

**Cabinet**

**13 January 2021**

**County Durham Partnership Update**

**Ordinary Decision**



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## **Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change**

**Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council**

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

### **Electoral division affected:**

Countywide

### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP). The report also includes updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.

### **Executive summary**

- 2 The coronavirus pandemic has had a profound effect on individuals, families and communities in County Durham and around the world and the wider County Durham Partnership have worked together to ensure we provide a response across all agencies that will support people through this. The mature partnerships and enhanced relationships have been a key strength throughout the pandemic, both with statutory and non-statutory agencies, which has ensured that our support offer has been co-ordinated at both the local (including through Area Action Partnerships (AAPs), the voluntary and community sector and mutual aid groups) and strategic levels.
- 3 The County Durham Vision 2035 was written together with partner organisations and the public and sets out what we would want to county to look like in 15 years' time. This vision is structured around three ambitions which are

- (a) more and better jobs;
  - (b) people live long and independent lives;
  - (c) connected communities.
- 4 The vision ambitions and objectives which support these ambitions, have supported how partners are responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and how partners deliver services.
- 5 The **Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)** has been critical to the success of the County's response in supporting individuals and local communities and will continue to do so during the recovery and restoration phases. The VCS played a significant part in mobilising community networks and assets to provide an immediate response supporting the vulnerable in need during the lockdown. This has also highlighted the need to ensure that sustainable funding is provided to the sector so that our communities continue to be well connected and supportive of each other.
- 6 Durham County Council had a dedicated £1.4 million coronavirus support fund, which was shared amongst **Area Action Partnerships (AAPs)** across the county, to ensure local projects were able to help those in need during the coronavirus pandemic.
- 7 The funding has been allocated to 291 projects and these projects have also attracted £1,461,959 in match funding from other sources, meaning projects supported by us across our county have seen over £2.7 million invested in projects to combat the effects of Covid-19.
- 8 These 291 projects will see the full £1.4 million coronavirus support fund utilised.
- 9 As part of the Outbreak Control Plans for Covid-19 each local authority area needs to have in place a Local Outbreak Engagement Board, which is a public-facing Board led by council Members to communicate openly with the public. In County Durham this is the **Health and Wellbeing Board**. The Covid-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan was endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting on 14 July 2020 and it receives an update at each meeting where questions submitted by residents are also answered by members of the Board.
- 10 A new partnership structure was agreed by the **County Durham Partnership** in September 2020. The new partnership structure underneath the County Durham Partnership is:

- (a) Health and Wellbeing Board (and Outbreak Engagement Board) – **Statutory**;
  - (b) Safe Durham Partnership – **Statutory**;
  - (c) Economic Partnership;
  - (d) Environment and Climate Change Partnership.
- 11 In addition, the Prevention Steering Group, which was established in 2017, to identify areas of work where the Partnership needed to concentrate its efforts with early interventions to reduce demand on services and impacts on people’s lives, communities, business and organisations that support them has been expanded to become the **County Durham Together Partnership** which will be responsible for countywide approaches.
- 12 The **County Durham Together Community Hub** has been established in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 13 The hub was developed to coordinate food provision, social contact, welfare support, volunteering and be the central coordination function for the voluntary and community sector.
- 14 A **Covid-19 Community Champions programme** has been developed to ensure that as the pandemic continues, key messages are shared within communities, and that these messages are trusted, concise and clear.
- 15 The Child Poverty Working Group was awarded £150,000 from the Poverty Action Group and £100,000 from Public Health to develop and deliver holiday activities with healthy food across County Durham. The funding has supported work with partners across the county to add value to a co-ordinated, sustainable, countywide holiday food and activity offer that supports children, young people and families to help reduce the ‘holiday experience gap’ and has impact in our communities longer term.
- 16 Officers from across multiple DCC services came together to deliver the October half-term school meals support scheme, providing invaluable support to children and families across the county. A total of 8,632 applications for support were received and DCC paid out 6,670 claims. This amounted to the equivalent of £156,270, which was used to provide meals for 10,418 of our county’s children.
- 17 The three-year European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Durham Sparks/Community Enterprise Durham project has come to an end with the final claim submitted in October 2020. The project was established to support community social enterprises and local potential

entrepreneurs across the county and achieved positive successful outputs and broader outcomes. It attracted £525,000 of ERDF funding, matched with £350,000 funding from Durham County Council.

- 18 The Office of Police Crime and Victim's Commissioner, together with Durham Constabulary and Durham County Council as part of the **Safe Durham Partnership**, has been successful in obtaining £485,360 as part of the Home Office Safer Streets Fund. This funding will be used to support situational crime prevention (i.e. target hardening security equipment to addresses which have been a victim of burglary, repeat burglary and properties in close proximity to the burgled property) in the Horden area with the aim of preventing residential burglaries.
- 19 Partners supported World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2020. This is important given the impacts Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions have had on the health and wellbeing of people across the County, and access to people's support networks.
- 20 In October 2020, the Council agreed to adopt the County Durham Plan. The Plan seeks to ensure the county is a successful place to live, work, invest and visit by focussing on supporting and creating vibrant communities.
- 21 Our **14 Area Action Partnerships** (AAPs) held autumn events where they met virtually to gather the views of residents and businesses on a wide range of issues. This was an opportunity for residents to find out what was happening in their area and how people have been supported throughout the coronavirus pandemic and to hear about the priorities and goals for the next 15 years, which have been set as part of the Vision for the county. In addition, AAP Board meetings and task and finish groups have also moved to virtual meeting to enable them to continue.

## **Recommendation**

- 22 Cabinet is recommended to:
  - (a) note the contents of this update.

## Background

- 23 The **County Durham Partnership** including the board and forum (which bring together the board and local communities), five partnerships (**Health and Wellbeing Board, Safe Durham Partnership, Economic Partnership, Environment and Climate Change Partnership** and **County Durham Together Partnership, Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership** and the **Local Safeguarding Adults Board, Better Together VCS Forum** and all **Area Action Partnerships** lead on key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.

## County Durham Partnership Board

- 24 The County Durham Partnership Board met in July to give partners an opportunity to discuss their collective local response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The role of the Local Resilience Forum as a collaborative mechanism for delivery of partner organisations mutual aims and outcomes in the event of an emergency or major incident and the use of an intelligence-based approach to working with communities was acknowledged. In addition, measures to move the county forwards in terms of recovery from the impacts of Covid-19 through a Business, Economy, Regeneration and Strategy (BERS) Recovery Group, a subgroup of the **County Durham Economic Partnership** were discussed.
- 25 In September, partners agreed a new partnership structure for the County Durham Partnership which ensures the partnership structure aids delivery of the County Durham Vision 2035, which was ratified at the County Durham Partnership meeting in September 2019, with ambitions for:
- (a) More and better jobs;
  - (b) People live long and independent lives;
  - (c) Connected Communities.
- 26 The County Durham Partnership also agreed new branding to reflect the new partnership structure.
- 27 At the November meeting, an overview of the VCS in County Durham and the effects Covid-19 has had on the resilience of the VCS was discussed.
- 28 The VCS are a key partner within the County Durham Partnership and are recognised for their unique capabilities to energise and support local communities and make a distinct and sustained contribution to the



Better for everyone

The new CDP logo

economic and social development of County Durham. The new County Durham Vision, the Wellbeing approach and the developing work of County Durham Together provides an appropriate time to review how we work with the VCS. Sustainable longer-term funding for VCS infrastructure, a greater coordination of VCS commissioning by partners and developing a 'connector model' to identify and respond to gaps in provision were discussed. The development of a VCS Framework to provide a consistent and strategic approach to how the public sector works with the VCS was also discussed.

## **Covid-19**

- 29 The Covid-19 pandemic and response has seen a reprioritisation of partners' efforts to manage their response to Covid-19 and the cancellation of a number of partnership meetings. However, all meetings have now been resumed and are taking place via Microsoft Teams.
- 30 The Covid-19 pandemic is likely to have a further negative impact on adults, children and young people already living in poverty in County Durham. Our response to this ongoing public health crisis has been to develop alternative service delivery models, adapt and do differently and use technology for workforce training, drop ins and interventions.
- 31 **County Durham Together (CDT)** was developed based on the Wellbeing principles and worked to ensure the community was empowered to self-help as much as possible and reach those most in need through an intelligence led approach from the outset. At the point of need the hub was there to consider the whole person and embed back into community networks as much as possible thus fully utilising the VCS to the maximum.
- 32 Wellbeing for Life was a central part of the proactive work with the most clinically vulnerable. Pathways were developed to triage and escalate more vulnerable residents and a first check was always undertaken to establish if people were already known to services to avoid duplication in effort and confusion in the system. County Durham Together had strong connections and pathways with TEWV mental health trust and the community team of CDDFT. The AAPs and VCS were critical in the deployment of essential supplies such as food and understood the local community networks and how to reach the most vulnerable. Funding grants were swiftly dispersed into communities through the work of the AAPs.



- 33 There are ten components to working with our communities using the new delivery model:
- (a) culture and leadership change programme to develop shared values, beliefs, language and behaviours of our workforce no matter who your employing organisation;
  - (b) understanding our people using our data to develop our knowledge of people and families who have multiple clinical and / or social vulnerabilities and may require earlier support;
  - (c) co-production **WITH** our people: building on the work of AAPs to hear the thoughts and ideas from our elected members and communities to co-produce the delivery model as a collective;
  - (d) continuing with the digital offer with a feedback loop;
  - (e) transforming LOCATE into a community book, enabling self-help to be as easy and equitably accessible as possible enabling people to find out what is available to them for health, social and welfare purposes;
  - (f) VCS alliance contracting, sustainability and coordination;
  - (g) working with the voluntary and community sector to continue with the growth and development of the mutual aid infrastructure;
  - (h) developing a clear and credible Coordinated Navigators / Community Connectors to interface with the voluntary and community sector as well as core public sector such as the lead for this in primary care and then mental health and local government.
  - (i) workforce to have generalist skills and competence up to threshold of specialism;
  - (j) buildings to have multi-functional access and service delivery at the level of place. Considering where our teams are based in communities and how our physical presence embeds within that community whether that be part of a library, customer access point, a family centre or a GP surgery.
- 34 The County Durham Together Community Hub supports residents who:
- (a) are clinically extremely vulnerable;
  - (b) have multiple social vulnerabilities and are impacted by COVID-19;

- (c) are self-isolating;
  - (d) need support to access food, essential supplies and online supermarket shopping slots;
  - (e) have concerns about money, housing, health or employment linked to coronavirus, self-isolation or lockdown;
  - (f) are isolated or lonely and would like someone to listen and chat via our Chat Together programme;
  - (g) have questions or queries about current Guidance and Legislation.
- 35 A **Covid-19 Community Champions programme** has been developed to ensure that as the pandemic continues, key messages are shared within communities, and that these messages are trusted, concise and clear.
- 36 Champions will help us to reach all communities across County Durham by:
- (a) supporting the promotion and dissemination of key messages;
  - (b) information sharing online and potentially through events;
  - (c) helping us to better understand the needs of communities;
  - (d) being part of an interactive County Durham Together webpage;
  - (e) liaising with AAPs and other local groups.
- 37 By using the latest local public health data together with the knowledge, connections and relationships of local champions we will be able to get the appropriate information to the right people within the community.
- 38 The champions will receive training and ongoing support from the council to empower communities to play their part in preventing the spread of the virus. A total of 59 people have signed up to be individual champions, with a number of organisations signed up as Champions Plus. <http://www.durham.gov.uk/covidcommunitychampion>
- 39 A number of AAP areas had face to face advice suspended due to Covid-19 and alternative arrangements were quickly put in place in the **3 Towns AAP** so residents could access advice from the Advice in County Durham network through telephone calls and email. Self-referral posters were displayed in local venues and this was publicised on social media.

40 **Bishop Auckland and Shildon (BASH) AAP** supported 17 projects through its Covid-19 emergency funding. Projects covered a wide range of issues including crisis and food bank support, debt advice, food, running costs for community groups, activity packs, children's activities and care packages.

41 Durham County Council is recruiting a COVID-19 compliance team who can make a real impact to support local businesses through education, support and proportionate regulation. The principal role of this team is to visit relevant business premises across County Durham to ensure Covid-19 compliance, including the investigation of related complaints. Accordingly, they will provide advice and support to businesses on how to operate in a Covid-19 secure way in accordance with legislation, Government and sector guidance.



BASH residents receiving a food box

### **AAP Autumn events**

42 Between 20 October and 12 November each of our **14 Area Action Partnerships (AAPs)** met virtually to gather the views of residents and businesses on a wide range of issues. The focus of these events was to:

- (a) find out more about how groups and individuals in their area have been supporting their community during the pandemic;
- (b) hear from Cllr Simon Henig, leader of the Council, about the priorities and goals for the next 15 years, which have been set as part of the Vision for the county. These aims are based on feedback gathered from the public during a consultation carried out last year;
- (c) have the opportunity to shape the county's future activities, including £20 million of work to make towns and villages around the county more vibrant - one of the key priorities of the Vision;
- (d) hear an update from Amanda Healy, County Durham's Director of Public Health, on the coronavirus pandemic and details of how residents can play their part in reducing the spread of the virus by becoming community champions.

- 43 The ability to write comments and feedback at the events gave attendees a chance to interact with the presenters. The total number of comments received across the 14 events was 1375, with the least number of comments received at an event being 56 and the most being 126, eight events had over 100 comments. These are really good numbers considering this is the first time that we have held virtual events in this way.
- 44 Since the pandemic began, AAPs have provided more than £1.1 million to almost 300 community groups and organisations working to support the county's most vulnerable residents. This is alongside the support given to groups by agencies such as Durham Community Action and the County Durham Community Foundation.

### **Holiday activities with health food countywide programme**

- 45 The Child Poverty Working Group was awarded £150,000 from the Poverty Action Group and £100,000 from Public Health to develop and deliver holiday activities with healthy food across County Durham. The funding has supported work with partners across the county to add value to a co-ordinated, sustainable, countywide holiday food and activity offer that supports children, young people and families to help reduce the 'holiday experience gap' and has impact in our communities longer term.
- 46 The Holiday Activities with Health Food (HAWHF) group have worked together with the AAPs to develop, administer and distribute funding for enriching holiday activities with healthy food over the holiday periods 2020 (Easter, May half term, Summer and October half term).
- 47 Each of the 14 AAPs were given **£15,000** in total to allocate to community organisations to deliver Holiday Activities with Healthy Food across the four school holiday periods in 2020. A total of **£210,000**. In addition, £10,000 was allocated for county wide projects.
- 48 From Easter to October 2020, **184** projects were allocated funding through the 14 AAPs for Holiday Activities with Healthy Food and an additional project was allocated countywide funding to deliver during the summer holidays.
- 49 **Over 14,522** beneficiaries have been reported to date from **115** out of **185** of the projects allocated funding. The total number who have benefited from the 185 projects allocated funding from the Holiday Activities with Health Food funding will be significantly higher when all monitoring returns have been received.

50 Most of the projects delivered, involved the creation of a wide range of activity packs offering a range of activities for children and young people and families to engage in. From arts and crafts, environmental and wildlife activities, science activities and sports and physical activity and activities to enhance wellbeing as well as either healthy food and snacks or ingredients and recipes to make a wide range of meals for themselves and their families.



51 All groups that received funding through the AAPs were provided with a document developed by Public Health 'Recommendations to support Holiday Activities with Healthy Food Groups operate during the Covid-19 pandemic' to support them with face to face delivery during the summer holidays.

52 For each holiday period the VCS Alliance team have collated all HAWHF programmes across the county, the information is made available as a live mobile app and a printer friendly PDF version. The mobile app is updated regularly and to date is shared with all VCS Alliance networks, AAPs, all schools (via the extranet and Headteacher briefing note), Families Information Service and Locate.

53 Officers from across multiple DCC services came together to deliver the October half-term school meals support scheme, providing invaluable support to children and families across the county. A total of 8,632 applications for support were received and DCC paid out 6,670 claims. This amounted to the equivalent of £156,270, which was used to provide meals for 10,418 of our county's children.

## Safeguarding

54 The **Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB)** held its development session in September 2020 and adopted the new ways of working within the landscape of COVID-19. The session was an opportunity for

LSAB statutory and relevant partners to consider its new strategic plan, which focusses upon the learning from emerging themes for safeguarding adults during COVID-19. Work strands over 2020/2022 will encompass reflecting upon COVID-19 to inform upon hidden victims and emerging themes, that will inform and support the LSAB assurance activity and identification of key communication messages with cross connectivity to wider partnerships and connected agendas. A strong thread of audit and assurance will ensure the LSAB continues to measure the effectiveness of local multi-agency working and in ensuring adults remain safe.

55 The LSAB have produced their fifth Annual Report. The annual report provides assurance on the measures in place to safeguard adults across County Durham, and outlines progress, achievements and challenges during 2019/20 against the following LSAB strategic priorities. It also includes details of the early LSAB response to the Covid-19 pandemic:

- (a) Prevention and Early Implementation;
- (b) User/Carer Voice and Awareness Raising;
- (c) Performance, Quality and Governance;
- (d) Safeguarding Adults Reviews Learning and Training.

56 An easy read version and an 'annual report on a page' have also been produced.

57 David Pickard has been appointed as the new Independent Chair and Scrutineer of the **Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP)**.

58 The DSCP has produced its first annual report since the new DSCP arrangements came into force. The Annual Report demonstrates how the functions of the DSCP have been fulfilled, as set out in the statutory guidance 'Working



Keeping Children Safe



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Together to Safeguard Children 2018' and an update on work undertaken against the DSCP priorities during 2019/20. It also provides a performance monitoring overview, a summary of the use of restraint in secure centres, serious case reviews and child death reviews and

details on the multi-agency training provision. A children and young people's version of the annual report has also been produced.

- 59 The DSCP has appointed a Young People's Commissioner Apprentice, whose role is to engage with children and young people across the county to ensure their voices are heard, and that this influences the services they receive.
- 60 November 2020 saw the third year of undertaking a wider partnership approach to Safeguarding Week under the umbrella of the **Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB), Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP)** and the **Safe Durham Partnership**. Key themes during the week focussed upon safeguarding in the community with a lens on strengths of multi-agency working during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to ensure safeguarding and the safety of residents remained front and centre. Promoting awareness of issues such as radicalisation, modern slavery, domestic abuse and financial abuse as well as the activity under County Durham Together and the Community Hub response to COVID-19. The week also placed a strong focus upon the strength-based model of signs of safety, and mental health. A podcast from the National Domestic Abuse Commissioner, Nicola Jacobs was also included as part of the week. The session was opened by the LSAB Independent Chair and DSCP Independent Chair and Scrutineer.

### **Vision 2035: More and Better Jobs**

- 61 On 21 October the Council adopted the County Durham Plan. The Plan seeks to ensure the county is a successful place to live, work, invest and visit by focussing on supporting and creating vibrant communities. This is by delivering more and better jobs and sustained economic growth; a wide choice of high quality homes that supports economic growth and meets the needs of all people; a high quality built and enhanced natural environment; and the necessary supporting infrastructure including transport, health and educational needs.
- 62 The County Durham Plan includes provision for over 300 hectares of land to be allocated for business and industry development, with the potential for this to create more than 32,000 jobs. It also envisages almost 25,000 homes being built up to 2035.
- 63 The Business, Economy, Regeneration Strategy Recovery Group (a subgroup of the **County Durham Economic Partnership**) has been established to assess and address the economic implications of the pandemic for County Durham to provide the assistance that businesses need to restart and grow the economy of County Durham. It is focusing on six key areas:

- (a) Business support,
- (b) Employability and skills;
- (c) Infrastructure,
- (d) Intelligence,
- (e) Strategy and Lobbying;
- (f) Communication.

64 During the first couple of months following the launch of Government Grant Funding, support was also given to an additional 266 High Street Businesses, both in securing grant funding and signposting to areas of support. In August 2020:

- (a) the Council received European Funding to support the reopening high streets safely;
- (b) three officers were appointed until March 2021 to visit high street businesses, support businesses with opening and operating safely and identifying further support that is required;
- (c) the Market Project was launched; which allows new and existing businesses access to funding support for purchase of market stalls and relevant legal requirements.

65 All the initiatives in place support the Government's efforts to help business trade in a safer environment.

66 The coronavirus crisis has put thousands of jobs and hundreds of businesses at risk. Durham City has seen a number of businesses close. **Durham AAP** have supported Durham BID with an Area Budget grant of £40,000 which will enable them to utilise new and old technologies to get key messages out to local people to look at new ways to encourage people to come into Durham to shop, eat and drink in a responsible way.

67 One of the first projects to be supported using Covid-19 Recovery monies by **Chester-le-Street AAP** was the CDC Enterprise Agency - PLAN B – Business Action Planning. This is a business support program designed for post COVID recovery. 25 businesses will receive bespoke one to one coaching and practical support to redesign their business models allowing them to thrive in a post Covid-19 economy.

68 Single Homeless Action Initiative in Durham (SHAID) approached the **Stanley AAP** for funding support as they like many others had highlighted and identified a need to keep key workers safe and get them the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) they require. SHAID received funding to purchase a 3D printer and materials to produce 700 face visor masks for



Stanley Medical Group staff wearing their SHAID supplied masks

frontline workers of local organisations and single carers across the Stanley area. The KO3D printing for Covid-19 project has enabled the quick delivery and distribution of face visors to frontline staff across the Stanley AAP area including: care homes, pharmacy staff, schools and front-line charity workers and single carers who needed this added safety measure to continue their role as key workers, enabling them to stay safe and to be able to continue to offer the vital services they are delivering in the community during this pandemic.

69 The three-year European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Durham Sparks/Community Enterprise Durham project has come to an end with the final claim submitted in October 2020. The project was established to support community social enterprises and local potential entrepreneurs across the county and achieved positive successful outputs and broader outcomes. It attracted £525,000 of ERDF funding, matched with £350,000 funding from Durham County Council.

70 The Durham Sparks Project supported over 100 local community enterprises with over 30 new FTE employment opportunities also created. Nearly 150 individuals were also supported to explore their own business ideas through 12+ hours of support. The Finchale Consortium led by Finchale Group and involving a number of business consultants delivered the project over the last three years across the county. ERS Consulting were also awarded the evaluation element of the project and have produced a comprehensive, positive and complimentary report on the project particularly focussing on the approach and model of delivery.

71 Young people, who disproportionately make up the workforce of key affected sectors such as hospitality and leisure, are likely to be hit hardest by unemployment in the coming months.

72 Work is underway on the establishment of three Youth Hubs in Peterlee, Bishop Auckland and Stanley utilising DurhamWorks and Jobcentre Plus funding.

73 The Northern Saints Trails project is a tourism product development initiative to position and market North East England as The Crossroads of British Christianity through the development of six long distance walking trails based on existing ancient pilgrimage routes.



74 The Trails portray the region's Saints and their stories, set against a backdrop of the very best of the region's attractions, landscapes, places to eat and drink and visitor accommodation. A range of marketing materials are in place and ready to go for the full launch of the Northern Saints project in 2021, once pandemic restrictions are eased. The project website was soft launched over the summer and is aimed at in-region and day visitors. The website contains over 500+ regional products.

### **Vision 2035: People live long and independent lives**

75 The **Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB)** is refreshing its Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25 to take account of Covid-19 and the Vision following the Strategic Governance Review.

76 The County Durham Placed Based Commissioning and Delivery Plan 2020-25 sets out the commissioning and delivery intentions of all partners represented at the Integrated Care Board and forms the health and care delivery component of the County Durham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

77 A Health Impact Assessment was undertaken in response to Covid-19, with findings and recommendations being endorsed by a range of Partnerships to enhance recovery using a system wide approach. In addition to specific action being undertaken by partners, this will focus on:

- (a) targeted work for vulnerable and marginalised groups as part of COVID-19 recovery to reduce preventable inequalities;

- (b) training of the whole-system workforce to raise awareness of welfare support and impact money worries can have on health and wellbeing;
- (c) using population health management approaches and forecasting across the system, consider how to support prevention and early intervention in mental health can be used to mitigate as far as possible any increased demand to secondary care;
- (d) develop and implement a streamlined information resource to provide access for communities and individuals to support for mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- (e) ensure the community is prepared to respond to a second wave and local outbreaks.

78 This year, World Mental Health Day was on 10 October 2020, and a number of activities to raise awareness were introduced. These included the 'Power of 5 challenge', where staff were encouraged to spend 5 minutes across 5 days talking to 5 people they haven't spoken to since lockdown began in March 2020.



79 Staff were also reminded of the five ways to wellbeing:

- (a) Connect;
- (b) Be active;
- (c) Take notice;
- (d) Keep learning;
- (e) Give.

80 A Healthy Business Strategy has been developed for businesses across County Durham. The framework contains a set of actions which tackle workplace mental health, stigma and discrimination, improve general mental health awareness and promote the importance of good workforce mental health which aims to support small businesses and voluntary organisations.

81 AAPs have supported a range of initiatives relating to people's mental health and physical wellbeing. Keeping connected is especially important for people living with mental health issues.

**Mid Durham AAP** funded the Welcoming Lanchester: A Guide to Lanchester addressing Issues around Loneliness. This is a document led by members of the Patient Participation

Group at the medical centre including members of Lanchester Partnership. The publication was posted through every door in the parish and is also included on our 'Durham Insight' website

<https://www.durhaminsight.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Welcoming-Lanchester-Guide-for-websites-03122019.pdf>



Mid Durham AAP members promoting 'Welcome to Lanchester'.

82 Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP) delivered a number of activity packs to the homes of older residents in the **Great Aycliffe and Middridge (GAMP) AAP** area. The packs were designed to promote resilience and improve mental wellbeing, also helping to alleviate boredom during the older people's isolation due to Covid-19. Packs contained arts/crafts and baking activities suitable for all

abilities. Packs were delivered by PCP key workers/volunteers and the GAMP AAP Coordinator who could also offer help and advice should any queries arise when delivering the packs. The feedback from the older people was very positive and they appreciated the support.



GAMP and PCP volunteers preparing to deliver activity packs to residents

83 The **4 Together Partnership AAP** supported the Solan Connor Fawcett Family Trust with two applications during the first lockdown period. One was support towards the charity's fixed running costs and the other was an application to provide care services and packages to cancer sufferers and their families in the area. Vital care services were able to be continued including transport to hospital and doctors' appointments,

services and equipment to support families, help with funerals and delivery of a care packages with regular telephone phone support.

84 With an extension of our funding this project was able to run right through from April to the end September, offering 24 weeks of vital support to some of our most vulnerable individuals and their families.

85 AAPs, especially in rural areas, can use the natural environment to support the development of leisure related activities. **Weardale AAP** has supported the refurbishment of the Weardale Way. The Weardale Way which is a popular walk for both local residents and it attracts walkers of all levels of fitness, this varied and at times challenging walk offers the opportunity to enjoy the natural environment depending on the experience of the walker. The refurbishment will ensure works are undertaken in keeping with traditional stonemasonry and carpentry skills, employing local contractors and the health benefits of being outdoors are utilised.

86 Elections took place in secondary schools across the county at the beginning of 2020 to elect young people onto the new **County Durham Youth Council (YC)**. The YC currently have 39 registered members, with



Durham Youth Council members self portraits

representation from 19 secondary schools, and they are working with 23 other youth provisions to increase membership and improve representation. Since September 2020, and following schools return to teaching, a Participation and Engagement Officer has been appointed, as the lead support for the Youth Council.

87 The Youth Council ran their British Youth Council elections in the week beginning 19 October and two County Durham Young people are our representatives at the national level.

88 Youth Council members have set up four sub-groups:

- (a) Mental Health and Wellbeing,
- (b) Environment,
- (c) Youth Council Handbook;

(d) Durham History Centre Project.

Members have selected which sub-groups they would like to be involved in and will be holding regular meetings to expand the work on their projects.

- 89 Roles for Care Experienced Young Inspectors are being developed to help us to shape the services we provide in Durham County Council Children's Residential homes. The Young Inspectors will be developing a framework and toolkit, accessing training and support to allow them to carry out the role of a Young Inspector, which will involve them visiting our children's residential homes and sharing their views and observations on the services provided to the young people and their home.

- 90 The Young Carers Charter supports to make positive change for children, young people and families where there is a caring role. A total of thirteen organisations have achieved Young Carer Charter status within the **Spennymoor AAP** area this has included five Primary Schools, four community organisations along with Spennymoor Town Council, Spennymoor AAP, County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group and Saint Andrews Medical Centre. Spennymoor Youth Council and Spennymoor Stage and Song have also committed to achieve charter status.



Promoting the Young Carers Charter in Spennymoor

- 91 This Charter work has been extremely successful within the Spennymoor AAP area and has ensured that the needs of young carers have been considered and actioned by a range of local organisations who will ensure that any information regarding the support of young carers is disseminated and shared with respective teams and partnerships.
- 92 A presentation on the work of the Neighbourhood Charter has also been undertaken at the Spennymoor AAP Board meeting earlier in 2020 and received a very positive response.
- 93 Since the last update report, the council has confirmed three years funding for our **Armed Forces Outreach workers** who are part of a local authority partnership **Armed Forces Outreach Service**, providing advice and support for members of the armed forces community in

need. Help is available with housing, benefits, employment, health and wellbeing, thus ensuring that the most vulnerable are assisted to live long and independent lives.

- 94 At the first virtual meeting of the **County Durham Armed Forces Forum** on 8th October, our CCG partner reported that 30 GP surgeries in County Durham are now accredited as Veteran Friendly GP Practices and all GP surgeries in the county have links to the Veterans Gateway, an online resource of support available to members of the Armed Forces community. Further work is planned to update Durham Insight with data about Veterans' health so that appropriate interventions can be planned to help veterans have long and independent lives.



Showing support for Durham Armed Forces

### **Vision 2035: Connected Communities**

- 95 The **Safe Durham Partnership** is refreshing its Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2020-25 to take account of Covid-19 and the Vision following the Strategic Governance Review.
- 96 As part of the work of the **Safe Durham Partnership**, County Durham has been successful in securing £485,360 from the Home Office Safer Streets Fund. The Safer Streets Fund aims to stop offences that blight communities and cause misery for victims from happening in the first place. The scheme has been operational since October 2020 will run to the end of March 2021 and target the Horden area which has been identified as an area where support would benefit the community. The money is being used to provide target hardening measures for both the victims property and those of the tenants in the surrounding area. The funding will also be used to train officers to deliver local crime prevention advice to residents.
- 97 The National Hatecrime Awareness Week campaign ran virtually, from the 10 -17 October 2020. Daily multi-media messages were shared to raise awareness of 'hate crime' and branded under the "Hate Hurts" campaign to shows that partners are united against Hate Crime in Durham and Darlington. Officers within the partnership were also given the opportunity to take part in some free online training to help them identify hate crime, how it impacts on the individual and the community as well as how to report.

- 98 Following on from activity at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic to raise awareness of the helplines available for domestic abuse, 16 days of Action ran from 25 November until 10<sup>th</sup> December which saw partners through the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group, a sub group of the **Safe Durham Partnership**, work together to provide a coordinated response. Key themes included:
- (a) Why Covid-19 has made the issue more important than ever;
  - (b) The impact of domestic abuse on children in the home;
  - (c) How you can get help;
  - (d) How we can all help.
- 99 As part of our PREVENT duty under the **Safe Durham Partnership**, a joint collaboration between Durham Constabulary's Prevent Team, Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council saw approximately 100 school safeguarding officers' and Head Teachers engage in a training event held over two days in order to provide the latest information on the threat and risks related to extremist and terrorist related activity in the area. This was the first fully online event of its type in the area and received positive praise from the attendees.
- 100 Social Housing providers have received special training to deliver terrorism awareness to their staff in order that front line officers can spot the signs of radicalisation and extremist behaviour and make the necessary referrals for support through the Prevent referral and Channel process.
- 101 Channel is the safeguarding panel, which aims to safeguard those vulnerable to being drawn into extremist and terrorist related acts.
- 102 The new Channel guidance, which has implications for how Channel panels are delivered across England and Wales was published by the Home Office and launched through online events in November 2020.
- 103 Some of the key practical requirements for local authorities include:
- (a) designating a Channel chair and deputy chair;
  - (b) embedding Channel within local governance arrangements;
  - (c) as a statutory function, ensuring Channel is incorporated within local authority constitutions;
  - (d) updating local Data Protection Information Notices (Privacy notices) to reflect Channel panel and the use of personal data.

104 Our current Channel guidance will be updated to take account of the new national Channel Guidance.

105 To make sure the right messages were being delivered and people seeking advice were not confused by the amount of websites on offer, work was carried out in September 2020 in order to ensure that the most appropriate advice was being highlighted to children, parents, carers and professionals in relation to online safety.

106 **East Durham Rural Corridor (EDRC) AAP** funded a project which involves working with the Cyber Harm Reduction Officers at Durham Constabulary to divert young people away from cybercrime and prevent cybercrime from happening. Members of the Youth Forum took an interest in the work after the Police attended a Board meeting. The Cyber Officers advise the public on how to stay safe online and work with young people to divert them away from cybercrime. A high number of those who commit cyber offences are teenagers, so they work along the line of PREVENT to ensure that they are aware of cybercrime and are diverted from committing this.



Meeting up to tackle cyber crime

107 The EDRC AAP Youth Forum have developed a Facebook Group 'Live, Listen, Speak Project' to allow relevant information to be circulated quickly and to enable children and young people in the area to have continuous dialogue and have a say. Through working with the Cyber Officers, they will be able to ensure that the online youth forum is safe and secure. The Youth Forum would like to continue working on this project and progress it further to raise awareness of the project the young people will hold two workshops across the area to talk to other young people about engaging. The young people will see what others want to improve about the areas via the online forum and will work to make these changes by involving the local community.

108 Following agreement of the new partnership structure at the County Durham Partnership, a workshop was held on 10 November 2020 to establish a new **County Durham Environment and Climate Change Partnership (ECCP)**. Experts from partner organisations, businesses and the voluntary sector with an interest in the environment and climate

change met to ensure a strategic, multi-agency approach was established for the new partnership.

109 At the workshop people used their knowledge and expertise to identify the areas which will influence the new ECCP agenda over the next decade, whilst considering cross-partnership linkages to ensure the partnership's agenda is as comprehensive as it can be, including considering environmental links to people's health and the economy. People discussed the issues which would influence the strategic priorities for the ECCP currently and in the future; including those detailed in the Vision 2035, the Climate Change Emergency Response Plan, A Green Future: 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Bill 2020. Following discussions three priority workstreams were agreed for the new ECCP.

- (a) Climate Emergency;
- (b) Ecological Emergency;
- (c) Place, Health and Community.

110 **Derwent Valley AAP** have worked with OASES (Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists) to undertake an energy audit in four primary schools in the area and identify how they could become eco-friendlier. Each school will choose a topic they would like to focus on, for example, energy, biodiversity, waste. An action plan will be created for related activities to be carried out involving the whole school and linking into the wider community as well as linking into national campaigns such as Earth Hour.



111 A budget will be allocated to each school to spend on capital items (for example, items to replace single use plastics, hi-vis clothing for walking buses) to help them in their eco school journey. The schools will also be helped to achieve the ECO Schools Award - Bronze, Silver or Green Flag with all schools aiming to be Green Flag status.

112 To support our vision in helping our communities realise their potential and help build our communities. The approach to wellbeing has been adopted by the Health and Wellbeing Board and builds on the fantastic work undertaken by communities during Covid-19. The approach

means we will work **with our** communities, delivering solutions together, instead of **doing to** communities.

- 113 High streets and town centres retain an important place in our society, but they need to adapt to ensure that they remain vibrant, safe and attractive social hubs that people want to use. **Teesdale AAP (TAP)** has agreed in principle to introduce a free public internet and analytics solution throughout Barnard Castle town centre. TAP and the Council believes this will help make the town centre a more vibrant and attractive place for residents, visitors, businesses and shoppers, and that it will increase footfall and help local businesses thrive and grow.
- 114 There will be 17 Access Points installed across the town centre which will provide free wi-fi to anyone that logs on to the system 'Connected Barnard Castle'. Any person that has a line of sight to one of these Access Points will be able to access the free Wi-Fi. Evidence suggests that a town centre that provides free wi-fi encourages people to dwell longer in town centres, encourages additional footfall, additional spend and in turn helps businesses to thrive and grow.
- 115 The role of County Durham's Local VCS Infrastructure Organisation, Durham Community Action (DCA), has been pivotal in providing information to the Council about how local groups have been managing and the support they have been providing in local communities including intelligence about the emerging Mutual-Aid groups. It has also been providing information, advice and guidance to local groups through regular communications with the sector, downloadable guides, online training and telephone support around Covid-19 secure practices, safeguarding volunteers and vulnerable adults and children, information about emergency and recovery funding programmes, and supporting trustees and management committees for Community Buildings. During this time, they also launched the new County Durham Volunteering website which is designed to match organisational requests for volunteers with individuals looking for volunteering opportunities and will be an invaluable resource for promoting and encouraging volunteering within the county.
- 116 The most recent survey carried out by DCA in August 2020 amongst members of the **Better Together Forum** of larger and/or specialist VCS organisations revealed that amongst the organisations who responded:
  - (a) 100% have seen consistent changes in the nature of support provided to beneficiaries and everyone is doing things differently;
  - (b) 90% have had Covid-19 related grant funding with the majority funding service adaption and continuing core services to meet increased demand. Just under two thirds of respondents have

also developed specific (fixed term) Covid-19 emergency response project-based activity;

- (c) 80% of those who had emergency funding for project based activity would like to continue with it in the medium to long term and these longer term funding needs centre around resourcing for the 'new normal' with 88% identifying IT equipment, training and support as a priority.

117 **East Durham AAP** has supported local community centres and local organisations by providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to enable them to continue to operate and comply with the latest government guidance. By providing this equipment, organisation can continue to support local communities during the coronavirus pandemic.

118 The role **Faith Communities** are playing during the pandemic is crucial to keeping communities connected and supportive of each other. Although places of worship were initially closed during the lockdown, the members of faith communities continued to provide both practical and pastoral support for local communities



Food provided by Sacriston Churches Together

through foodbank provision, meal delivery services and telephone befriending. Several faith-based projects were supported by AAP Covid-19 emergency funding.

119 One faith-based charity, Durham Christian Partnership, who run several projects including the Countywide network of Foodbanks, also run Community Money Advice County Durham which operates as part of Advice in County Durham. This free, impartial and confidential debt and money advice service is now available through video links at 11 foodbank centres across County Durham with further locations coming online soon. Authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority and affiliated to the national charity Community Money Advice, they have been helping people with debt issues for the past 10 years through face to face consultations, telephone, text, email and post. Clients can now speak directly through a video link with one of their debt advisers, or simply collect information at the foodbank centres and ask for a same-

day call back. This service helps individuals and families stay connected by helping them through difficult and life changing circumstances.

## **Conclusion**

- 120 We could not have foreseen the scale of the Coronavirus pandemic and the impact this has had on all services across the County from early 2020.
- 121 Unfortunately, the ongoing pandemic has impacted disproportionately on certain people across the County, particularly our older population, people with existing/underlying health conditions such as diabetes and obesity, our black and ethnic minority population as well as those living and working in more disadvantaged circumstances. The pandemic has also impacted on mental wellbeing across the whole life course, widening health, social and economic inequalities.
- 122 The County Durham Partnership, including our Safeguarding Boards, Better Together VCS Forum and our fourteen Area Action Partnerships will continue to work together to prevent health and wellbeing inequalities widening even further and work with our communities as true and equal partners through this difficult time. Our relationships with other agencies and with our communities are built on a robust foundation and will continue to provide a basis for improving outcomes for our local people through to the end of the pandemic and during the recovery and restoration phases to meet the County Durham Vision we set over a year ago.

## **Background papers**

- None

## **Other useful documents**

- None

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

None.

### **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.

Durham County Council had a dedicated £1.4 million coronavirus support fund, which was shared amongst Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) across the county, to ensure local projects were able to help those in need during the coronavirus pandemic.

### **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.

### **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 partnerships and the working practice of AAPs.

### **Climate Change**

This is recognised throughout partnership activities.

### **Human Rights**

None.

### **Crime and Disorder**

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to form a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment and to reduce re-offending. In County Durham, the CSP is the Safe Durham Partnership.

### **Staffing**

None.

**Accommodation**

None.

**Risk**

None.

**Procurement**

None.