



Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Date Monday 20 October 2014
Time 9.30 am
Venue Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham

Business

Part A

Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend. Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's agreement.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2014 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Declarations of interest, if any
5. County Durham Partnership Update - Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Pages 7 - 28)
6. Welfare Reform Update - Joint Report of Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate Director, Resources and Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development (Pages 29 - 44)
7. Update on the Delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan 4 - Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Pages 45 - 50)
8. Notice of Key Decisions - Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Pages 51 - 58)
9. Update in relation to Petitions - Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Pages 59 - 64)
10. Information update from the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees - Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Pages 65 - 70)
11. Any other urgent business (subject to the Chairman's approval)

Colette Longbottom
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
10 October 2014

To: **The Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board**

Councillor J Armstrong (Chairman)
Councillor P Stradling (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Batey, R Bell, J Blakey, A Bonner, D Boyes, J Chaplow,
R Crute, B Graham, D Hall, K Henig, A Hopgood, P Lawton, J Lethbridge,
H Liddle, T Nearney, C Potts, A Shield, M Simmons, W Stelling, R Todd,
J Turnbull and S Wilson

Faith Communities Representatives:

Revd K Phipps

Parent Governor Representatives:

Mr R Patel

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

At a Meeting of **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 12 September 2014 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor J Armstrong (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors P Stradling, A Batey, R Bell, J Blakey, J Chaplow, R Crute, B Graham, K Henig, A Hopgood, P Lawton, J Lethbridge, H Liddle, M Simmons, R Todd, J Turnbull and S Wilson

Faith Community Representative:

Revd K Phipps

Also Present:

Councillor L Pounder

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Hall, C Potts, A Shield and W Stelling.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 June and 31 July 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman referred to the Combined Authority and reported that two scrutiny meetings had been held so far and a work programme was being explored. Leaders were yet to meet and it would take time to agree policies and implement them. Members were advised that regular updates would be provided to the Board.

In referring to points raised, the Head of Planning and Performance provided the following updates:-

Item 5 – it was confirmed that following the request of Councillor B Graham, a visit had been arranged to the multi-sensory facilities in Spennymoor on the 13 October.

Item 6 – Councillor R Bell had been advised of a cumulative figure regarding the Regional Growth Fund.

Councillor S Wilson had been provided with information on Free School Meals.

Item 11 – Councillor Hopgood had been provided with information on how many minority party representatives had attended the interviews.

The Head of Planning and Performance informed Councillor Liddle that she would provide an update about Witton Gilbert at the end of the meeting.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 County Durham Drug Strategy 2014-2017

The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health and presentation of the Commissioning Manager that highlighted details of the first County Durham Drug Strategy 2014-2017 (for copy of report and presentation slides see file of Minutes).

Mark Harrison, Commissioning Manager presented information on the Drug Strategy for 2014-2017 and highlighted the following points:-

- Development of the Strategy
- Vision
- National Policy Driver
- Local Policy Drivers
- Drug Misuse in County Durham
- Crime
- Prison
- Housing
- Carers
- Children Protection
- Definitions of Drugs and Recovery

He then informed Members about the Key Objectives of the Strategy, including;-

- Preventing Harm
- Restricting Supply
- Building Recovery

The Commissioning Manager concluded his presentation by advising about the following recovery outcome domains and what the evidence tells us we can expect:-

- Human Capital Recovery
- Social Capital
- Physical & Economic Capital
- Cultural
- Drug

Councillor S Wilson asked about the proportion of people affected by medicines on the controlled drug list and how much stigma was attached to the recovery in rehab. The Commissioning Manager replied that prescribed medicines such as tramadol and other controlled substances need looking at closely. He added that in a prison setting it had come to light that these medicines were being used as an alternative to methadone. Work was ongoing with GP surgeries about highlighting the dangers of these drugs. With regards to the question about recovery, the Commissioning Manager said that residential rehab was difficult to monitor as some people who move away to seek treatment tend not to move back to the County if it works.

Councillor K Henig asked if rehab was available repeatedly for patients and the Commissioning Manager advised that it is common for people to repeat treatment programmes. He continued that there was a menu of choices available and it was important to get the right treatment for the right person.

The Chairman thanked the Commissioning Manager for his presentation and said that a response would be drawn up on behalf of the Board.

Resolved:-

That the Board consider the information presented and prepare a response to Public Health by 30 September 2014.

6 Medium Term Financial Plan (5), Council Plan, Service Plans 2015/16 - 2017/18 and Review of the Council's Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Board considered a joint report of the Corporate Director, Resources and Assistant Chief Executive that provided an update on the development of the 2015/16 budget, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP (5)) and Council Plan/Service Plans 2015/16 to 2017/18 and a review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which has been in place since 1 April 2013 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) reported that no extra funding cuts had been announced for Local Government in March 2014 and the authority had been concentrating on minimising the impact of savings until 2018-19 by the use of reserves. Members were informed that reserve levels were being used to control the savings required and that over the last four years £75m had been used, with £10m this year and £20-30m required for future years. He advised that there would be a comprehensive spending review next year but that the level of reduction was not yet known. This would make savings in the future more challenging. He continued that development of MTFP (5) would utilise the public feedback received during extensive consultation.

On answering a question from Councillor R Bell about the timetable, the Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) said that the Autumn Statement would be on 3 December and therefore a report would go to Cabinet mid December.

Councillor R Bell asked if there was an expiry date for Equal Pay claims and if there was a need to keep the Equal Pay reserve. He was advised that the County Council were using the Equal Pay reserve to delay the impact on the budget of the annual cost of the implementation of single status which had the Council £4.5m per annum. With reference to Empty Homes, Councillor R Bell said he was surprised at the amount of funding available to bring them back into use and asked if they were actively managed. The Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) said that a company had been employed to specifically look at empty homes on the register and they visited every one. This generated an additional New Homes Bonus of £900,000. Councillor Bell said that he had concerns about those homes not on the register.

Councillor A Hopgood referred to the New Homes Bonus and as asked if the amount was too low given housing development was showing signs of improvement. The Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) said that the County Durham Plan should be approved by Summer 2015 and a number of planning applications are in the pipeline for new developments. He added that the County Council had been criticised in the past for not

having a New Homes Bonus built in, hence the reason for having a prudent figure of £750,000. The actual 2015/16 figure for New Homes bonus should be confirmed in December and in line with previous years will be brought into the budget.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

7 Co-op Bank Contract

The Board considered a joint report of the Corporate Director, Resources and Assistant Chief Executive and presentation of the Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) that provided information regarding to the changes to Durham County Council's banking provider (for copy of report and presentation slides see file of Minutes).

The Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) informed Members that in November 2013 the Co-operative Bank advised that they were withdrawing from the Local Government banking market. He advised that negotiations took place to extend the current contract until April 2016 and work is now ongoing to find a suitable alternative supplier. A formal procurement process starts in September with tenders being evaluated in November, and the award of contract in December 2014. A range of informal discussions have already taken place with five major banks and the authority would seek to find the best deal possible. Transition arrangements would be significant with opening new bank accounts, organising signatories, a courier service and transferring standing order and direct debit payments. There would be costs associated with replacing the stationery, schools would need to move to a cash collection courier service from a health and safety viewpoint and the cost of a new cashpoint machine at County Hall were excessive. The authority were also looking at the social value and community benefits that a new contract could bring.

Councillor A Hopgood asked what options the authority had in terms of the ATM at County Hall. She said that the local post office at Newton Hall receive funding to host an ATM with no charge for their customers. She also suggested that a cashless system could be introduced at the canteen, similar to that use in schools. The Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) replied that options were being explored including smart cards for the canteen. He added that as it stood replacing the existing ATM was too costly for the authority to consider.

Councillor R Bell referred to cash in schools and said that the introduction of a courier service may not work for some, especially if the cost of the courier was greater than the amount being collected. He suggested that cashless schools would be a better option to explore for smaller schools. The Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) said that this issue would be debated at the Schools Forum and Internal Audit would be involved in saying what was a reasonable sum of money which should be held in a school, depending on the size of the school.

On answering a question from Councillor J Lethbridge, the Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) said that the Co-operative Bank had withdrawn from the market even though the business is profitable.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) for his informative presentation and re-iterated the point that there was a long run in period for the transition so that the best deal possible could be achieved for the authority.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

8 Quarter 1 2014/15 Performance Management

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which presented progress against the council's corporate basket of performance indicators (PIs) and reported other significant performance issues for the first quarter of 2014/15. A presentation was given by the Head of Planning and Performance (for copy of report and slides, see file of minutes).

Councillor R Bell said that there was no clear evidence of where Job Seekers Claimants go to when they come off the list. Councillor H Liddle asked if the JSA figure was reduced because claimants had found employment, been removed and what effect this has on claims of housing and other benefits.

Councillor S Wilson asked for breakdown of the hate crimes reported. The Head of Planning and Performance said that these details would be obtained and passed through the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Referring to fly tipping Councillor R Bell said that it was cheaper to use the Council's removal services and people should be made aware of it. The Chairman said that the majority of fly tipping was carried out by builders and private businesses and fines had been issued recently. He added that some people may not be able to afford the Council's fee for removal but that communities should be encouraged to club together for one collection.

On answering a question from Councillor A Hopgood about the drop in children in need referrals, the Head of Planning and Performance said that the issue could be explored and fed back through Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members discussed the decline of performance appraisals being carried out and advised that the way numbers are reflected should change. The Head of Planning and Performance explained that if a person changes a job the performance appraisal process starts from scratch as a person was appraised on the post they held.

Councillor A Batey suggested that the reasons for contaminated waste in recycling could be due to ignorance and people not knowing how to do it. She added that it might be appropriate to speak to private landlords so that information was on hand to new tenants. The Chairman confirmed that this does happen and was an ongoing battle.

Councillor J Blakey and Councillor B Graham raised their concerns about fly tipping and the regular hot spots being used by some residents and builders. The Chairman said that Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee would look at this area and that evidence was required to prosecute.

The Chairman stated that the Board and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees would never be complacent when considering child safety and needs, following a concern raised by Councillor J Chaplow about children self-harming.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Planning and Performance for her presentation.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

9 Request for Call-In - Durham Villages Regeneration Ltd

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services that advised a request for call in of a Cabinet decision and of the decision made by the Vice Chairman of the Board not to call in the decision (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

10 Notice of Key Decisions

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services that provided a list of key decision which were scheduled to be considered by the Executive (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Planning and Performance reported that since the last update there had been the following movement in items being considered at Cabinet:-

- A report on Housing Stock – Principles of Land Transfer, TUPE Issues and SLAs was moved from July to September;
- Added to the Plan for October is Proposed Designation of Local Nature Reserve at Easington Colliery;
- New to the plan for December, are items on Housing Stock – Transfer Update, and 2015/16 General Fund Revenue and Capital Budget MTFP 5 and Council Plan and Service Plans

Councillor A Hopgood raised concern about the lack of information about important decisions being made by the authority that were not included in the Notice, such as the Children Centre consultation. The Head of Planning and Performance said that the Notice only contained Key Decisions. Members agreed that it would be helpful to have sight of important decisions coming forward for Cabinet.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

11 Information update from the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Board considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided an update of overview and scrutiny activity between May and August 2014 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

20 October 2014

Cabinet

10 September 2014

County Durham Partnership Update



Report of Corporate Management Team

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council

Councillor Brian Stephens, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Durham County Council's Cabinet on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP) including key issues from the Board, the five thematic partnerships and all area action partnerships (AAPs). The report also includes updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.

Summary

2. The County Durham Partnership continues to take forward the priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). The renewed SCS will be officially launched at the forthcoming whole partnership event being held in November. The event will be focused on the successes and achievements of the CDP as well as looking at the challenges going forward.
3. As the council and DLI Museum build up to the World War One Centenary Commemoration Weekend events taking place on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 September local communities are marking the War in a number of different ways, with some examples detailed in the report.
4. This report shows the diversity of how AAPs actively support their local communities on a daily basis in addition to funded projects. AAPs respond to many community concerns ranging from traffic calming issues to street lighting and supporting the establishment of new community groups where needed. Although many of these issues can be dealt with quickly and easily they are of concern to the public and communities of County Durham and the support they offer is therefore very important.

Partnership Event

5. There will be a whole partnership event in November that will bring together all parts of the County Durham Partnership. The aims of the event are to help people understand the role they play in the work of the partnership as well as to highlight the CDP's achievements over the last five years. It will also encourage the whole partnership to focus on actions that have a big impact on local people; opportunities for asset transfer and the official launch the SCS as the shared vision for the future.
6. It is hoped that as a result of the event attendees will understand what the CDP can achieve through partnership working as well as feel enthusiastic about County Durham and its future. The event offers an opportunity to share ideas for change through workshop sessions focused on the partnership's six areas of cross thematic focus. Further details can be found in appendix two of the report.

Welfare Reform

7. The **Three Towns Partnership** is leading on work with the Department for Work and Pensions on a new social justice pilot which aims to improve welfare and wellbeing outcomes for customers receiving DWP benefits in Crook, especially those who are vulnerable and have particularly challenging circumstances.
8. The objectives of the pilot are:
 - a. To bring together the managers and practitioners of relevant agencies and support organisations in Crook, to identify where better customer outcomes can be achieved by working more closely together and build upon existing relationships;
 - b. To take a 'customer centric' view of the support people may receive concurrently from different organisations, consider whether effectiveness of support can be improved and whether communications can be formalised and coordinated;
 - c. To identify the causes and contributory factors of problematic outcomes such as benefit sanctions and identify where action can be taken, individually or collectively, to reduce or prevent such occurrences;
 - d. To consider whether practitioners in organisations would benefit from having a greater knowledge of how things work in each of our services.
9. The AAP brought 40 people together for the first meeting from a wide range of organisations to understand the starting point and explore the possibilities for the project. A subsequent meeting took place in July where an action plan was developed and agreed with different partners taking forward actions.

World War I Commemorations

10. There is a significant amount of activity taking place throughout the county to commemorate the centenary of Britain entering World War I. Many of the AAPs are working with local groups and supporting a wide variety of local events and initiatives.
11. The **4 Together Partnership** is working with elected members and community groups to help fund numerous projects across the partnership area to commemorate, educate, and bring people together to remember. One project will involve up to 90 young people participating in workshops over a number of weeks

to prepare for the performance “Home Fires”, a commemorative piece focusing on World War I which will take place at Auckland Castle. Other community based projects being developed include film clubs, tea dances, memorial plaques, and booklets being produced by children and young people for young people, including interviews with local people with their own war time memories.

12. Over the next four years there will be numerous projects in **Teesdale Action Partnership’s (TAP)** area also commemorating the centenary of the Great War. Local councillors have supported a scheme led by Bowes which aims to create a ‘roll of honour’ listing all the residents of Teesdale who served in World War I. It hopes to involve every community in the Teesdale area and will leave a legacy that started in 1914 and was never completed. This project has also been heavily supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.
13. Residents of Eggleston are working together to commission an artist to create a memorial stone that will be erected in the village as a lasting tribute to all those who gave their lives. TAP has liaised with the local community and local councillors in order to make this happen.
14. **East Durham AAP** has supported the restoration of the original enamelled brass World War I memorial in Easington. It was created in 1920 and was recovered from the original Welfare Hall following a fire in the 1930s. Since then it had been stored in a cupboard for a number of years. The AAP was able to identify a specialist conservator who did the restoration free of charge, ensuring that the restoration was completed before 4 August.

Joint working with the Voluntary Sector and Local Councils

15. The working groups which enable partners to work strategically with colleagues from the voluntary and community sector and representatives from local councils continue to meet and share information on key issues affecting all parts of the partnership.
16. The VCS Working Group, which drives forward improved working with the VCS and the delivery of the VCS Strategy, has driven work that has seen significant progress made towards developing a clear approach to increase the number, diversity and quality of volunteer opportunities and recognising the impact and value of volunteering in local communities.
17. Key achievements, led by Durham Community Action on behalf of the Working Group, include:
 - a. An updated Do-it website to publicise County Durham volunteer opportunities.
 - b. A Kite Mark for good practice in volunteer recruitment being developed and supported in order to improve the volunteer experience.
 - c. A Volunteer Passport to improve employability through the enhancement of personal skills.
 - d. The launch of Volunteer Awards for County Durham.
18. The Working Group invited Professor Tony Chapman to their July meeting who gave a presentation on ‘Continuity and Change in the Third Sector’. He gave an overview of the national and regional picture, the latter being based on his research

through the Third Sector Trends Study. This is now in its third phase and responses to the latest survey are being sought from the sector <https://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/durham/tstnortheast2014>. Feedback on the county information from the study will be available once the research is completed and a report published in May 2015.

19. The Working Group has submitted a response to the Office for Civil Society's consultation on a new fund to support the sustainability of VCSE organisations. The outcome of the consultation should be known in the autumn with the new fund due to be launched before the end of the year.
20. A VCS Market Engagement event was organised in July and involved 34 voluntary sector organisations. The purpose of the event was to consider 'Social Isolation' and how a range of providers covering a variety of specialisms e.g. carers, older people, learning disability, autism, mental health, young people services, family services are able to address issues which result in social isolation.
21. Providers identified a number of cross-cutting actions and themes to help address social isolation. These included:
 - a. Encouraging and enabling people to access services with the support of volunteers, buddying, mentoring schemes;
 - b. Communicating in a range of ways – not everyone has access to IT or want to engage in IT;
22. Other funding streams were also highlighted, including EU investment funds, Area Action Partnerships and how VCS organisations can work effectively in a consortia approach to access funding to deliver joined up services.
23. **East Durham AAP** has engaged with a number of Neighbourhood Planning events in partnership with Local Councils in the area. Together with Thornley Regeneration Group and the Parish Council, the AAP organised a community visioning day. The aim of which was to give the residents of Thornley the opportunity to view the plans for a new community centre and recruit a management committee. The event attracted over 200 residents and saw over 30 people recruited. The AAP and Locality has supported the group to develop a robust business plan, a new Charities structure – Charitable Infrastructure Organisation (CIO), develop new policies and appoint trustees for the new community facility.
24. The AAP team supported the delivery of a community conference to highlight services available in Shotton and identify emerging community issues. The event was attended by over 140 people and will contribute to the Shotton Neighbourhood Action Plan. This work has supported a successful Our Place funding application and will assist in addressing the local priorities as identified by the community conference.

The community development role of Area Action Partnerships

25. Whilst the updates given to Cabinet through these reports concentrate on the projects and initiatives supported by the 14 AAPs, it is also important to note that they deal with a wide variety of issues outside of these, ranging from environmental clean ups and litter to traffic calming. They are also widely seen as a source of

advice and support within their local communities. The following paragraphs show some examples of the work led by AAPs to support local communities and individuals.

26. A key concern within many of the AAPs at the present time is around welfare reform and questions have been regularly coming to the **4Together AAP** team about foodbanks. The local foodbank in the area approached officers for assistance and support to advertise the work that they do. This small request has led to the AAP devising a large scale welfare reform project for both Ferryhill and Chilton which is being developed at the current time and will lead to a Neighbourhood Budget project to refurbish the kitchen at St. Aidan's Chilton.
27. Members' enquiries also continue to be on the daily agendas of the AAP. There has been a series of anti-social behaviour linked issues including fly tipping, speeding, housing and licensing which are also raised through ongoing community consultation. Regular contact and support from partners means that the AAP addresses these complaints in a timely manner.
28. An example which has had a direct benefit to the local community is work carried out with Kier Group plc, a leading construction, services and property group specialising in building and civil engineering, support services, residential and commercial property development and infrastructure project investment. Through liaison with the AAP on local community needs, the Group is looking at how they can assist local groups with welfare reform projects. They are also interested in expanding one of the AAP's environmental and construction projects if their bid to Livin' is successful and this would expand a Chilton project to cover the Ferryhill area.
29. **Mid Durham AAP** is noted for its work at a village level, with 16 village action plans which have been developed through conversations with residents and partners over the last two years. Over that period the AAP has delivered 42 drop in surgeries and discussed village issues with over 500 residents, both young and old. Many of the issues that have arisen do not require AAP or County Councillor funding. A lot of the issues are related to either highway repairs, grass cutting or dog fouling, which residents are encouraged to report through the Highways Action Line or local PACT meetings. A number of these issues can also be solved by the residents themselves with officer support from the AAP and other partners, these include environmental improvements, newsletters, litter picks, community events and activities.
30. The Mid Durham AAP staff team attend and support various community partnerships, village halls and community associations and residents groups, offering advice where applicable and linking groups to other like-minded groups, partners, funding streams and countywide initiatives and programmes. The AAP also has good working relationships with its ten Parish Councils, attending regular meetings and a monthly Parish Councils Committee for the Mid Durham area. This relationship has seen the development of joint drop in village surgeries which created the village action plans.
31. The AAP has supported the Police in its work in Burnhope which, due to criminal activity over the past 15 years, had seen a huge reduction in community activity. Since 2010 the AAP has supported the resurrection of the local community

partnership which now has over 100 members, its own village newsletter, an annual gala and several environmental projects ongoing.

32. The **Stanley AAP** staff team also deals with a number of neighbourhood issues and resident queries on a daily basis. The officers work with County Council colleagues and key partners to address and take action on the many issues that come into the office via letter, telephone and email. The issues reported can range from a street lamp not working at a particular street corner to a housing relocation request from a disabled resident.
33. AAP officers act swiftly on local concerns and issues and ensure that the resident or organisation submitting the issue is kept up to date whilst it is being dealt with. In some cases solutions are not always available, however feedback is always passed on to local residents as to the reasons for this.
34. An example of supporting local community groups to access funding from the Stanley AAP area involves the South Moor Garden Association. They have been helped with their application to the County Durham Community Foundation for funding for improvements to the perimeter fence around their allotment site. The AAP co-ordinator assisted in filling in the necessary paperwork and ensured that the association also provided any accompanying paperwork that was required. South Moor Garden Association was successful in gaining the funding they applied for and the improvements were carried out. The Garden Association have now gone on and applied to other funds for further allotment improvements.
35. **Derwent Valley AAP** has also supported local groups in fundraising. As well as encouraging community groups and organisations to be proactive in fundraising, the AAP also plays a part in local fundraising efforts linked to Fairtrade, Willowburn Hospice and Marie Curie Cancer Care. Coffee mornings are hosted by the AAP on an annual basis to help raise funds for charity.
36. The AAP also supports local community organisations on a regular basis, this support ranges from providing advice regarding group governance, support with planned events, project advice and general signposting to other community and voluntary sector organisations and partners. By supporting the local community network through existing groups, the AAP has been able to promote its own work and has increased its forum membership to over 1,300 and the new Facebook page currently has over 300 'followers'.
37. It should be noted that the AAP also encourages and supports the creation of new groups, particular in areas where there is very little, if any, representation or means for the residents to have a collective voice. The AAP also works on a one to one basis with groups who are developing or researching projects specific to their area. This has recently led to the idea of hosting a 'Village Action' project aimed at focusing the efforts of the AAP team on a particular location for a set amount of time to help communities bring their ideas to fruition.
38. In order to develop projects to tackle AAP priorities and to add value to existing projects, the AAP officers frequently access data captured via a number of sources including the CRM system and monthly economic updates – this helps to keep the AAP up to date and further evidences local need.

39. The **Chester le Street and District AAP** is leading a piece of work to establish a new Friends of Chester-le-Street Riverside Park. This new group is designed to increase the amount of community involvement in the park and to work closely with the council's leisure services and the Riverside Management Team. The group will also be used as a vehicle to try to attract external funding into initiatives, improvements and events in the Riverside Park. 25 members of the public attended the inaugural meeting of the group in June and work is underway to develop a constitution for the group and to establish a management committee. The AAP will play a supportive role to this group with the aim of the group becoming self-sustaining and independent from the AAP moving forward.
40. Working since 2012 with Pelton Fell Community Partnership, the AAP has been engaged in helping to co-ordinate all the service providers to agree a standard of service delivery for that community under themes of clean, green and safe. Having helped design and deliver a survey of residents in the summer of 2013 which identified issues locally which impact on the community this then set the foundations for the development of the Pelton Fell Community Charter which gives some assurances to residents about the input, work and promises by services to deliver a quality service in that area. The AAP's role was to co-ordinate a partnership of eight service providers who have a stake or responsibility under the clean, green and safe agendas. The AAP was central to the whole process through their support to the partnership in ensuring the right links were made, services were committed to the charter, surveys were designed and delivered, the charter was printed and a launch event for the community was undertaken.
41. Allyson Rose (Chester-le-Street & District AAP – Community Development Project Officer) who undertook the key co-ordinating role on behalf of the AAP was nominated by Pelton Fell Community Partnership for a "Locality – Local authority heroes award", which is a national award celebrating local authority officers who have supported their community organisations. Allyson was one of only 22 winners across the country to receive the award for 'outstanding partnership in providing support, encouragement advice and genuine guidance to local community organisations' June 2014.
42. An area of concern for residents within the **Spennymoor AAP** area is the transporting of patients to GP surgeries. This was brought to the AAP's attention by a local resident who was unsure if there was such a scheme available to residents within the area, as it had been raised by a number of elderly residents directly to him. In order to address the query, the AAP co-ordinator arranged a meeting with Public Health colleagues and representatives from the Social Resource Centre based in Ferryhill. As a result of the meeting it was noted that this service was in existence and could be utilised by residents within the area. Also as a consequence of the meeting, the AAP now publicises the work of the Social Resource Centre on a regular basis and will work with the organisation on projects moving forward.
43. A second key issue of concern is about the area of land at the rear of Cheapside in Spennymoor which has been raised as an issue and appears to have been a concern to local people for a number of years. The main issue is due to the fact that this land is a relatively small area which is owned by a number of businesses/organisations that includes Durham County Council. As a result of these problems the Spennymoor AAP is endeavouring to try to find a long-term

resolution to the situation. Work has been undertaken in order to gain a full picture of the situation. Alongside this, work is ongoing with the private sector owners in order to obtain their co-operation to any long-term solution that can be found. Finally, local County Councillors are also fully engaged in order for them to be able to fully explain to residents, if approached, about the site and also to potentially look at any future funding which may need to be outlined to develop the area of land.

44. The Spennymoor AAP has been working on a number of key areas recently which have included the following:
 - a. Monitoring of the successful Your Money, Your Area, Your Views projects;
 - b. Continuation of the production of AAP countywide Youth & Business Engagement strategies;
 - c. Working towards a localised Carbon Offsetting project with Sustainability Strategy colleagues in Regeneration and Economic Development;
 - d. Development of local projects such as Mobile Cinema, BRASS Event, DurhamGate-Duke of Edinburgh, Skatepark, Young Peoples Publicity Project, Youth Council Project etc;
 - e. Awareness raising of the work of the AAP at key local events such as Spenny Gala, Blooming Great Tea Party etc.
45. Working with the Stanhope Community Centre committee, the **Weardale AAP** has looked at supporting the activities taking place within the centre, but more importantly working with groups to build longer term sustainability. The AAP team have been instrumental in linking together projects to ensure longer term sustainably and to avoid duplication.
46. The AAP board also received numerous concerns from local residents regarding disruption caused by the annual polar express. It therefore encouraged wider public consultation and meetings to find a positive outcome for all parties. The AAP has brokered relationships between the residents and service providers, ensuring that possible solutions are identified and agreed forward actions are accepted by all parties.
47. **Durham AAP**, like many others, deals with a vast range of issues arising from local communities and brought forward by local Elected Members on their behalf. The AAP has supported the creation of a local VCS network to help voluntary and community groups in providing mutual support for each other. To date there are over 120 new members (organisations and individuals) signed up. The AAP hosts events and funding workshops for organisations and individuals with support from partners including Durham Community Action.
48. A new Health Network has also been established within the AAP to support the needs of local VCS groups whose main activities are within the health sphere, supported by the AAP team.

Altogether wealthier

49. The **County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP)** at its Board on 28 July focused on Youth Unemployment. With presentations and discussion on the key issues; the scale of the challenge, perceptions of business and young people, our partner approaches to tackling the problem including learning and progression and

more tailored solutions, EU resources, the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and the proposed activities as a response to the challenge.

50. Presentations were provided by Linda Bailey (Children and Adults Services, Durham County Council), John Cuthbert (Chair of Business Education Board) and Michelle Duggan (North East Local Enterprise Partnership). Some of the key issues, challenges and areas of discussion covered:
 - a. High rates of youth unemployment that remain significantly higher than national rates
 - b. Skills attainment levels are increasing; however there is a significant gap and need to improve higher level skills
 - c. In terms of supporting progression, applications to higher education are increasing, but we have a low base and the joint lowest applications within the UK
 - d. Increasingly competitive apprenticeships are being filled by more qualified young people. This exacerbates unemployment for those with least experience and few qualifications.
 - e. Widening participation remains an important agenda. Need to continue to improve skills attainment and narrow the gap whilst enabling progression to employment and improving the employability of our young people.
 - f. Need to bridge the gap between supply and demand. Through the Business Education Board partners will strengthen the relationships and deliver practical solutions for business and schools.
51. As partners we have various strategies, approaches and services in place to support this agenda. We need to continue to effectively raise aspirations, deliver demand led training, careers guidance and give our young people the right tools to pursue the opportunities and make the use of available resources through the Youth Employment Initiative and European Funding.
52. The Board's discussion also focused on future investments within the County, including those that have received Single Local Growth Fund resources and the opportunities available through the next round of European Funding. The work of the Durham Investment Group was highlighted and it was agreed to continue to strengthen this inclusive partnership approach.
53. The North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) has secured £290m investment, which will help create over 4,000 of new jobs for the North East. The investment is part of the Government's Growth Deal, which was announced on 7 July 2014. This provides the North East and County Durham with funding to take forward its plans and projects to support economic growth as set out within the NELEP Strategic Economic Plan.
54. Resources allocated for Durham will support the delivery of key economic infrastructure, transport, skills and business schemes. Some of the investments include: Horden Rail Station (£3.3m); Newton Park infrastructure development (£10m); NETPark infrastructure (£6.8m); Centre for Processes and Innovation (CPI): Centre for Innovation in Formulation; Rural Skills Development, East Durham College (£10m); and the North East Rural Growth Network (£6m).

55. Work is ongoing to refresh the Housing Strategy to consider key changes and issues that have arisen since the development of the last strategy. The existing Housing Strategy for County Durham 'Building Altogether Better Lives' was developed to cover the period 2010 – 2015. It is planned that the refresh will keep the 'Building Altogether Better Housing Markets', 'Building Altogether Better Housing Standards' and 'Altogether Better at Housing People' themes. A phased approach to the refresh has been undertaken, with key issues being researched and evidenced to inform future partner discussion. A draft refreshed Housing Strategy will be completed by the end of December 2014.
56. The first stage of formal consultation on the Council's proposal to transfer its homes ended in June 2014. Employees hand delivered 21,908 'Offer Document Packs' and 15,500 tenants were spoken to during the consultation period.
57. Follow up visits then took place where 8,116 tenants were spoken to and a further 70 tenants attended drop in sessions on the offer throughout June 2014. Open Communities (Independent Tenant Adviser) received 20 calls from tenants about the transfer proposal. The Stage One representation period ended at midday on the 7 July 2014, with 1374 tenants responding to the consultation, indicating 87% of respondents supportive of the transfer proposal. In addition, seven leaseholders responded to the consultation. None of the responses received indicated that the council should change or amend the offers it has made as part of its Offer Document.
58. On 16 July 2014, Cabinet agreed to proceed to a ballot in August 2014. The result of this is the subject of a separate report on this agenda. The majority of tenants voted in favour of the proposal and further work will now be undertaken to hand ownership of its homes over to a new group of its existing housing services providers (Dale & Valley Homes, Durham City Homes and East Durham Homes).
59. The **Derwent Valley AAP** is currently developing a Mobile Internet Support Project which will help communities living in the more rural parts of the area to access information and internet provision, particularly in those areas which do not have community venues.
60. This project aims to build on the success of the 'Time to get Online' project piloted by partners including Derwentside Homes. It will offer residents the opportunity to learn the benefits of using the internet, staying safe online, setting up e-mails, saving money on services and products, accessing information about health services and activities, researching online job opportunities, completing forms online and keeping in touch with friends and relatives. The 'mobile' nature of this project means that residents will not have to travel to access this support and it will be taken directly to their villages via an information bus style approach which could also present opportunities to deliver free health checks and other available services to more difficult to reach residents.
61. The delivery of **Stanley AAP's** Retail Improvement Project is fully underway with seven shop front improvement grants coming to fruition. The seven shops that make up phase one of the project have undertaken a major facelift and have received: joinery repairs, painting to doors, woodwork and masonry. New signage has been provided to five of the shops.

62. The shops have also received retail advice about their shop and window display layout to help maximise their retail offer and improve their footfall. A full press release is to be issued in the coming weeks once the shop front improvements have had the time to have a marked impact on Stanley Front Street. Shopkeepers and local shoppers will be consulted on the reaction to the shop fronts and any increase in sales or profits as a result.
63. Phase two of the project will be launched alongside the press release with shops on the Front Street being encouraged to apply for a shop front grant by a certain deadline. A further six applications have already been received and have been put on hold until the deadline of phase two applications passes. The new applications will then be assessed and work identified. Schedule of works and sign designs for phase two will be carried out throughout June/July. Advertisement consent will be submitted in early August and once approval is confirmed, works will commence in late September 2014.
64. Building on the success of last year's apprenticeship initiative, a further 15 apprenticeship opportunities will be provided in the **East Durham Rural Corridor AAP** area. By working in partnership with Job Centre Plus and colleagues in Regeneration and Development within Durham County Council; £15,000 of Area Budget funding along with £22,500 of National Apprenticeship Scheme (NAS)/ Job Centre Plus funding will increase the number of apprenticeships in the area by encouraging private businesses to create additional opportunities.
65. The project will work with private sector Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) who have never recruited an apprentice before, or have not recruited an apprentice in the last year thereby increasing the business base of those companies who recruit apprentices (only 24% in 2011/12) and providing more opportunities for young people. A grant of £1,500 is available to SMEs from the NAS AGE 16-24 initiative and an informal agreement has been reached with NAS in order for the AAP to 'top up' the financial provision to provide a total incentive with a value of £2,500 (i.e. £1,500 from NAS and £1,000 from the AAP). The apprenticeship opportunities created will last a minimum of 12 months with the incentive being paid at the end of the first 13 weeks of employment.
66. In relation to the apprentices funded last year, at the current time monitoring shows that all of the apprentices will gain full time employment. A positive example of one of the employers engaged in this scheme is Altec Engineering in Bowburn. The AAP co-ordinator and Task Group Lead visited them recently and were very impressed by the organisation's forward thinking and felt that the company were contributing more to the apprentice by funding them to pursue higher qualifications.

Altogether better for children and young people

67. Following consultation, the **Children and Families Partnership** endorsed the Early Help Strategy. The strategy provides a refreshed approach to early intervention and prevention in County Durham. As part of the transformation of Children's Services, the aim of this strategy is to support families as early as possible to prevent needs escalating. As part of the Early Help Strategy, the new First Contact Service went live on 7 April 2014. This provides a single point of access for Children's Services to ensure that referrers and families can get early help services quickly.

68. Progress has been made in relation to the new arrangements as outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability reforms as part of the Children and Families Act. A 'local offer' of available services to children and young people with special educational needs between 0-25 years has been published on the [Families Information Service](#) .
69. The Children and Families Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board supported the proposal for a six month consultation for a voluntary code, discouraging people from smoking at outdoor play areas in County Durham. Smoke free play areas are part of the 'Smokefree County Durham Tobacco Control Alliance' plan. It is hoped that by making play areas smoke free, and changing social norms it will prevent young people from taking up smoking, as well as motivating smokers to cut down or quit, reducing exposure to second hand smoke, protecting the environment and reducing tobacco related litter. The consultation process will begin in July 2014 and will involve the public, communities and partners, including AAPs.
70. The **County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP)** is working in collaboration with the North East Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) to tackle youth unemployment in the County. The scheme, which has already launched, aims to crowd source ideas from the whole community utilising the Simpl platform. This is an electronic tool available on the FutureGov website for local councils and organisations to pose a question or challenge for a solution to a problem. Anyone can submit an idea, which will be voted on and those selected are taken forward and considered further at an event. The FSB and the CDEP are hopeful that the ideas will infuse new concepts to reduce the level of youth unemployment and help more young people reach their aspirations.
71. In the **Three Towns AAP** the 'Kids for Kids UK' received funding from the AAP to take a group of young people through an all- encompassing film making experience where they were able to experience first-hand, all aspects of film production from the conception of an idea right through to the marketing and organisation of their own film premiere. Participants were encouraged to take the lead in every role, supported by a team of professionals who were on hand to give advice and guidance throughout the process. The course took place over eight weeks, with participants looking at film theory, scriptwriting, pre-production methods, workshops in camera, lighting and sound operation. They then took part in the film shoot with individuals taking on roles such as director, production assistant, camera operator, lighting assistant, make up and continuity. Participants then worked post-production on editing, music, titles and credits as well as the marketing and organisation of a film premier.
72. The outcomes of the project include:
- a. 12 young people took part in the project to produce a high quality film and organising a film premier at a local venue, the New Victoria Centre, Howden le Wear.
 - b. Over 100 people attended the film premier showcasing the work of the young people.
 - c. The young people who participated in the programme are inspired by film and media and the project has opened many new doors for individuals

including opportunities to engage in BFI residentials in London with one young person being offered one to one mentoring from BAFTA.

73. Working in partnership with the Pre School Learning Alliance, the Healthy Starts project will support local families with information relating to health and wellbeing and support the volunteers who run local toddler groups to continue to support the families in an ongoing capacity. The project will focus on giving families information and advice on various issues around healthy weaning and the importance of exercise for children.
74. The Healthy Starts Project will include four visits to the eight toddler groups running in the **Great Aycliffe and Middridge Partnership** area: two groups in Neville Parade, Stephenson Way, St. Clare's, St Mary's, Burnhill Way, Newton Aycliffe Youth & Community Centre and the Xcel Centre. The first visit will be to liaise with the leader to discuss the type of support needed and to go through a resource pack with the leader which contains a risk assessment and good practice checklist whilst the second visit will give families information about Welfare Reform changes and how and when they come into effect. Advice will be shared on budgeting and the dangers of payday loans, setting up a credit union or bank account and looking at where they can access the internet. Information will also be shared on different local organisations where families can go for help, for example 'GAMP Welfare Champions'.
75. The third and fourth visits will focus on Healthy Lifestyles in order to develop healthy eating choices and the importance of exercise for young children. Each session will include a messy play activity centred on making healthy choices: families will participate in making healthy snacks and meals looking at portion sizes, cost and healthy options. Sessions will also include music and movement time.
76. The Newton Aycliffe Detached Youth Work project, supported by GAMP Area Budget, will support two additional youth workers to target areas identified by police and young people who are involved in, or at risk of, being involved in risk taking behaviour e.g. alcohol and drugs, sex and antisocial behaviour. They will contact young people, predominantly at weekends, and work with individuals to recognise and manage their behaviour. They will also refer young people onto the project's workshops which will be held during the day with specialist tutors/agencies.
77. As part of this work, a series of workshops will be delivered to young people from local schools, identified by staff. Young people from the pupil referral unit will also be involved. The workshops will include: drugs and alcohol, sexual health, crime and antisocial behaviour, internet safety, bullying, HMP prisoner workshops and visits to local magistrates courts. The young people will have court visits to give an insight into the formal process and the gravity/impact of this process.
78. **Teesdale AAP** (TAP) has been working with local partners to organise and run a youth arts festival. The pilot YOUfest took place in July and involved 200 young people aged 13 to 18, with support from youth workers and volunteers. There was a diverse programme of music, dance, drama and art and young people were able to use the facilities at the TCR Hub, Teesdale Leisure Centre and Teesdale School who jointly hosted this event. To complete the festival atmosphere young people were able to camp out on the Saturday night.

79. Multi-sports for children are being delivered by the Council's leisure services team in villages right across the Teesdale area which is being made possible by funding from TAP and local Councillors. A successful pilot in Eggleston has proven to be very popular and now it is hoped that this can be repeated in communities stretching from Toft Hill to Mickleton.
80. In order to give more opportunities for young people and the wider community a project has recently been launched by Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services (UTASS) that will offer training to minibus drivers. It will allow young drivers to obtain the correct permissions on their driving licence and will offer refresher courses for older drivers. The project is funded by TAP and was developed through the Voluntary Sector Task Group.
81. For the past three years **Chester-le-Street & District AAP** has been supporting the National Citizens Service (NCS) programme which focuses on school leavers (16/17 year olds) undertaking citizenship programmes. The AAP's role has been to introduce the 300+ annual intake of young people across County Durham to the AAP and what an AAP does, using the Chester-le-Street work as an example.
82. The aim of the whole programme is to enable them to make a contribution to communities through helping achieve something of benefit locally and through doing so give the young people an insight into enterprise and also in aiding them become a better citizen. AAP staff were asked to give out the countywide NCS awards in November 2013 for the recognition of the AAP's role in aiding the programme and the hundreds of young people who had taken part.

Altogether healthier

83. The first **Health and Wellbeing Board** Annual Report was agreed in July 2014. It outlines the key achievements of the Board in its first year of operation since the Board was established as a statutory committee of Durham County Council, which include:
 - a. Agreeing ways of engaging with patients, services users, carers, the voluntary and community sector and other stakeholders in relation to the Health and Wellbeing Board activities
 - b. Developing the first Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-17 and supporting delivery plan for County Durham
 - c. Agreeing the County Durham Better Care Fund plan which will support seven work programmes to integrate health and social care working
84. A Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy Delivery Plan for 2014-17 was also agreed by the board in July 2014. The delivery plan will ensure the actions in the strategy are taken forward by partners. Plans and initiatives in the Better Care Fund have been aligned to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy delivery plan to ensure the work on integration and transformation is fully reflected.
85. End of life care is a key priority of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Following a review of hospice and palliative care services, the Palliative and End of Life Care Plan has been agreed. The plan will identify commissioning and service developments needed to ensure that the people of County Durham who are diagnosed with a life limiting condition, and their families and carers, receive high

quality sustainable services which will lead to improvements in their patient and carer experiences when they are progressing towards the end of life.

86. Figures show that the number of people aged 60 and over with dementia is expected to double in County Durham by 2030, so it is essential that the right services are in place to accommodate need. The Dementia Strategy for County Durham has been agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board to address this challenge, by improving early diagnosis and support for patients with dementia and their family and carers. A key area of the strategy is the roll out of 'Dementia Friendly Communities'; Barnard Castle and Chester le Street have been selected as the first two sites in County Durham to pilot this initiative.
87. Working in partnership with the Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP), **Great Aycliffe and Middridge AAP (GAMP)** has recently launched an innovative project to help individuals with a health condition or disability return to the labour market. The Work for Health project aims to provide access to a training programme that will help individuals with a health condition or disability (physical, mental, psychological etc.) within the GAMP area move towards employment by focusing on the development of 'key' employability skills; providing access where appropriate to health interventions and support. The project will support clients to reintegrate with the concepts of employability and provide a combination of group and one to one support. The project will target GAMP area residents aged 19+ with a health condition wishing to improve their confidence and employability skills with a view to finding work in the future.
88. The ten week course will include a Level 1 Employability qualification (accredited by One Awards), interactive workshops to boost confidence, look at stress relief, promote team work, communication and problem solving. It will also cover digital workshops to enable job search, use of Universal Jobmatch and uploading CVs and online applications. This will be provided by the National Careers Service. Employer led seminars will be organised in partnership with local employers. Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and GAMP Welfare Champions will also be invited to provide support to clients affected by the current welfare reforms. Learners will also receive one to one support from staff or volunteers should this be required outside the two hours per week learning time, through informal drop-in sessions and community surgeries.
89. The **Stanley AAP** coordinator has been working with officers from Public Health in the preparation of a Health and Wellbeing commission to help improve the health and wellbeing of residents residing in South Moor and Quaking Houses. The project will incorporate a strong targeted tobacco control approach.
90. The project will aim to tackle health inequalities and improve health and wellbeing in the area. The main objectives of the project are:
 - a. Increasing knowledge and awareness of health issues in the community- specifically tobacco controls, social isolation issues for older people;
 - b. Promoting and facilitating the community to build networks, relationships and friendships that can provide caring, mutual help and empowerment;
 - c. Promoting mental well-being and developing resilience;
 - d. Supporting people back into education, training and employment;

- e. Helping people access health services including the appropriate uptake of preventive services;
 - f. Empowering people to make positive lifestyle changes to improve their health, particularly when working with disadvantaged, low income or minority ethnic communities;
 - g. Focusing on helping people to manage their long term conditions.
91. The Health Improvement Service (part of the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust) has been appointed as deliverers for the South Moor and Quaking Houses Health and Wellbeing project. Stanley AAP will continue to work with Public Health officers and the Health Improvement Service to make the project a success.
92. Roddymoor Allotments has received funding from **Three Towns Partnership** over the last two years. Roddymoor had no community building within the village and run-down allotments. The Neighbourhood budget monies, along with some monies from the remaining Its Up 2 U funding, helped to develop a community building along with storage area and a community garden which is available to all of the community as well as local groups and schools.
93. The benefits of the project have been significant and include:
- a. The community has been reenergised and feel more positive about the future of their community;
 - b. The community are now working together with motivation and encouragement;
 - c. Links have been made to local schools that will be using the community garden to teach pupils about growing their own vegetables;
 - d. Links have been made to the Salvation Army 'Victory Programme' which has taken over a plot to teach the 'Dig for Victory' element of the programme;
 - e. Links have been made to the local care home that will be using the community garden facility.

Altogether safer

94. The **Safe Durham Partnership** recently approved the Safe Durham Partnership Plan for 2014/17. The plan demonstrates how the Partnership will deliver on the strategic objectives, which are:
- a. Reduce anti-social behaviour.
 - b. Protect vulnerable people from harm.
 - c. Reduce re-offending.
 - d. Alcohol and substance misuse harm reduction.
 - e. Embedding the Think Family approach.
 - f. Counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism.
 - g. Road casualty reduction.
95. Each priority is delivered by a sub thematic group, each of which will develop a supporting delivery plan which sets out the actions intended to deliver the objectives and outcomes of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan.
96. The Ministry of Justice 'Transforming Rehabilitation' programme has resulted in the separation of probation services. A new public sector National Probation Service is

dealing with all those who pose the highest risk of serious harm to the public. A private sector Community Rehabilitation Company is now managing all other offenders. The National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company are responsible authorities on the Safe Durham Partnership Board and will support both statutory and non-statutory partnership arrangements in County Durham.

97. The Safe Durham Partnership was awarded 'Runner Up' in the Howard League Community Programmes Award for its approach to Integrated Restorative Practices at the national conference held on the 15 July, where presentations were awarded by HRH Princess Royal.
98. The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduces a new range of simplified powers to deal with ASB. The Safe Durham Partnership is preparing for the introduction of those powers which, from October 2014, will include:
 - a. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, injunctions and support orders will be replaced by a single 'Injunction to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance';
 - b. A whole range of measures from litter clearance, dog fouling, no alcohol zones and premises closure will be replaced by three measures designed to protect the community, protect public spaces and protect neighbourhoods from premises where drug misuse is causing nuisance or disorder; and,
 - c. Complex dispersal orders will be replaced by powers for the police to require individuals to leave an area where they are likely to be, or already have been, involved in anti-social behaviour.
99. Seaham Neighbourhood Policing team have been piloting a community engagement approach in the Deneside Ward, supported by **East Durham AAP**. They have undertaken nine focus groups which have identified the priority issues which the residents would like to be addressed and there are consistent themes that have emerged. On a positive note, the residents 'love where they live' and believe that 'Seaham is a good place to live' but unfortunately some also stated that there is 'no community spirit'. The focus groups have motivated residents to get more involved in their area, an example being that residents organised a litter pick of a communal area with over 30 Adults and Young People helping to fill 50 rubbish bags, remove mattresses, fridges, cookers etc.

Altogether greener

100. The **Environment Partnership** Board has appointed a new member with representation now secured from Durham University which will assist in strengthening the partnership as there are opportunities to engage further with the University in terms of its environmental programme and local activities.
101. The 'Environment in your Communities' group is working on a volunteer project called Nourishing Neighbourhoods where community groups and individuals can access 'grow your own' facility. This project has health and social benefits and will involve a wide range of partners. The group is also co-ordinating partners to deliver a joined up approach to local action. This is based on the Council's Community Action (CAT) Team approach to resolving environmental issues within communities.

102. The launch of the Environment Awards was held on 5 June, 2014 at the Gala Theatre. The event celebrated the launch of the awards 25th anniversary and it was well received by partners. There are 12 categories for the 2014 awards including a new category named 'places and spaces'. Judging is currently taking place for the awards and a ceremony is to be held in November which is funded via partnership sponsorship.
103. Durham City was chosen by Northumbria in Bloom judges as a national Britain in Bloom finalist in the Large Town category. Sedgefield was also a finalist in the Small Town category. This entry is led by Sedgefield Town Council and Sedgefield in Bloom and supported by the Authority. The judges visited Durham on 7 August and the final results will be announced 16 October 2014.
104. Britain in Bloom looks at the wider picture of residential areas, environmental responsibility and community participation as well as flower displays. It is a partnership initiative and includes voluntary organisations, Durham University, Durham Railway Station and the Police. Funding for the Britain in Bloom Durham entry was secured by various partners including AAPs, parish councils, members and businesses.
105. **Stanley AAP** supported Durham Wildlife Trust, Natural England and County Council Colleagues in their successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding for the Durham Heartland Heaths – Community Heaths Restoration Project. This is one of three complementary projects being taken forward by the Three Rivers Local Nature Partnership, to restore and regenerate Durham's heathland heritage in its heartland communities. Over two years, the project will:
- a. Establish closer links between communities and their local heaths;
 - b. Facilitate the integration of ideas from local groups into how their heathland sites are managed;
 - c. Establish and train volunteer groups to carry out practical countryside management works and wildlife surveys;
 - d. Lead 'green gym' work groups and health walks;
 - e. Build the capacity within the community groups to sustain this activity beyond the lifetime of the project.
106. The project offers the opportunity for local people to be at the heart of this regeneration, helping to determine how sites are managed, and using this as a catalyst for tackling some of the effects of deprivation. Increasing the appreciation of, and access to, the heathland sites could help improve the physical and mental health and well-being of local residents, offer the potential for skills training, and thereby effect regeneration within the communities themselves.

Area Action Partnerships Update

107. In addition to individual projects the AAPs are collectively involved in a number of different pieces of work. This covers a wide variety of project work as well as the broader support highlighted earlier in the report. Some further examples of their work are detailed below.
108. A project which has just launched in the **Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP** area is Park Life. This is a new and exciting programme of activities for children and

families exclusively designed to make best use of the outdoor spaces at Hackworth Park in Shildon, Bishop Auckland Town Recreation Ground and Glenholme Park in Crook . Families and children are encouraged to come along and try activities such as outdoor table tennis, cycling, running, archery, tennis, and many more. Both daytime and evening sessions are available, and subject to weather conditions, activities will move into one of the local leisure centres. The project also secured Sport England's Community Sport Activation Fund at a total of £250,000 through support from AAPs (BASH and 3 Towns) and DDES CCG.

109. **Stanley Area Action Partnership** and a number of County Councillors via their Neighbourhood Budgets supported the delivery of the BRASS: Durham International Festival - an annual celebration of internationally acclaimed brass artists. Building on the success of previous years, schools in the Stanley AAP area had the opportunity to benefit from the high quality musicians visiting Durham via their own intimate International Brass Band Performance. The overall aim was to ensure children and young people from the area who would not normally have access, benefit from the high quality, cultural and artistic opportunities which were offered throughout the festival.
110. The funding provided by the AAP and Councillors contributed towards a focused programme of outreach activity as part of the festival, in the form of performances/workshops in 15 schools from our exciting international street bands who were resident for the festival duration. This built on an established expectation from schools in the area that have successfully benefited from education and community activities as part of the festival in previous years.
111. Performances from international street bands are a popular aspect of the festival and provided a whole school experience, having been reported to be a highly effective tool in raising levels of cultural awareness, inspiration to play a musical instrument and generating opportunities for further in-school activity.
112. The AAP funded 15 school performances in 2013, reaching a total of 3893 staff and pupils. As in previous years, The Forge will lead on all co-ordination and booking of the bands into schools. The most popular words the children and staff used to describe their experiences were fun, fantastic, happy, amazing, achieving, enjoyable, excellent and inspiring.
113. Badged 'Are you Prepared' **Chester-le-Street & District AAP**, in partnership with the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU), local Town Business and Resident Associations undertook a 'drop-in' session for communities and parish councils to learn more about community resilience. The AAP through its Improved Environment Task Group has been championing the cause to help better prepare local communities for potential emergency situations. Chester-le-Street Town has traditionally suffered from severe flooding, and the technical measures required to help stem flooding incidents are being addressed through neighbourhood teams alongside the Environment Agency. Northumbrian Water also has a proposed scheme, which could start this summer, investing circa £3m in improved drainage.
114. The AAP was conscious that the missing link in this work was in ensuring the communities of the town and surrounding villages were more confident, prepared for an emergency situation which could arise in the future. The drop in session was designed to give an introduction to community resilience planning and the benefits

of this. Emergency services such as the Fire Service and Police representatives were also there to inform attendees of their responses to emergencies and the importance of communities being more prepared. Following the drop in sessions six communities across the AAP area are looking to take forward their own community resilience plans, relevant to potential issues within their areas. The AAP alongside the CCU and community partners will look to continue this work and have a number of community resilience plans in place by 2015.

115. Tourism brings economic wealth into **Weardale**, and the AAP's Tourism Task Group is working with Farmers, B & Bs, cafes, visitor agencies and networks including attractions to identify how all partners can maximise the tourism experience and bring in additional visitors. The groups have identified that, by utilising social media, effective B & B management, incentivising money off vouchers for visitor attractions and understanding the visitor offer for the entire county, this will offer some sustainability. A number of cycle, walking and visitor itineraries are being developed specifically to celebrate and publicise the Weardale offer.

Recommendations and reasons

116. Members are requested to note the report.

Contact: Clare Marshall, Principal Partnerships and Local Councils Officer
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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - Area and Neighbourhood budgets are utilised and delivered through the 14 AAPs and ensure the Council (and AAPs) receive improved information on the outputs achieved through use of locality budgets.

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - The actions set out in this report aim to ensure equality and diversity issues are embedded within the working practice of AAPs.

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - Altogether safer is the responsibility of the Safe Durham Partnership.

Human Rights - None

Consultation - The County Durham Partnership framework is a key community engagement and consultation function of the Council and its partners. The recommendations in the report are based on extensive consultation with AAP partners and the establishment of a Sound Board to progress the recommendations and will continue this consultative approach.

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications – None

Appendix two

Partnership Events 2014

Date	Event Title	Lead Partner	Contact Information
18 September 2014	Prevent Seminar: Perspectives on Terrorism	Durham County Council	prevent@durham.pnn.police.uk or graham.mcardle@durham.gov.uk 03000 265436
23 September 2014	Domestic Homicide Review Symposium - Embedding the Lessons	Durham County Council	Jeanette Stephenson Jeanette.stephenson@durham.gov.uk 03000 267390
26 September 2014	Economic Partnership Social Inclusion Conference	Durham County Council	Ruth Robinson ruth.robinson@durham.gov.uk 03000 264716
October	Mental Health Awareness Month	All	Catherine Richardson catherine.richardson@durham.gov.uk 03000 267667
2 October 2014	Health and Wellbeing Big Tent Event	Durham County Council	Andrea Petty andrea.petty@durham.gov.uk 03000 267312
10 October 2014	World Mental Health Day Conference	Durham County Council	Catherine Richardson catherine.richardson@durham.gov.uk 03000 267667
20 November 2014	Whole Partnership Event – County Durham Partnership	Durham County Council	Clare Marshall clare.marshall@durham.gov.uk 03000 263593
20 November 2014	VONNE annual conference	VONNE	Angela Goodfellow 0191 233 2000

**Overview and Scrutiny Management
Board**

20 October 2014

Cabinet

15 October 2014

Welfare Reform Update



Report of Corporate Management Team

Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Don McLure, Corporate Director, Resources

**Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic
Development**

Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council

**Councillor Alan Napier, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Portfolio
Holder for Finance and**

**Councillor Eddie Tomlinson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing
and Rural Issues**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on welfare reform and its impacts on the county and to outline proposals to extend the work to encompass a wider remit looking at poverty in the county.

Background

- 2 Welfare reform has been a major element of the Coalition programme for government since 2010. The government believes that by amending the welfare system it will be able to encourage more people back into work, reducing dependency on welfare and achieving over £15 billion savings per year by 2015/16. Over 40 changes have or are being made to the benefits system, mainly under the Welfare Reform Act 2011, and the scale of change has been described as the most significant for over a generation.
- 3 Of the major changes proposed, the following have been implemented so far:
 - Localisation of Council Tax Support;
 - Restricting housing benefit payments due to 'under occupancy';
 - Applying a 'benefit cap' to any household receiving more than £500 a week in benefit;

- Introduction of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) for new claimants and some existing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants.
- 4 The government has now confirmed that the flagship policy change of Universal Credit which will bring together six existing benefits into a new single payment having been delayed will now be rolled out nationally from early 2015. It is possible however that the council will encounter some Universal Credit claimants before that date, as individuals may move to the county from pilot areas where the new single payment has already been introduced.
 - 5 No overall figures are available for the UK on how many people are affected by all of the changes brought forward by the Welfare Reform Act 2011. However, within County Durham we still estimate that approximately 95,000 households will be affected by one or more of the welfare reforms.
 - 6 Members have received a number of regular update reports on welfare reform, the most recent being on 12 February 2014.

Policy update

Welfare spending

- 7 Since the last report to Members, the government has set the cap for total welfare spending at £119 billion for 2015-16, rising in line with inflation to £127 billion in 2018-19. The cap is in line with current welfare expenditure in 2014/15 and includes child benefit, incapacity benefit, winter fuel payment and income support, but does not include state pension and Jobseeker's Allowance.
- 8 More recently both the Labour and Conservative Party have announced freezing some welfare payments if they are elected into government at the next general election.
- 9 In line with the Welfare Benefits Up-rating Act 2013, any change to the overall cap would be subject to a parliamentary approval.

Universal Credit

- 10 In relation to Universal Credit (UC), government has confirmed that the national roll out of the scheme will begin early in 2015 for single claimants previously eligible for Jobseekers Allowance. Alongside this they have announced details of how they will be developing local partnerships primarily between the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) and local authorities which will support the implementation programme. These partnerships will be known as 'Universal Support'. DWP will also put in place Delivery Partnership Agreements between Jobcentre Plus and local authorities to provide funding for those who need extra help.
- 11 A key questions and answers guide developed from the experience of the local authority-led pilots has been published. The document covers the experience and learning from the pilot areas, and identifies areas of learning which other authorities can use in implementing UC. Key outcomes include: ensuring that there is better integration of services to help provide better

customer services and partnership working; and making sure frontline staff have knowledge, skills and understanding to help in any triage process.

- 12 The DWP has also had to begin an investigation into the Universal Job match site, after concerns were raised that in the region of 300,000 jobs on the site may be fake.

Benefit cap

- 13 A legal appeal brought by two lone parent families to the benefit cap was dismissed by the Court of Appeal in February. The court in making its judgement, stated that the government's policy discriminates against women, but that the discrimination was justified because it reflects the political judgement of the government. The court of appeal also made reference to the implementation and described as a 'matter of concern' the government's delay in addressing problems with the cap's application to women's refuges.
- 14 However, at the start of March 2014, the DWP brought proposals to the Social Security Advisory Committee for a number of amendments which would exclude benefit paid to cover housing costs in most supported housing from being taken into account for the household benefit cap or being met via the Universal Credit rent element. The proposals would create four categories of accommodation which would be excluded including women's refuges and some housing authority hostels.

Personal Independence Payments

- 15 Concerns have also been expressed about to the new Personal Independence Payment (PIP) system. The House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee in its report 'Monitoring the Performance of the Department for Work and Pensions in 2012-13' found that the length of time that disabled people were having to wait to find out if they were eligible for benefits was unacceptable, with some claimants having to wait six months for their claim to be processed. The report makes a number of recommendations including that the DWP needs to clear the backlog of existing PIP claims before extending the programme of reassessment of existing DLA claimants.
- 16 As part of the first independent review of PIP, the DWP held a recent call for evidence to which the council submitted a response. This is the first independent review as required by Section 89 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

Social housing and spare room subsidy

- 17 There have been a number of developments in relation to social housing and the spare room subsidy. The government has released the 'Prevention of Social Housing Fraud (Power to require information)' regulations. These regulations make it a criminal offence for sub-letting or parting with possession without permission of social housing. The regulations also enable local authorities to require information from private sector bodies when undertaking a social housing fraud investigation, in a similar manner to the powers they have when undertaking social security fraud investigations.
- 18 In addition, the Department of Communities and Local Government has published research into the mutual exchange scheme. Their research in 12

demonstration areas has concluded that the take up of the scheme was enhanced when there were specific housing officers employed to promote and support the scheme. However, they have little evidence of the impact that increased mobility may have on reducing welfare payments and meeting people's housing needs.

- 19 In January 2014, the government identified an error in Housing Benefit regulations which meant that working age social housing tenants who have occupied the same home since 1996 and remained on continuous housing benefit should not have been affected by the policy in 2013/14. The DWP has now closed the loophole and local authorities are checking records and processing benefit payments to individuals who may have had their housing benefit reduced due to the under occupancy charge in 2013/14. In the county, the council worked with its housing providers and identified 1,454 potential cases where the under occupancy charge may have been applied. All cases were reviewed as a matter of priority and we successfully awarded additional Housing Benefit to 491 tenants totaling £278,000.
- 20 On 2 July 2014, Andrew George MP presented a private member's bill to Parliament, entitled the Affordable Homes Bill. In part, the bill aims to introduce three new exemptions to the application of the under-occupation deduction from Housing Benefit (or the housing element of Universal Credit) for claimants who are deemed to be under-occupying their social rented homes. These include exemptions for people who could not be found a smaller home; disabled people who need a spare bedroom; or who have adapted homes.
- 21 National evidence to date on the impact of the spare room subsidy has been mixed. One investigation with social housing providers concluded that only six per cent of the social housing tenants affected by the spare room subsidy moved home, with 28 per cent of tenants falling into rent arrears since the changes were introduced. Whereas other feedback has suggested that there was an "indiscernible number" of tenants in arrears.
- 22 On 5 September 2014, the bill received its second reading and was voted through for detailed scrutiny at the committee stage.
- 23 Several Housing Benefit and Social Housing circulars have been published. The key circulars have included the 'HB S2/2014' which has provided information on the additional funding which will be made available to local authorities to meet the additional costs of implementing welfare reform change in 2014/15. The council has been allocated £187,850 in addition to £281,186 received in 2013/14 to meet the new burdens arising from the changes to local housing allowance, removal of spare room subsidy and the benefit cap. The note highlights that extra funding will be distributed to meet the IT costs associated with reporting and to meet the costs of removal of HB to European Economic Area jobseekers. The council also received an additional £20,000 in September 2014 to meet the additional administration costs of dealing with 'persons from abroad'.
- 24 On 10 September 2014, the government issued a consultation on 'right to move' to help social tenants move to another area to take up work. It proposes to introduce new rules that would ensure local residency

requirements do not prevent social tenants from moving into the area to take up work or training opportunities.

- 25 Social tenants relocating for work would be given greater priority, either by creating a new 'reasonable preference' category – used by councils to prioritise people for social housing – or through strengthened statutory guidance to ensure local authorities apply the existing 'hardship' reasonable preference category to include people moving for work or training.
- 26 Further proposed new statutory guidance will also ensure that every council in England would have to set aside at least one per cent of lets for tenants who need to move because of work or training (those that opt not to do so would need to explain why to voters).
- 27 Ministers also advised that later this year, the government intends to launch a new fund to help a number of councils to trial new and innovative ways of helping people looking to move for work in their area.

Localisation of Council Tax Support

- 28 In January 2014, the Institute of Fiscal Studies reported that the 10 per cent cut in national budget for Council Tax prior to localisation, caused 80 per cent of English councils to reduce entitlements to council tax support, resulting in many residents having to pay council tax for the first time. With local authorities obliged to protect pensioners, entitlements were reduced for 2.5 million working age households, by an average of £160 in 2013–14. Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) reported average increases of 30 to 40 per cent, in the number of people seeking advice from about council tax debt in July–September 2013.
- 29 On 11 March 2014, the Public Accounts Committee published its report on Council Tax Support following the 10 per cent reduction in the national budget and the localisation of council tax support in 2013/14. The committee concluded that although authorities differed in how much of the funding reduction they passed to claimants, many had cut entitlements and had not made the savings hoped for by ministers.
- 30 Around 230 local authorities had introduced schemes which required claimants to pay minimum council tax payments and of these, 133 local authorities offered no protection to vulnerable groups, other than pensioners and war pensioners.
- 31 The committee highlighted that whilst the reform was intended to increase incentives to encourage people into work, in 19 areas, people could lose more of their earnings as a result of income tax and national insurance contributions combined with the withdrawal of Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit.
- 32 The committee consequently called on the government to improve its understanding of the impact of benefit cuts when introduced alongside other funding reductions, such as cuts in town hall spending.
- 33 The government responded by reiterating its current approach to assessing the impact of welfare and benefit changes through joint work and impact

assessments through the Department for Communities and Local Government and DWP.

Entitlements for migrants

- 34 In July 2014 the government announced plans to halve the period over which European migrants can claim benefits. From November, European jobseekers will only be able to claim Jobseekers Allowance and other key welfare benefits for a maximum period of three months. This follows changes that were announced earlier this year to introduce a minimum three month delay to claiming benefits and to cut off benefits after six months unless the individual has very clear job prospects.

Support with childcare costs

- 35 From autumn 2015 the government will provide 20 per cent support on childcare costs up to £10,000 per year for each child. The limit had previously been set at £6,000. This now means support of up to £2,000 per child per year. Tax-Free Childcare will be open to more than twice as many families as currently use Employer Supported Childcare (ESC) vouchers and, unlike ESC, will not depend on employers offering it. In addition to giving support to the self-employed, the scheme has been adjusted to ensure those working part-time, earning £50 per week and above, those on maternity, paternity or adoption leave and those starting their own business who may not meet the minimum earning requirement will be included, giving them government help with childcare costs for the first time.
- 36 The scheme will be introduced more quickly than previously announced so that all working parents with children under 12 will be covered within the first year from autumn 2015. This is significantly faster than initially proposed, where children under 12 would have gradually qualified for the scheme over a seven year period.
- 37 Following consultation in 2013, the government also announced in March 2014 that all families in Universal Credit will be able to receive 85 per cent support on childcare costs, up from 70 per cent. In line with the principles of the welfare cap, offsetting savings to fund this expansion will be found from within the Universal Credit programme. Further details will be set out in Autumn Statement, which is expected at the beginning of December.

Troubled Families

- 38 On 19 August 2014, the government announced that its Troubled Families programme is to be expanded.
- 39 Work will begin this year in 51 of the best performing areas, including County Durham, ahead of a national five year programme from 2015 to help more troubled families.
- 40 While the programme will continue to tackle truancy and prioritise getting adults into work, the programme will be expanded to work with children under 5 as well as school-age children and will also have a particular focus on improving poor health including mental health and helping a larger group of families with a wider set of problems including domestic violence, debt and children at risk of being taken into care.

Tackling poverty

- 41 Supporting childcare and troubled families are components in the government's approach to tackling poverty, which focuses primarily on supporting and encouraging people into work, such that they are able to provide for themselves.
- 42 The Prime Minister also announced in August, a new family test on all government policies will be formally introduced into impact assessments from this autumn, with every single domestic policy examined for its impact on the family. Policies that fail to support family life will not be allowed to proceed.
- 43 On 26 June 2014, the government published a refresh of its child poverty strategy, together with an action plan for the period 2014-17, following consultation earlier in the year.
- 44 In the strategy, the government reiterated its goal of ending child poverty in the UK by 2020, by focusing on supporting families into work and increasing their earnings; improving living standards; and preventing poor children becoming poor adults through raising their educational attainment.
- 45 Between 2014-17, it committed to support families into work and increase earnings by:
- a) creating jobs and supporting families into work;
 - b) making work pay, through welfare reform and tackling low pay;
 - c) helping people move on to better jobs that pay more;
 - d) improving the qualifications of parents through adult Apprenticeships, investing in English and maths and helping parents through the National Careers Service;
 - e) tailored support for one-parent families to overcome the barriers to work they face, including additional support through Universal Credit, bespoke support from employment services and ensuring they begin getting ready for work when their youngest child turns three;
 - f) ensuring parents of larger families know how much better off they would be in work or working more hours, encouraging flexible working so that parents of larger families can find and progress in jobs that suit their needs and those of their family and working to raise basic skill levels of parents of larger families;
 - g) helping poor parents with health conditions to work by providing tailored support as set out in our Disability and Health Employment Strategy, putting in place clearer, more flexible benefit rules, support for employers to employ parents with health conditions, and help for parents who experience mental health issues.
- 46 In relation to improving living standards of low-income families, the government committed to:

- h) continuing to provide a welfare safety net for those families who cannot work;
- i) reducing energy bills through the Warm Home Discount and making homes more energy efficient;
- j) reducing water costs by capping the bills of low-income families with three or more children on a water meter and promoting social tariffs that provide cheaper water for low-income families;
- k) providing Healthy Start Vouchers for young children in low-income families, free school meals for all infant school pupils, breakfast clubs in deprived areas, and free fruit and vegetables at school for children aged four to six;
- l) reducing transport costs for low-income families through free home to school transport, limiting rail fare increases, introducing more flexible rail tickets, and keeping the price of petrol down through freezing fuel duty since 2011;
- m) tackling rising housing costs by increasing the supply of new housing and affordable housing;
- n) increasing access to affordable credit through investing in expanding credit unions and protecting consumers by cracking down on payday lending, including by legislating to impose a cap on the cost of credit;
- o) tackling problem debt through working with the Money Advice Service and safeguarding the transition to Universal Credit by offering support to manage the changes via the Local Support Services Framework.

47 In relation to education, the government committed to:

- p) continuing to raise educational attainment through increasing the number of poor children in high quality pre-school education with 15 hours free childcare for all three and four year olds and for two year olds from low income families, getting better qualified staff in pre-school settings and having a simpler early years curriculum;
- q) introducing an Early Years Pupil Premium to help ensure three and four year olds from the most disadvantaged backgrounds get the best start in life;
- r) ensuring poor children do better at school by giving disadvantaged pupils an additional £14,000 throughout their school career through the Pupil Premium;
- s) put in place targeted support for poor children who fall behind, with £500 per child who is behind at age 11 and summer schools to prepare poor children for secondary school;
- t) supporting poor children to stay in education post-16 to get the right skills and qualifications and helping them to move into work through

- “on the job” training, apprenticeships, traineeships, and better careers advice;
- u) helping parents provide the best possible home environment by supporting parenting classes and providing free books to poor families;
 - v) supporting schools in the different ways they choose to develop and build character, including getting more cadet forces into state schools;
 - w) helping parents who experience mental health issues (including through the expanded health visitor service), investing in drug and alcohol dependency treatment and supporting young carers;
 - x) increasing support for children with Special Educational Needs through the reforms introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the new SEN & Disability Code of Practice;
 - y) reiterating our commitment to improved health outcomes through the Government’s Better health outcomes for children and young people pledge.
- 48 On 21 July 2014, the government published *Cutting the costs of keeping warm*, a consultation document to help develop a new fuel poverty strategy for England.
- 49 Under Section 1A of the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000, the government is required to set a fuel poverty target. Alongside the consultation document, the government published the Fuel Poverty (England) Regulations 2014, which would create in law a new fuel poverty target of ensuring that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency standard of Band C by 2030.
- 50 Currently just 4 per cent of fuel poor households in England have an energy efficiency rating of Band C and above, compared to around 18 per cent across all households. Around 36 per cent of fuel poor homes are D rated, almost a half (46 per cent) are E rated, with the remaining 14 per cent being F or G rated.
- 51 Alongside the proposed new target, the government proposed that the following interim milestones would be included in the new fuel poverty strategy:
- a) as many fuel poor homes in England as is reasonably practicable to Band E by 2020 – 15% of fuel poor households currently live in F and G rated homes;
 - b) as many fuel poor homes in England as is reasonably practicable to Band D by 2025 – 46% of fuel poor households currently live in E rated homes.
- 52 In addition, the consultation paper also sought views around proposed actions to address fuel poverty, including:

- a) warmer homes: cutting bills and increasing comfort in the coldest low-income homes, making a real and lasting difference through energy efficiency and heating improvements;
- b) supporting people: helping people directly with their energy bills and helping to increase incomes;
- c) fairer markets: ensuring that everyone can take action and benefit from a more open energy market;
- d) improving delivery: making the most of the support available, getting it to the right people, and working together to support fuel poor households – recognising that fuel poverty is not a problem that central government can tackle alone.

53 In light of the linkages made nationally with welfare changes being linked to reducing poverty, it clearly makes sense to widen the council's current work looking at the changes to welfare to consider the levels of poverty within the county and how these are being affected by the changes being made.

Council response to date

54 The council has taken a strategic and co-ordinated approach to the changes made to the welfare system to date including how we have used the funding available from government to support people affected by the changes. This has identified the benefit of joining services across service groupings. In doing so it has become apparent that alongside the welfare reform changes there are areas of work already being delivered which are complementary and collectively address the underlying issues around the county such as the Warm Up North scheme and the council's work on financial inclusion.

55 Changes to welfare have posed a major challenge for Durham, given its traditionally high numbers of benefit claimants.

56 Researchers from Sheffield Hallam University estimated that the financial loss in the county per working age adult due to welfare reform is equivalent to £565 a year, which compares with £470 across Great Britain as a whole. The total financial loss to the county economy per year is estimated to amount to £188 million.

57 The council's response to the welfare changes continues to be overseen by Cabinet, supported by an officer project group, reporting to the Assistant Chief Executive. Full Council has been kept up-to-date with two presentations and Members and employees, particularly those in customer-facing roles, have received training to help them understand the changes and how the council and partners can help.

58 A comprehensive communications programme has been instigated to ensure that claimants understand proposed changes and are signposted to the most appropriate sources of advice, help and support.

59 We held two major welfare conferences in the county, bringing delegates together from a variety of sectors to share thoughts and practice and cement our multi-sector approach.

- 60 To support individuals and communities, we have worked across the council and with partners to anticipate benefit changes, mitigate impacts and support benefit claimants to become more independent where we can.
- 61 Teams in housing, revenues and benefits, economic development and adult social care have worked together with housing providers to develop specific packages of support to help residents and service users adapt.
- 62 The council is one of only two local authorities in the North East to have retained entitlement levels for Council Tax discounts via the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with that which applied under the Council Tax Benefit regime prior to 2013/14. This policy has protected vulnerable residents at a time when welfare changes have had a significant adverse impact. At its meeting of 16 July 2014, Cabinet agreed to recommend to Full Council that the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme should be retained for 2015/16, with a review in the first quarter of 2015/16 to inform budget options from 2016/17 and beyond.
- 63 We have worked with the community and voluntary sector to develop a welfare assistance policy to replace Social Fund crisis loans. We have also introduced a triage-based advisory service called Help and Advice Network Durham (HAND) to help benefit claimants become more financially independent. Regular reviews of this scheme have enabled us to respond to feedback and implement policy changes such as utilising existing furniture recycling schemes for fulfilment.
- 64 Many of the AAPs have stated welfare reform as one of their key priorities and have supported various projects in their areas. These projects are linked to helping residents respond and cope with the changes, such as the Cornforth Job Club Mentoring Project and the Teesdale AAP Foodbank project. The funding helped to support the project with equipment and training. All AAPs have been given £10,000 to implement further projects relevant to their areas to help residents respond and cope with the changes to welfare and proposals are currently being developed.
- 65 In East Durham, we worked with the East Durham Trust to recruit volunteer 'welfare champions' to support local people adversely affected by benefit changes before they get into financial difficulty. So far 25 champions have been recruited, helping over 500 people with advice, signposting, advocacy and food bank referrals. The approach has been so successful it is being replicated in other parts of the county such as Newton Aycliffe where 11 volunteers have been recruited and over 200 people have been helped.
- 66 The council has continued to maintain and expand the programmes it supports to help local residents into employment, including the County Durham Apprenticeship Programme, the Rural Employability Programme, local delivery of the Work Programme and targeted support programmes funded by the area action partnerships.
- 67 In line with the way government has used employment initiatives as a way of helping manage changes to the welfare system, £500,000 has been set aside from the Welfare Assistance budget to develop a specific employability and wage subsidy scheme to help disadvantaged people into work. The scheme will provide access to training and work-based learning, skills provision

financial support, wage subsidies for employers and targeted discretionary support where required.

Monitoring the impacts on residents

- 68 The council's Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) offered the same level of discounts as the previous council tax benefit scheme and therefore no council tax benefit claimants have been financially worse off since April 2012.
- 69 Council Tax in-year collection performance for 2013/14 is broadly line with original budget expectations. Anecdotal evidence, from demand for Discretionary Housing Payments, Welfare Assistance Scheme applications, rent arrears statistics in County Durham compared to others across the region would suggest that the protection afforded to working age claimants from the impact of a LCTRS that reduced entitlement is having a positive impact/reducing impacts on these areas.
- 70 We have yet to experience the significant rises in rent arrears seen elsewhere, but are keeping a close eye with partners on the impact of welfare reform on an already difficult housing market.
- 71 Anecdotally tenants appear to still be prioritising housing costs possibly through borrowing from friends and families, loan sharks or lenders charging high interest rates and therefore the impacts expected have not yet been seen.
- 72 Since April 2013 over 5,300 residents been through 'triage' with either their housing provider or the council's Housing Solutions team and received advice and support to help them improve their personal circumstances. Over 2,400 of these triage referrals have resulted in the tenant receiving financial support from the council in the form of a DHP award. Long term successful outcomes include over 120 tenants moving to a more suitable property; over 1,200 tenants receiving employment advice; over 1,500 tenants receiving specialist advice and support on their personal finances e.g. debt and over 2,000 tenants have received advice and support on how to maximise and make the most of their income. This has included helping tenants claim benefits they are entitled to which exempt them from under occupation, moving to more appropriate accommodation or increasing their income through employment or increased hours etc. Reflecting this work the overall number of under occupiers has reduced from 8,003 in April 2013 to 6,871 in July 2014.
- 73 The number of tenants terminating their tenancies is showing an increase and the number of applicants bidding for three bedroom properties through our choice based lettings scheme has reduced. Further research work is underway to analyse trends in the number of empty properties, turnover of stock, existing supply/demand and trends in the private sector. The research work aims to determine and understand what is happening and if residents are choosing the private rented sector rather than the social rented sector, and the impact this will have on the housing market particularly in relation to the provision of new housing in the future.
- 74 In 2013/14 the council was successful in bidding for additional Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funding for £110,000 and together with the original

budget spent a total of £993,792 to help those residents struggling to meet their rental liability with the vast majority being affected by the removal of the spare room subsidy.

- 75 For the current year we were allocated £1,096,133. However, demand for DHP awards is still high and forecasts based on detailed modelling are indicating a slight overspend by the end of the year.
- 76 This is being monitored closely and a letter has been sent to the DWP asking if additional funding for this year will be made available via a similar bidding scheme to that in 2013/14.
- 77 Over 1,600 awards have been made to County Durham residents since the council's Welfare Assistance Scheme started in April 2013. This includes nearly 800 Daily Living Expense Awards and over 800 Settlement Grant Awards.
- 78 Although demand for the Welfare Assistance Scheme has been less than expected, this is now increasing and it is likely that demand for emergency assistance will increase further over the next few years.
- 79 As Members are aware government funding for this scheme ceases after this year. The Local Government Association (LGA) has requested the government work with the LGA and councils to review this with a view of retaining this fund to enable councils to continue delivering local welfare support schemes. More significantly following the settlement of a judicial review, the government has agreed to reconsider how local welfare provision should be funded in 2015 – 2016. This will include undertaking a consultation and further consideration of their equality duty in reaching a fresh decision on future funding. It is expected this will be made before the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is announced.
- 80 The council recognises that this is a long term problem and work is currently underway looking at options to continue this scheme after March 2015 without government funding should this position not change. We are looking at what other councils have done although nearly all schemes are supported by a significant financial commitment. Detailed proposals once developed will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting for consideration.
- 81 The council's Welfare Rights service has assisted in raising over £2 million in PIP awards for residents since the roll out in County Durham. This includes both the care and mobility component and represents a 98 per cent success rate.
- 82 Whilst the council's Welfare Rights Services have had a positive success rate for clients receiving PIP awards, these residents are experiencing lengthy delays in their claims being processed. DWP started accepting claims in April 2013 and some non-terminal illness cases have waited nine to ten months for a decision.
- 83 The AAP projects linked to Welfare reform have seen positive levels of success including the Cornforth Job Club Mentoring Project. This project currently offers three job clubs per week and has: provided 'one-to-one' mentoring support for a wide range of complex issues for 45 clients;

developed the skills of 100 clients to improve their employability; advised 95 clients around career and training opportunities; enabled 52 clients to successfully achieve accredited qualifications; enabled 33 clients to participate in specialist training workshops including Understanding Addiction, Domestic Violence, Anger Management, Healthy Changes and Confidence Building; assisted 51 individuals to access ICT support for Universal Job Match and CV development; and helped eight clients to secure employment of over 16 hours per week.

- 84 The council has supported the work of credit unions by implementing a salary deduction scheme. From September 2013 to September 2014, 280 council staff have joined the salary deduction scheme and saved £140,000. £60,000 has been borrowed from the credit unions rather than the high cost credit, payday loan companies.
- 85 The council's new employability and wage subsidy scheme is still in its infancy. The scheme is being monitored and outcomes will be reported as the scheme progresses. More generally, it should be noted that the council has supported 3,132 residents into employment through its economic development initiatives between 2009-14.
- 86 Following confirmation that the flagship policy change of Universal Credit has been delayed and will not be in place within the North East before 2016, planning for this change has been limited.
- 87 The Welfare Reform Steering Group received a presentation from Warrington Borough Council, a Universal Credit Pathfinder Council, in June 2014. Despite initial low levels of take up of Universal Credit, Warrington stressed the importance of planning and early engagement with housing providers especially around direct payments and the cost implications around managing the impacts of direct payments, although they did acknowledge the financial support they received from DWP as a pathfinder council and it is unlikely this support will be available as part of the wider roll out.

From welfare to poverty

- 88 As the council has anticipated and responded to the government's welfare reforms, what has become apparent is that to support residents and households affected by benefit changes, the council and its partners need to take a much more holistic approach, addressing the wider issue of poverty, which has been compounded by the impact of benefit changes.
- 89 In order to do this, it is proposed to broaden the scope of the welfare reform policy work, including the remit of the associated governance, to focus on poverty as well as welfare reform policy and administration changes.

Way forward

- 90 The existing officer project group would be broadened into a poverty and welfare reform steering group. This would coordinate the delivery of a range of new and existing policy work which would seek to ensure the policy development is complementary in addressing poverty and any gaps identified are addressed. This focus would include:
- a financial inclusion strategy;

- initiatives to raise housing standards in the private rented sector;
- relevant elements of the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2015/16 as it relates to poverty;
- the council's Troubled Families programme;
- on-going research and responses to welfare reform and benefit changes;
- responding to any new policy announcements from government relating to poverty.

91 The steering group would continue to report to Cabinet Members and individual strategies and plans would be reported to Cabinet for consideration as appropriate.

Recommendations and reasons

92 Members are recommended to note the contents of this report and the proposed broadening of the scope of the welfare reform work as outlined in paragraphs 88 to 91 which was considered by Cabinet.

Background papers

Previous Cabinet papers.

Contact: Roger Goodes Tel: 03000 268050

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – There are no new financial implications contained within the report.

Staffing – There are no new staffing implications contained within the report.

Risk – N/A

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – The council's Welfare Assistance Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments policy and bids for funding referenced have all been subject to an equality impact assessment where appropriate.

Accommodation – N/A

Crime and Disorder – N/A

Human Rights – N/A

Consultation – N/A.

Procurement – N/A

Disability Issues – N/A

Legal Implications – N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

20th October 2014



Cabinet

10th September 2014

Update on the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan 4

Report of Corporate Management Team

Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council and all Cabinet collectively

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report provides an update on the progress made at the end of June 2014 on the delivery of the 2014/15 to 2016/17 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP 4).

Background

- 2 Cabinet has received regular updates on the progress made by the Council in delivering the financial targets within MTFP 1, 2 and 3 which covered the period 2011/12 to 2016/17. These updates have also outlined the approach being taken to ensure the Council has a rigorous programme management framework in place to make certain we meet our duties under the Equalities Act, we comply with our duties as an employer and we consult on and communicate the changes being made.
- 3 MTFP 4 has been agreed by Council and for 2014/15 the savings target is just over £23m. This forms part of the overall savings target for the period from 2011/12 to 2016/17 of around £224m.

Progress to date

- 4 Delivery of the MTFP programme remains very challenging for the Council and the savings for 2014/15 represents an increase of 10% on the savings required in 2013/14.
- 5 Through the robust approach we continue to take in managing the savings programme we remain within plan in meeting the savings targets and therefore the savings required for 2014/15 are on track. Already over 60% of

the target has been met with £14.2m having been achieved in the first quarter. Since April 2011 we have now made almost £128m of savings.

- 6 The main areas where savings have been made in this period include the change in Member budgets to increase the amount of capital available whilst reducing the amount of revenue required. This has ensured Members maintain existing levels of funding to help their localities whilst making MTFP savings.
- 7 Further savings continue to be realised through internal restructures including HR, Culture and Sport, Direct Services, Planning and Performance within ACE and service support teams across the Council. As a result of the restructuring that has happened over the last few years supporting budgets have also been reduced, so we have seen more reductions this period to supplies and services budgets.

Consultation

- 8 Consultation with the public and other stakeholders remains an important element in the MTFP programme. However during the first quarter of this year there was no external consultation undertaken, as the savings proposals were mainly internal restructures so consultation activity focused on trade unions and employees affected.

HR implications

- 9 In the first quarter of 2014/15 we accepted 32 ER/VR applications, deleted 46 vacant posts and unfortunately made 12 employees redundant as a result of the MTFP proposals. The majority of the HR reductions which have been as a result of the savings delivered for MTFP4 so far would have been realised during 2013/14 and are reflected in previous figures provided to Members. This reflects the approach outlined previously to Members of delivering savings early wherever possible.
- 10 The total impact on the workforce through reduced posts continues to remain in line with the original projections of 1,950 posts being removed by the end of 2014/15. Since 2011 a total of 947 ER/VR applications have been accepted, 414 vacant posts deleted and 357 compulsory redundancies made.
- 11 The Council continued to support staff affected by the MTFP and we have found over 357 staff alternative employment through the Council's redeployment process.
- 12 Staff are also continuing to apply for ER/VR and to date we have 192 expressions of interest which we are actively monitoring to try to support where we can. Although we have kept open the opportunity for staff to discuss ER/VR if this is something they wish to explore we issued a general invitation for expressions of interest in ER/VR, with the result that a further 134 employees have expressed an interest. These are currently being considered by managers against future plans to see if they will be possible to accept.

Equality Impact Assessments

- 13 The Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for 2014/15 savings were made available to Members in January ahead of the final budget decision. Our EIA process ensures that proposals for savings are subject to robust yet proportionate analysis with initial screenings for new savings or those likely to have minimal impact and more detailed EIAs for ongoing savings with a greater level of impact. Proposals which have the potential for a disproportionate impact on any of the protected equality characteristics have a full detailed assessment ahead of the final decision.
- 14 The EIA process is intended to protect the authority from legal challenge and ensure that mitigating actions are considered as part of the final decision making. In general legal challenges to other authorities have focussed on lack of evidence that equality duties were considered and were based on flawed consultation processes. Our impact assessment and consultation processes work together to ensure that decision makers are made aware of their legal duties, have sight of evidence and consider the views of relevant equality groups.
- 15 During the first quarter of 2014/15 Cabinet considered the proposal to close the five remaining in-house residential care homes. The published impact assessment was updated to include equality data on current service users and evidence from the consultation carried out from October 2013 to January 2014. Agreed closure of the care homes will impact most on age as all current residents are older people as are most day service users. There are also gender impacts as the majority of residents and service users are female. Additionally a significant proportion have a physical disability and/or sensory and/or mental health impairment. The potential impacts relate to health and wellbeing of service users, additional travel or reduced opportunities for visiting family and friends and loss of local provision. There are also impacts for staff particularly in relation to gender. The mitigating actions include taking account of individual needs in any move, aiming to move residents together if this is their choice and following corporate HR procedures to ensure fair treatment of staff.

Conclusions

- 16 To highlight the current position and to put this in perspective with what we are estimating will be required over the next few years the savings made since 2011 represents about 57% of the projected savings target of £224m.
- 17 A key element of the MTFP delivery strategy as Members are aware has been to wherever possible deliver savings ahead of time, often generating reserves in the form of cash limits. This ensures that we are able to respond to unexpected delays and can 'smooth' implementation from year to year.
- 18 The Council is in a strong position to continue to meet the financial challenges ahead through accurately forecasting the level of savings required, developing strong plans and robustly managing implementation including high volumes of consultation and communication. This position is further enhanced by the approach of planning and delivering MTFP proposals early where we can.
- 19 The Council has delivered £14.2m of the savings for 2014/15 (over 60%) which amount to almost £128m in savings made since 2011.

Recommendations

- 20 Members are recommended to note the contents of this report and the progress being made in delivering MTFP4.

Contact: Roger Goodes, Head of Policy & Communications
Tel: 03000 268050

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – The delivery of the MTFP involves cumulative saving of approximately £224m over the period from 2011 to 2017 of which nearly £128 has been delivered in 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Staffing – Where the proposals affect staff, full consultation is undertaken and the trade unions consulted. Wherever possible, staff reductions are done through voluntary means. In addition, there has been a proactive management of vacancies to lessen the impact on staff and the Council has a redeployment process which continues to find alternative employment for a number of staff

Risk – The delivery of the MTFP is highlighted as one of the Council's strategic risks and is monitored through the corporate risk management process. In addition, risks for individual proposals are being monitored through the work undertaken to deliver the proposal.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken for the original 4 year MTFP plan and additional screening was undertaken for proposals which have been identified for subsequent MTFPs, together with any other changes made to the original plan. In addition, for each proposal an EIA is undertaken as part of the decision-making before the proposal is implemented. Figures relating to staff leaving through voluntary redundancy, early retirement and ER/VR during the first quarter showed that just under 70% were female and just over 30% were male. All of the 88% who disclosed ethnicity were White British, 3% had a disability, 18% were not disabled and 79% had not disclosed whether or not they had a disability. The profile of those leaving through compulsory redundancies showed 53% were female, all were White British. More than one in ten (13%) disclosed they had a disability, 87% were not disabled. Comparing this first quarterly profile against the overall workforce shows that a slightly greater proportion of women (65%) left the workforce through both compulsory and voluntary redundancy compared to the proportion of women in the overall workforce profile (62.7%). There was a higher percentage of compulsory redundant leavers with a disability than the workforce profile (2.9%), however due to the numbers involved the difference is not significant. There was no difference in terms of ethnicity.

Accommodation - As proposals are planned the impact on accommodation is ascertained, with staff being consulted on any moves as part of the process. The anticipated loss of 1950 posts from the Authority will mean a requirement for less accommodation and the Office Accommodation Team has built this into the Office Accommodation Strategy.

Crime and Disorder – N/A

Human Rights – N/A

Consultation – A full consultation with a range of stakeholders was undertaken on the MTFP prior to its agreement and again in 2013. In addition, where appropriate

for individual proposals, internal and external consultation plans are developed so that consultation informs the decision making process.

Procurement – A number of the proposals involve the changing of existing contracts and this work is being taken forward through the Council's agreed procurement processes.

Disability Issues – Any disability impacts are being picked up through the Equality Impact Assessments undertaken.

Legal Implications – The legal implications of any decisions required are being considered as part of the delivery of the proposals.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

20 October 2014



Notice of Key Decisions

**Report of Corporate Management Team
Colette Longbottom, Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To consider the list of key decisions that is scheduled to be considered by the Executive.

Background

- 2 New rules in relation to Executive decisions were introduced by The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force on 10 September 2012.
- 3 The regulations took away the requirement for the Executive to produce a Forward Plan of key decisions, however introduced that the decision maker cannot make a key decision unless a document has been published at least 28 clear days before the decision is taken, unless either a general exception or special urgency requirements have been met. The document which has to be published must state:
 - a) that the key decision is to be made on behalf of the relevant local authority
 - b) the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made
 - c) where the decision maker is an individual, that individual's name and title if any and where the decision maker is a decision making body, its name and list of its members
 - d) the date on which or the period within which the decision is to be made
 - e) a list of the document submitted to the decision maker for consideration in relation to the matter of which the key decision is to be made
 - f) the address from which, subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure copies of, or extracts from any document listed as available

- g) that other documents relevant to those matters may be submitted to the decision maker
 - h) the procedure for requesting details of those documents (if any) as they become available.
- 4 The requirements also apply to an exempt matter as previously it did not strictly have to be included in the Forward Plan. Now a publicity document must contain particulars of the matter, but may not contain any confidential exempt information or particulars of the adviser or political adviser or assistant.
- 5 Notices of key decisions that are being produced meet the legal requirements of publication, as well as continuing to provide information for a four month period. Members will therefore be able to consider key decisions as previously for the four month period.

Current Notice of Key Decisions

- 6 The notice of key decisions that is attached to the report at Appendix 2, is the latest to be published prior to the papers for the Board being dispatched to members. The notice complies with the requirements for Cabinet to be able to take key decisions at the meeting on 15 October 2014. It also contained information on those key decisions that are currently scheduled to be considered by the Executive up to 31 January 2015.
- 7 The information in the Notice of Key Decisions provides the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board with the opportunity of considering whether it wishes to seek to influence any of these key decisions, or to request further information. Members are asked to note that this version of the Notice has been amended and includes a column which has been added to advise of the relevant Scrutiny activity.
- 8 In responding to the request of the Board for further information to be provided on any items that are removed from the previous notice without being considered by Cabinet, this information will be provided at the meeting.
- 9 If the Board wished to examine any of the key decisions, consideration would need to be given as to how this could be accommodated in the Overview and Scrutiny Work programme.

Recommendation

- 10 You are recommended to give consideration to items listed in the notice.

**Contact: Ros Layfield, Committee Services Manager Tel: 03000 269708
Jenny Haworth, Head of Planning and Performance, ACE
Tel: 03000 268071**

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance : Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Staffing: Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Risk: Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Equality and Diversity/ Public Sector Equality Duty: Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Accommodation: Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Crime and Disorder Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Human Rights: Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Consultation: Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Procurement: Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Disability Issues: Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Legal Implications: Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

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SECTION ONE - CORPORATE

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Scrutiny involvement
Corp/R/14/02	15/10/14	2015/16 General Fund Revenue and Capital Budget MTFP 5 and Council Plan and Service Plans	Cabinet report - 16 July 2014	Cllr Simon Henig and Cllr Alan Napier	The Council carried out a significant consultation process for MTFP (4). The responses to this process will be utilised for MTFP (5) although AAPs will be consulted on the 2015/16 budget and there will be targeted consultation on individual savings plans.	Don McLure, Corporate Director, Resources Tel: 03000 261945 and Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive Tel: 03000 268060	The OSMB and CIOSC will input into the formulation of the MTFP 5 and Council/Service Plans and provide member assurance into this development process. Meetings planned for Sept/Dec 2014 and March 2015.
Corp/R/14/02	14/01/15	2015/16 General Fund Revenue and Capital Budget MTFP 5 and Council Plan and Service Plans	Cabinet report - 16 July 2014 & 15 October 2014	Cllr Simon Henig and Cllr Alan Napier	The Council carried out a significant consultation process for MTFP (4). The responses to this process will be utilised for MTFP (5) although AAPs will be consulted on the 2015/16 budget and there will be targeted consultation on individual savings plans.	Don McLure, Corporate Director, Resources Tel: 03000 261945 and Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive Tel: 03000 268060	The OSMB and CIOSC will input into the formulation of the MTFP 5 and Council/Service Plans and provide member assurance into this development process. Meetings planned for Sept/Dec 2014 and March 2015.

**SECTION TWO -
CHILDREN AND ADULTS SERVICES**

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information

SECTION THREE - REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Scrutiny involvement
R&ED/10/14	17/12/14	Housing Stock - Transfer Update		Portfolio Holder for Housing and Rural Issues	Council staff via the formulation of transfer principles	Sarah Robson, Head of Economic Development 03000 267 332	The Economy and Enterprise OSC has considered several updates in respect of the Stock Transfer project and will receive updates in respect of the initiative at future meetings.
R&ED/12/14	TBC	Compulsory Purchase at Henderson Avenue, Wheatley Hill		Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration	Council officers and ward members attend the bi-monthly Wheatley Hill Steering Group to provide updates to the community and ward members are appraised through regular liaison meetings	Sarah Robson, Head of Economic Development 03000 267 332	
R&ED/14/14	15/10/14	Proposed Designation of Local Nature Reserve (LNR); Easington Colliery		Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration	Consultation with Easington Colliery Regeneration Partnership, National Trust and other organisations via meetings. Natural England consulted in writing.	Stuart Timmiss, Head of Spatial Policy, Planning, Assets and Environment 03000 267 334	

SECTION FOUR - NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Scrutiny involvement
NS/14/11	15-Oct-14	Approve a framework for the future provision of fixed play sites across the County	Cabinet Report 24 July 2012 2001 census 2011 census – first data release (DCC document)	Cllr. Maria Plews Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Libraries and Lifelong Learning	Consultation with key stakeholders, AAPs and members of the public via online survey and other feedback mechanisms	Stephen Howell Head of Culture and Sport Tel 03000 264550	

**Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

20 October 2014



Update in relation to Petitions

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board with the quarterly update in relation to the current situation regarding various petitions received by the Authority.

Background

2. Following the introduction of The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the administration of the petitions process was passed to Democratic Services.
 - 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Management Board have received update reports on petitions since September 2008.
 - 2.2 From the 15 December 2010, the Authority has provided a facility for members of the public to submit e-petitions on the Council's website.

Current Position

- 3 To-date 41 e-petitions have been submitted. Of these, 23 have been accepted and 16 rejected, 3 as they were duplicates of e-petitions already received, 13 as they did not qualify under the Council's Petition Scheme. 2 e-petitions did not go ahead at the request of the Petitioner, 1 of which did not "go live" on the Council's website. Of the 23 e-petitions accepted, 21 have completed the petition process.
 - 3.1 Since the last update, 3 new paper petitions have been submitted and 6 petitions have completed the petition process. A list giving details and current status of all active petitions is attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

Recommendation

4. Members are requested to note the update report on the status of petitions and e-petitions received by the Authority.

Contact: Ros Layfield, Committee Services Manager
Tel: 03000 269 708 E-mail: ros.layfield@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance : None

Staffing: None

Risk: None

Equality and Diversity/ Public Sector Equality Duty: None

Accommodation: None

Crime and Disorder: None

Human Rights: None

Consultation: Petitions which refer to a consultation exercise are reported to committee for information and forwarded to the relevant officer for consideration

Procurement: None

Disability Issues: None

Legal Implications: None

Petition Table – Active Petitions

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
Petition 211 Community Petition to save the Walls of Barnard Castle E-petition - Petition received 14.05.13 No. of signatures – 63 Paper petition received 07.04.14 No. of signatures - 1895	S Timmiss, Head of Planning and Assets, Regeneration and Economic Development	<p>Petitioner informed of a positive meeting between the parties involved, with all involved noting the importance of working together to attempt to resolve the issue. It was agreed for a structural survey of the cliff be undertaken and all parties to keep public and other interested parties up to date. Further discussions would take place after the survey and the Council would in the meantime reinforce fencing at the area</p> <p>Awaiting the results of the survey and will then be able to discuss with residents and the Town Council.</p>	Regular update sent, with the last one being dated 27.06.13 Petition continued – update sent 09.05.14 Service requested to provide an update – September 2014 Final letter sent 12.06.14 Petition CLOSED .
Petition 235 Put a Safe pedestrian crossing on Manor Way between St Cuthberts Church Vicarage and the William Brown Centre No. of signatures – 171 Petition received 15.05.14	T Smith, Special Projects Officer, Neighbourhoods	<p>Petition requesting that in order for all pedestrians to cross the road safely a pedestrian crossing be installed.</p> <p>Petitioner informed that the County Council have adopted a policy based upon national guidelines. This approach ensures consistency in determining requests as well as ensuring that a formalised crossing is safe and fit for purpose. On site observations indicate that even after additional weighting was applied, the location would not meet the criteria to justify the provision of a controlled crossing. As there is the possibility that circumstances change, the location will be kept under periodic review by officers.</p>	Final letter sent 17.06.14 Petition CLOSED .
Petition 236 Removal of trees from Chapel Hill Road, Peterlee No. of signatures – 10 Petition received 28.05.14	Oliver Sherratt, Head of Direct Services	<p>Request to remove trees from Chapel Hill Road, Peterlee</p> <p>Petitioner informed that following investigations the trees were in a healthy condition and they did not meet the criteria of being in a dangerous condition or excessive shade to a habitable room. The concern expressed about leaf accumulation has been addressed and a clear up of the accumulated leaves and wind-blown rubbish has been removed.</p>	Final letter sent 17.06.14 Petition CLOSED .

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
Page 9 Petition 236 cont.		Petitioner also advised that some modest pruning of the tree closer to the corner site and reducing some overhang from a large branch would be undertaken in the winter.	
Petition 237 Objection to Proposed Parking Restrictions in Middleton in Teesdale No. of signatures – 253 Petition received 02.06.14	Sarah Thompson Strategic Traffic Management - Traffic Section RED	Petition of Objection to Proposed Parking Restrictions in Middleton in Teesdale. Petition rejected under the petitions scheme, as refers to ongoing consultation. Passed to service to deal with as part of their consultation.	Letter sent 09.06.14
Petition 238 Improvement to Bollards, Shotton Road, Horden No. of signatures – 44 Petition received 11.07.14	T Smith, Special Projects Officer, Neighbourhoods	Petition proposing that a new, more effective barrier be erected near to the top of Shotton Road, to deny access to all motor vehicles to and from the adjacent fields and Chapel Hill area. It is proposed that a chicane be positioned across the footpath to allow access to wheelchairs, pushchairs and pedestrians only. Service response sets out the reasons why it is not possible to erect barriers at the location, the types of bollards that were in place in the area, options that had been considered at the location, and that issues of public disorder and nuisance should be directed to Durham Constabulary.	Final letter sent 06.08.14 Petition CLOSED .
Petition 239 Westerton Village Footpath – Poor Condition E-petition - Petition received 01.08.13 No. of signatures 32	Oliver Sherratt, Direct Services, Neighbourhoods	Petition asking the Council to inspect and commission the necessary work to clear and tidy the footpath leading from the A688 to Westerton Village and the footpath leading from Westerton Road to Westerton Village. e-Petition live from 08.08.14 to 30.09.14. e-Petition closed with 32 signatures – awaiting response from service.	Acknowledged via e-petition system 08.08.14 e-Petition live 08.08.14

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
<p>Petition 240</p> <p>Reduce 60mph Speed Limit on A68 from South Road, Toft Hill to Spring Gardens to 40 mph</p> <p>No. of signatures – 204 Petition received 27.08.14</p>	<p>T Smith, Special Projects Officer, Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to reduce the 60mph Speed Limit on A68 from South Road, Toft Hill to Spring Gardens to 40 mph</p> <p>Service response sets out the reasons why it is not possible to support the lowering of the speed limit. The introduction of Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 01 of 2006 "Setting Credible Speed Limits", required Highway Authorities to review all 'A' and 'B' class roads by 2011. It was the intention of this Circular to ensure that speed limits are credible and consistently applied throughout the Country with the aim that they become self-evident and enforcing by virtue of their surroundings. The review process takes into account various criteria and factors that are to be considered and evaluated. The existing vehicle speeds, nature of the road and its surroundings, local needs, development, highway signs, road markings and street lighting, the various road users, the credibility of the speed limit and accident history are some of the factors which are considered during the review.</p> <p>The speed limit on A68 has been the subject of much debate in recent years resulting in a number of requests over the past few years to reduce the speed limit. In 2008 the County Council together with Durham Constabulary undertook a joint review of the entire length of the A68 from its boundary with Northumberland to its boundary with Darlington in accordance with DfT Circular 01/06. The review having taken into consideration the factors mentioned above determined that the section of the A68 between Toft Hill and West Auckland would remain subject to the National Speed Limit.</p>	<p>Final letter sent 12.09.14</p> <p>Petition CLOSED.</p>
<p>Petition 241</p> <p>Provide a 2nd Football Goal on Kelloe Green</p> <p>E-petition – Petition received 04.09.14 No. of signatures 4</p>	<p>Steve Howell Head of Culture and Sport, Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>Petition requesting a second goalpost to be provided on Kelloe Green. A new goal post was installed a year ago by the County Council and a second would enable the youth in the community to enjoy a game of football.</p> <p>e-Petition live from 04.09.14 to 01.10.14</p> <p>e-Petition closed with 4 signatures however a response to be provided direct to lead petitioner by Service.</p>	<p>Acknowledgement via e-petition system 04.09.14</p> <p>Response to be provided by the service</p>

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
<p>Petition 242</p> <p>To continue to deliver early years services through the Children's Centres</p> <p>E-petition – Petition received 11.09.14 No. of signatures – e-petition runs until 23.10.14 & numbers will be available after that time.</p>	<p>Carole Payne Head of Children's Services, Children and Adults Services</p>	<p>Petition the Council to continue to deliver early years services through the Children's Centres.</p> <p>Already consultation taking place - lead petitioner advised that we can hold e-petition until closing date of consultation, after which time the collection of signatures would be passed to the Service, to feed into their consultation process.</p> <p>e-Petition live 11.09.14 – runs until 23.10.14</p>	<p>Acknowledged via e-petition system 11.09.14</p> <p>e-Petition live 11.09.14</p>

**Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

20th October 2014



**Information update from the Chairs
of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committees**

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present to Members an information update of overview and scrutiny activity from 12th September – 20th October 2014.

Background

- 2 As previously agreed, a written report of Chairs' updates will be presented for information only to all Overview and Scrutiny Management Boards. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are encouraged to get involved in any area of Overview and Scrutiny activity via thematic committees and/or talk to Scrutiny Committee Chairs and OS Officers on areas of project/overview activity.

Updates

- 3 Updates from Overview and Scrutiny Committees from 12th September – 20th October 2014 are as follows:

Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CIOSC)

<i>Update on Previous Reviews</i>	There are no systematic reviews to report on for this period.
<i>Scrutiny Review Activity</i>	<p>CIOSC on 19th September received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Plan (5), Council Plan, Service Plans 2015/16 – 2017/18 and Review of the Council's Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. This is the priority topic of review activity for CIOSC. <p>Special CIOSC on 17th October received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final report of the Customer First Task and Finish Group.
<i>Overview reports/ Presentations</i>	<p>CIOSC on 19th September received reports/presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - Annual Review of the Council's use of powers and Approval of RIPA Policy • Fairness of Local Government Funding

	<p>Special CIOSC on 17th October received reports/presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Feedback: Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Quarter 1 Report 2014/15 • CAS - Annual Representations Report 2013
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Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SSC OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	<p>SSC on 16th September received a progress update on the recommendations of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Neighbourhood Wardens.
Scrutiny Review Activity	<p>SSC on 16th September received verbal updates on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Substance Misuse Services • Review of Organised Crime.
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>SSC OSC on 16th September 2014 received reports/presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Probation Service • County Durham Road Casualty Reduction Forum • Police and Crime Panel • Safe Durham Partnership Update. <p>SSC OSC Members on 1st October 2014 attended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Crime Performance Workshop at the new Police HQ.

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (E & E OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	<p>There are no systematic reviews to report on for this period</p>
Scrutiny Review Activity	<p>E&E OSC review work is on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism marketing.
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>E&E OSC on 22nd September 2014 received reports/presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Site Management Service overview • Family Intervention Project (FIP) and Housing Intervention Project (HIP) • Housing Stock Transfer Project update • Minutes of the County Durham Economic Partnership. <p>Special Economy OSC on 6th October received reports/presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RED Capital Programme overview

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masterplans update • County Durham Plan update • Durham Employment and Skills overview
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Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Environment OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	Environment OSC on 2 nd October received an update on the recommendations of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the Council's Carbon Emissions.
Scrutiny Review Activity	Environment OSC review work is on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management of the woodlands estate owned by DCC
Overview reports/ Presentations	Environment OSC on 2 nd October received reports/presentations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality Action Plan and Consultation Strategy update • Landscape Scale Projects overview • Waste Programme update • Minutes of the County Durham Environment Partnership Board.

Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYP OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report on for this period.
Scrutiny Review Activity	CYP OSC on 25 th September received the scoping report for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O/S review on Self-harm. First Self-harm by Young People working group meeting 30 th September.
Overview reports/ Presentations	CYP OSC on 25 th September received reports/presentations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Centres Consultation • Healthy Weight Strategic Framework for County Durham • Summary of minutes from the Children and Families Partnership. CYP OSC Members on 13 th October attended a site visit to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The multi-sensory room at Spennymoor Leisure Centre.

Adults, Well-being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (AWH OSC)

Update on Previous Reviews	There are no systematic reviews to report on for this period.
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Scrutiny Review Activity	
Overview reports/ Presentations	<p>AWH OSC on 29th September 2014 received report/presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCG – provision of Accident and Emergency Ambulance Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from public engagement events ○ Issues update arising from Special AWBH OSC on 18th July 2014 • County Durham and Darlington Local Dementia Strategy. <p>Special AWH OSC on 16th October 2014 received reports/ presentations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCT – Urgent Care strategy • Public Mental Health Strategy • Healthy Weight Strategy • County Durham HealthWatch Annual Report.

Performance/Budget/Work Programme Reporting

- 4 Information on both performance and outturn reports continue to be received and commented upon.

Recommendation

- 5 Members are invited to receive the report and note the information contained therein.

Background Papers: Previous committee reports/presentations.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – N/A

Staffing – N/A

Risk – N/A

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – N/A

Accommodation – N/A

Crime and Disorder – N/A

Human Rights – N/A

Consultation – N/A

Procurement – N/A

Disability Issues – N/A

Legal Implications – N/A

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