strategic nature of the project, with the Board including the Portfolio Holder, Councillor C Robson, the Assistant Chief Executive; the Corporate Director: Resources; and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, together with customer representation. The Committee noted the projects completed thus far, including the agreement of project plans; agreement of key messages such as this being the largest SOA project in England; and the allocation of the Board as the key decision making group.

The SOA Project Manager explained that the Project Board had set up Task and Finish Groups that report back to the Steering Group, which also included customer and staff representation. Members learned that this included Asset Management, Housing Management and Stock Transfer Task and Finish Groups together with sub-groups looking at issues such as the Draft Durham Standard and Sustainability Matrix (to deliver consistency) and identifying costs and identifying areas of need.

It was noted that other issues looked at within the sub-groups would include: refining objectives to ensure that they were what was needed; visiting other organisations (examples being Leeds and Halifax) to learn from their experiences of SOA and stock transfers; and to test models of the options to transfer or retain stock.

The Committee noted that the Steering Group was the major consultative group and had developed a detailed Option Risk Register and a comprehensive Communication Strategy. Members were reminded that around 2,500 people had attended the various consultation events. It was added that in addition to monitoring the Task and Finish Groups, the Steering Group also considered the financial and legal advice given, providing challenge in this respect, and also explored the potential governance arrangements for the options being considered. Members learned that the Steering Group would provide recommendations to Cabinet in November 2012 in respect of potential options.

The SOA Project Manager explained that, in addition, there was a separate Customer Working Group that had procured, appointed and managed the Independent Tenant Advisor (ITA), Open Communities in line with best practise. It was added that the Customer Working Group had also reviewed the Tenant Empowerment Statement and was working on a refresh of this while also developing a communication programme for customers.

Members noted the next steps were to continue to work with stakeholders to test options; to bring forward the stakeholders preferred options for transfer or retention to Cabinet in Autumn 2012 and to review governance arrangements, planning for continued stakeholder involvement in the implementation of agreed options.

The Committee thanked the SOA Project Manager for her work in this regard and appreciated that it was a difficult and complicated process and looked forward to further information on the lessons learned from other Local Authorities and organisations in their SOA and transfer projects in due course.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the information provided in the presentation and report.
- (ii) That Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further progress update in relation to the Stock Options Appraisal Project at the meeting on the 19 November 2012.

**A10 Refresh of the Committee's Work Programme**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to the report within the agenda papers referring to the refresh of the Committee's Work Programme (for copy see file of minutes). Members were reminded that at the meeting held 29 March 2012 the Committee had considered the actions identified within the Council Plan 2012-2016 for the Altogether Wealthier priority theme and agreed the Committee's Work Programme to include a number of these actions together with topics in line with the DCC Cabinet Forward Plan, DCC Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), forthcoming Government legislation and the outcomes of the quarterly performance reports.

Members were reminded of the comments from the Chair, CDEP as regards the Committee's report on Increasing Employment Opportunities of Young People (18-24) and were asked if there were any suggestions for additions to the Work Programme or preferences for areas for review by the Committee.

Councillors reiterated the comments of the Chair, CDEP in identifying Welfare Reform as an important topic for review and added that information on the impact of Area Action Partnership (AAP) activities in relation to apprenticeships would be useful.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that information on AAP apprenticeship activity would be brought forward in the systematic review of the Increasing Employment Opportunities of Young People (18-24) in due course, together with the progress in general against the report recommendations.

**Resolved:**

That the Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree the new Work Programme as detailed for 2012-2014, noting the inclusion of the topic of Welfare Reform.

**A11 Minutes of the meeting of the County Durham Economic Partnership**

The Minutes of the meeting of the County Durham Economic Partnership held 30 April 2012 were received by the Committee for information.