



Durham County Council Council Plan

2020-2023



Executive Summary

County Durham is a dynamic place, used to overcoming challenges and reinventing itself. Recently, the council and partners agreed a vision for County Durham for 2035 following extensive consultation with our residents. Over 30,000 responses helped shape a vision that people recognise. This is to **create more and better jobs, help people live long and independent lives and support communities to be well connected and supportive of each other**. Our purpose holds to deliver on these ambitions against a context of COVID-19. This plan sets out how we will achieve this.

We want to create **more and better jobs** by supporting businesses emerging from lockdown back to stability and help to rebuild our economy. We are developing a pipeline of projects and investment plans; our roadmap to help stimulate economic recovery. We will create major employment sites across the county, cementing our position as a premier place in the region to do business. Employability support programmes will be developed to help people back into employment or to start their own business. As young people return to our schools and colleges, we will ensure that they receive a good education and training to equip them with the skills they need to access opportunities of today and the future. We will help our tourism and hospitality sector to recover as a great visitor destination with a cultural offer which will help stimulate the local economy.

We want our residents to **live long and independent lives** and remain in good health for many years to come. Surveillance, early identification and outbreak management are vital in controlling the virus, the most immediate threat to the health of our residents. We want to tackle some of the mental health challenges that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. There have been positive impacts on the environment since lockdown began. The council is committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2050 and making our county more conducive to physical exercise to benefit the environment and our health. We have a strong track record of health and social care integration in Durham. We want to build on the financial and practical support we have provided to the care sector during the pandemic by ensuring we have a high-quality care market that is sustainable in the future.

We want our **communities to be well connected and supportive of each other**. As town and village centres reopen, we will help them to be vibrant and accessible places that are well used, clean, attractive and safe. We will support the most vulnerable in our communities, particularly those socially isolating, shielding or adversely affected financially.

These ambitions will be supported by a well-run council with a good grip on its performance and finances and which makes best use of our workforce and technology to provide the best possible service we can for our residents.

Our ambitions are fully supported by a delivery plan at the end of this document.



Leader of the Council, Councillor Simon Henig
and Chief Executive, John Hewitt

A Vision for County Durham

In October 2019, public, private and voluntary sector bodies that make up the County Durham Partnership jointly agreed a [Vision for County Durham 2035](#). This vision was based on a strategic assessment of need using our intelligence platform [Durham Insight](#) and was developed following extensive consultation with the public. Residents, businesses and specific interest groups such as children and young people and people with a disability were asked what they would like to see in a new vision for the county and their views were incorporated into our final vision. The vision document that was agreed sets out our strategic direction and what we would like to achieve over the next 15 years and is written around three broad ambitions for the people of County Durham:

More and better jobs

People live long and independent lives

Connected communities

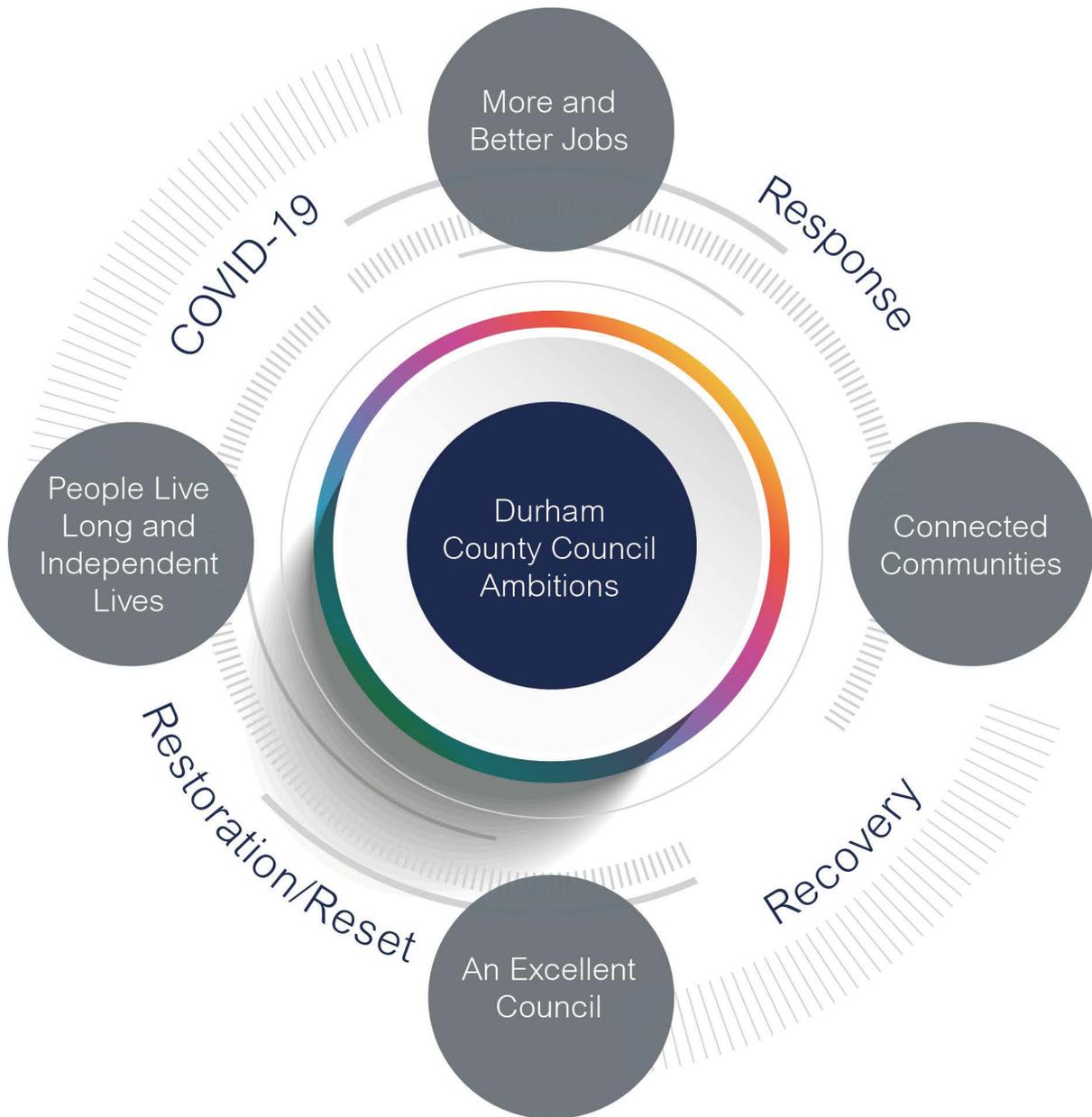
These three themes were developed following extensive public consultation with almost 30,000 pieces of consultation evidence having fed into the development of the vision. As well as being of key importance to local people's long-term priorities, they remain key strategic ambitions in our response to the COVID-19 crisis, where key impacts relate to employment, health and wellbeing, and communities. This document sets out the contributions that Durham County Council will make over the next three years to help achieve those ambitions.

Durham County Council has already delivered £242 million of savings and lost just under 3,000 posts since the introduction of the Government's austerity programme in 2011 and these savings are forecast to exceed £280 million by 2024/25. Despite this, we will continue to aspire to work with partners to achieve our shared Vision for County Durham, which reflects the views of our residents and communities. The unprecedented financial challenges that we face, and uncertain times ahead mean that like many public sector bodies, we will have to consider delivering some services differently if we are to continue providing them at all. Therefore, in addition to the three ambitions set out in the Vision for County Durham, this plan contains a fourth ambition capturing our own organisational transformation agenda and this ambition is to be an excellent council.

This Council Plan aligns to both the council's Medium-Term Financial Plan which sets out how our priorities will be resourced and the County Durham Plan which is the spatial representation of our ambitions contained within the Council Plan around housing, jobs and the environment as well as the transport, schools and healthcare to support it.

Durham County Council Ambitions

This document sets out the strategic framework for all of our plans and strategies. It sets out the council's contribution to achieving the Vision for County Durham as well as our own improvement agenda and the major programmes of work that Durham County Council will be undertaking over the medium-term to recover from COVID-19.



Planning Assumptions

A whole range of factors will directly influence the delivery of this plan. The major issues are identified here.

Clearly, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) will dominate the planning and delivery of our services over the lifetime of this plan and frame everything that we do to support our recovery in County Durham and achieve our vision. Our ongoing response to the global COVID-19 outbreak, how we support recovery of business and the economy and our communities and the restoration of council services features strongly during the period covered by this plan. It affects our local economy, the health and wellbeing of our residents, our communities and the delivery of services by the council. The council is playing a key role in coordinating the response to the pandemic through its public health function and as a first responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. We want to ensure that the most vulnerable in our communities such as older people and those with pre-existing conditions receive support and are best protected. We also want to ensure that we continue to provide essential services in the event of a local outbreak and deliver a range of programmes to help support business and individuals financially affected by the crisis.

Durham is a large and diverse county with a very dispersed settlement pattern which creates specific issues. A large proportion of the county, particularly to the west of the A68 is rural and has some of the sparsest population densities in the country. It is important to people that rural communities remain sustainable whilst maintaining those characteristics that make them distinctive. The particular challenges of rural communities are referenced throughout this Council Plan and rural proofing will be a major consideration in any policies that we develop.

Climate change is one of the most important issues facing humankind today. Whilst it is a global issue, there is a lot that can be done locally to respond to this challenge. Durham County Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. Our targets are to reduce carbon emissions as an organisation by 80% (from a 2008/09 baseline) by 2030 and contribute towards and work with others to achieve a carbon neutral county by 2050. These targets and the need to mitigate against the effects of climate change through a commitment to a low carbon future and a challenging action plan underpin the assumptions made in this document.

Everyone is justifiably proud of our beautiful countryside and coast. A large part of the county is of significant landscape value including the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (also a designated UNESCO Global Geopark) and the Durham Heritage Coast. Some parts of our county support unique combinations of plant and animal species. Our natural environment contributes significantly to our wellbeing and quality of life. Many feel that we need to commit to protecting this for future generations. These views have been incorporated into our plans.

The pace of change is accelerating. New technologies such as artificial intelligence and developing new insights from data have the potential to transform the global economy and business models across many sectors, automating processes, achieving efficiencies, enhancing service user experience and driving better decision-making. The county is well placed to develop new business opportunities in this area. The council is also looking to provide more effective services using technology whilst having regard to the ethical issues that they pose.

The UK's exit from the European Union (EU) will affect the whole country over the lifetime of this plan. County Durham benefits significantly from EU funding which is used to develop infrastructure and services, support economic and social cohesion, businesses, agriculture and the environment. The Government has announced a UK Shared Prosperity Fund which will replace farming subsidies and EU structural funding after Brexit. However, neither the terms of our future trading relationship with the EU or details of how the Shared Prosperity Fund will operate are known. This plan does not reflect any potential effects from the changing relationship with the EU or new government funding through the Shared Prosperity Fund. Our plans may need to be revised in the event of any changes having a significant impact on our future work programmes. There are a number of uncertainties around local government finance with a Comprehensive Spending Review which will set the quantum of funding available to local government and the Fair Funding Review which will affect the distribution of grant funding between local authorities and business rates retention. Assumptions around these uncertainties are built into our Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Equality Objectives

It was apparent during the consultation on the County's Vision that residents have a tremendous sense of belonging and are rightly proud of their communities and the county. Whilst many visitors to the county have commented on the friendliness of its people, there have been a small number of examples where people have been less welcoming. More integrated communities where everyone can feel safe and included, regardless of their background or characteristics, was seen as important and in the tradition of tolerance and acceptance of the North East people and this thinking has helped shape our plans. Local authorities have a duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and promote good working relations between people. Following further consultation on our vision with a number of groups, the following equality objectives have been developed to help us achieve our vision and comply with our duties.

We will improve employment opportunities for disabled people

As a Disability Confident Leader, we will improve recruitment and retention rates of disabled people within the council and work with businesses locally to improve disability employment rates countywide and through our approach to procurement.

We will build inclusive communities

To connect our communities and improve levels of tolerance and integration for our diverse communities we will support better partnership working on equality. This work will support a series of events that foster good relations between groups.

We will build an inclusive and welcoming employee culture

Through our transformation programme we will develop our culture to be welcoming and accepting of all, improving our staff engagement and support through the development of staff networks and improving how we collect, monitor, analyse and utilise staff diversity data.

Monitoring

We will continue to monitor council performance against a comprehensive set of performance indicators to Cabinet and scrutiny committees on a quarterly basis. Key performance indicators are included within this plan for illustrative purposes. Progress against key programmes of work included in this plan will be reported every six months. The plan will be subject to an annual review process.

Council Plan Ambitions and Objectives

COVID-19: Response, Restoration/Reset, Recovery

More and Better Jobs

- Delivery of a range of employment sites across the county
- A strong, competitive economy where County Durham is a premier place in the North East to do business
- A broader experience for residents and visitors to the county
- Young people will have access to good quality education, training and employment
- Helping all people into rewarding work
- Fewer people will be affected by poverty and deprivation within the county

People Live Long and Independent Lives

- Children and young people will enjoy the best start in life, good health and emotional wellbeing
- Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities will achieve the best possible outcomes
- A physical environment that will contribute to good health
- Promotion of positive behaviours
- Better integration of health and social care services
- People will be supported to live independently for as long as possible by delivering more homes to meet the needs of older and disabled people
- We will tackle the stigma and discrimination of poor mental health and building resilient communities

Connected Communities

- All children and young people will have a safe childhood
- Standards will be maintained or improved across County Durham's housing stock
- Our towns and villages will be vibrant, well-used, clean, attractive and safe
- People will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities
- Communities will come together and support each other
- Delivery of new high-quality housing which is accessible and meets the needs of our residents

An Excellent Council

- Our resources will be managed effectively
- We will create a workforce for the future
- We will design our services with service users
- We will use data and technology more effectively
- We will actively performance manage our services

Context: COVID-19 Response, Restoration/Reset and Recovery

The council's approach to the COVID-19 pandemic is threefold around response, restoration and recovery. As lockdown was announced, then a rapid response was required to support businesses and communities through the immediate crisis and to communicate public health messages to the people of County Durham.

The principles by which we will manage our response, restoration and recovery approach will be:

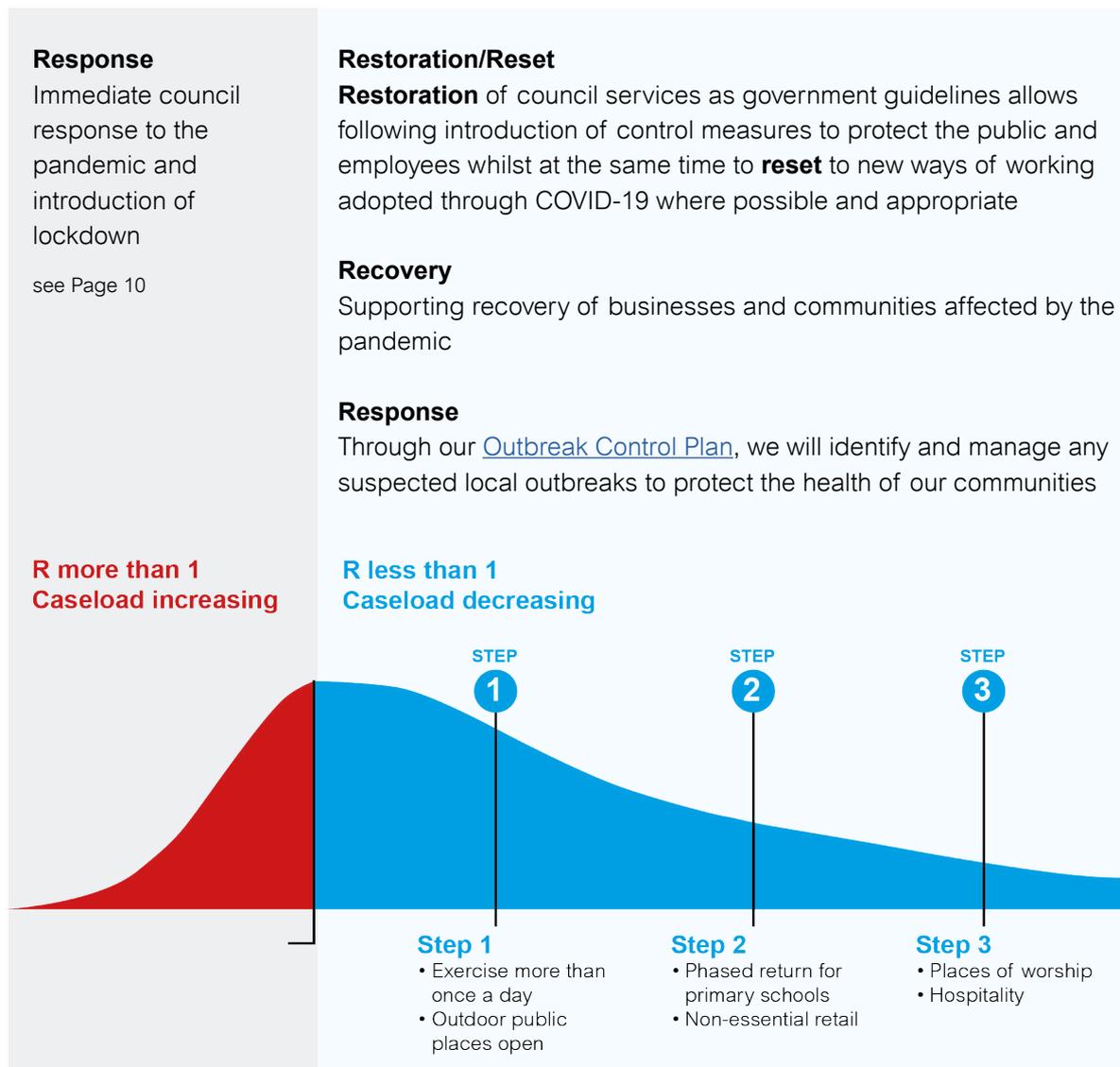
1. Close surveillance and management of the COVID-19 pandemic in County Durham;
2. Being responsive to where we are in our journey to recovery;
3. Taking a dynamic response to control the virus and to support businesses and communities;
4. Working in partnership with other statutory agencies on our Local Resilience Forum to coordinate our efforts.

As lockdown measures are relaxed, then it is anticipated that there will be an increase in cases of COVID-19. Together with partners, we have developed a COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan which sets out how a local outbreak of the virus will be identified and managed jointly by the council and Public Health England's North East Health Protection Team.

As the country takes a phased approach to the lifting of lockdown regulations, the council will follow government guidelines and restore council services that were previously restricted or suspended whilst at the same time reset some services to new ways of working adopted through the pandemic where possible and appropriate. Service restoration and the reopening of buildings will follow specific government guidance, a thorough assessment of risk and the introduction of necessary control measures to help protect the public and our employees. Innovative approaches to service provision that have either been developed in response to or enhanced because of the pandemic, such as online services, will be considered to see how they can transform our offer and culture of working in the future and reduce our environmental impact.

The pandemic will impact on businesses. We will need to closely monitor the economy and coordinate local, regional and national interventions to best support the business sector. Understanding the impact of the pandemic on our rural, urban and more deprived areas will be a core part of the council's recovery work and will inform the council's Poverty Action Strategy and how related council services respond. We will reshape our services to vulnerable groups such as older people and those suffering from poor mental health and those that are feeling lonely and isolated.

COVID-19 Strategy: Response, Restoration/Reset and Recovery



COVID-19: Council Response So Far



Provided over **18,000** households with an additional **£3.6 million** of support through our Council Tax Hardship Fund



Through smart use of ICT, enabled remote working for **5,000 staff**. Redeployed over **500 staff** into priority service areas



Allocated over **2,700 laptops** to disadvantaged children



Allocated an extra **£100,000** to each of our **14 Area Action Partnerships and an extra £100,000** for countywide projects to help community and voluntary groups adversely affected by the pandemic



Continue to be one of the few authorities in the country that offer up to **100 per cent discount** on council tax bills



Applied business rates reductions to over **2,400 businesses** totalling nearly **£51 million**



Suspended debt recovery for individuals in arrears and offered **three-month rent referrals** to business tenants



Supported over **9,600 businesses** with total COVID-19 related grant payments of around **£104 million**



Developed a virtual hub, County Durham Together, helping over **10,000 vulnerable residents** with access to essential services



Invested an **extra £1 million** in our Welfare Assistance Scheme providing short-term support to people in crisis



Over **£15m additional funding** given to adult social care providers and over 2 million items of PPE provided to care and primary health sector organisations



Continued to provide a range of services remotely such as employability sessions and our Library Online service

COVID-19 Plan: Response, Restoration/Reset and Recovery

Our COVID-19 plan sets out how the council's future plan to manage restoration of council services and recovery of daily life in the county whilst helping us achieve our long-term vision set against national recovery strategy, government guidelines and our public health duty to protect our residents.

Response Response to the COVID-19 pandemic and outbreak control	Restoration/Reset Restart services and reset to new ways of working adopted through COVID-19 where possible and appropriate	Recovery Recovery of business and communities in County Durham
Coordinate the public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic	Review the approach to care home commissioning, taking into account changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure a sustainable and high-quality care market	Assess the economic implications of the pandemic and assist businesses to restart and grow the economy in County Durham
Protect the health of local residents from COVID-19 and reduce any onwards transmission from the disease	Development of the County Durham Together community hub to promote and enable easier access to preventative services available in local communities	Provide employability support schemes and a programme to help alleviate financial hardship suffered by residents
	Assess risks, protect and support public and employees	Support mental health and wellbeing of residents
	Restoration of council services that have been interrupted by the pandemic	Provide additional support to community groups adversely affected
		Deliver a programme to support individuals, households and communities
Develop data and intelligence sharing and reporting arrangements to focus effort on restoration, recovery and response		

County Vision

- More and Better Jobs
- Long and Independent Lives
- Connected Communities
- An Excellent Council

Ambition: More and Better Jobs

We will continue our economic renaissance and ensure that people can enjoy a thriving economy with **more and better jobs**, and reduced levels of poverty and deprivation. We will build on our existing portfolio of businesses and will support the use of low carbon technologies and renewable energy.

Our county has some of the most beautiful countryside and coastal landscapes in Britain, a fascinating history, a wealth of attractions and a regular events programme. We have made great strides to improve our tourist economy. Our aim is to have Durham widely recognised as a leading centre for culture and the arts, with a range of experiences that match and exceed the best offered in the country.

Several of our villages were developed around collieries and homes which were built to house the population boom at the peak of coal production. Some of these communities have suffered a decline following the demise of these industries. We want to work with communities to address the underlying causes of deprivation and poverty.

Achievements

- The employment rate in County Durham has steadily improved since a mid-recession low point in 2015 when it stood at 66.6% and rose to 74.1% in June 2019, just 1.6 percentage points behind the national average.
- Outstanding success in attracting county-wide private and public investment in enterprise and tourism.
- £25 million invested on the Jade Enterprise Zone and junction.
- £178 million invested by Citrus on Integra 61 warehousing facility at Bowburn, including facilitating internet giant, Amazon and £5 million junction works.
- £271 million has been invested in one of Europe's leading technology parks at NETPark, Sedgefield delivered by Business Durham.
- £14 million has been invested at Forrest Park in Aycliffe preparing for further investment of over £140 million.
- £90 million spent in Barnard Castle by Glaxo Smith Kline on a new manufacturing facility.
- Almost £1.5 billion in Durham City, £750 million by the University and over £240 million on the Riverside and other projects.
- The first two phases of the development of the Aykley Heads strategic employment site have the potential to create 4,000 jobs with an estimated 1,800 jobs being supported in the construction of the park.
- £100 million invested through Project Genesis in Consett.
- £17 million spent at Beamish Museum on the 1950s town, upland farm and Georgian coaching inn.
- Lumiere in Durham, the biggest light festival in Europe, celebrated its 10th anniversary with 37 separate artworks attracting thousands of visitors and boosting the local economy in Durham City.
- Successful food festivals held at Bishop Auckland and Seaham.

Ambition: More and Better Jobs

Issues to address

- The lockdown will adversely affect both local businesses and residents financially.
- Increased uncertainty and lower confidence make the size and duration of an economic downturn unpredictable.
- Businesses and individuals have relied on support arrangements put in place to limit financial impact, but these are only for the short-term and will be phased out.
- The ability of businesses to respond quickly to changes in demand may be limited in the short-term.
- Around 64,000 employments in County Durham have been furloughed and 14,000 of self-employed people have made claims under the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.
- A weaker global economy will reduce export demand and disrupt international supply chains.
- Income levels are low in County Durham. The county is the 42nd most income deprived out of 151 local authorities nationally. Gross disposable household income per head of population in Durham is 77% of the national average.
- The gap between the employment rate for people with a disability compared with those who are not disabled stands at 29 percentage points (June 2020) which is one of the highest differences in the country.
- GCSE results as measured through the average attainment 8 score for the county are below the regional and national average.
- As at October 2020, only 64% of secondary schools in County Durham are rated as good or outstanding.
- 1 in 4 of our school children are on free school meals as at January 2020, which is an indicator of the level of child poverty within the county.
- As at September 2020, 5.8% of 16-17 year olds within County Durham are not in education, employment or training which is above the regional and national average.
- According to the latest figures (2018), an estimated 9.8% of households are in fuel poverty. This is defined as where the householder, after paying fuel costs, would be left with a disposable income which is below the poverty line.
- Day visitors to our county spend an average of £22.07 in the local economy per day whilst overnight visitors will spend an average of £190.27 per trip. Only 8% of visitors will stop overnight within the county.
- Uncertainties around the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, whether the government will secure a favourable trade agreement with the EU and whether the UK ends up leaving on a no deal Brexit is impacting on the national and local economy.

Ambition: More and Better Jobs

Approach

The national restrictions introduced as part of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to temporary business closures and employees being furloughed. Priorities for the council are to protect businesses and jobs and to alleviate financial hardship suffered by our residents. The council has introduced a range of measures to support local businesses in the current crisis. The council has also worked hard to ease the pressure on residents suffering financial hardship.

We have developed a COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan to help support businesses being released from lockdown, manage the transition to stabilisation and to rebuild and grow our places, services and industries. We have developed a pipeline of projects which will serve as a roadmap to recovery and deliver investment plans to help rebuild our economy.

We recognise that there will be job losses and that these are anticipated to affect older people and the lower paid, which disproportionately impacts on women and young people. We will monitor changes in employment throughout the county and develop and deliver employability support programmes to help those who have lost their jobs back into employment.

Increasing employment in the county has a significant multiplier effect in terms of its contribution to a range of other quality of life issues such as improving mental and physical health and reducing crime. Our ambition is to create more jobs for our residents. Wages levels in the county lag behind the national average and the gap is widening. We need to address this by attracting high-quality jobs to the area. We want to create the ideal environment for businesses to thrive in the county through ensuring that our workforce and our young people entering the jobs market are equipped with the necessary skills to access the jobs of today and the future. The pipeline of investment projects in the county has never been so high and we want to build on this by further developing our strategic employment sites and supporting key employment sectors.

We will continue to deliver a range of programmes to help people into rewarding work who are finding it difficult to access the jobs market including reskilling our labour force. Our plans will support rural growth whilst preserving the quality of what makes these areas distinctive. Our county has a rich historic and cultural heritage, some enviable world class attractions and beautiful countryside.

We want to continue to develop the visitor economy for County Durham. The historic collapse of heavy industry and the impact that this has had on residents and communities is apparent when we look at some of our communities which have some of the worst indicators of deprivation in the country.

We want to address the gaps in inequality across our county and make sure that no one is left behind and that the benefits of a resurgent economy can be enjoyed by all residents. Further detail of the programmes we plan to implement to ensure that we create **more and better jobs** are provided in our delivery plan.

Ambition: People Live Long and Independent Lives

Good health is central to people's happiness and has a significant impact on demand for services. Health is determined by several factors including the community we live in, access to a good natural and built environment, high-quality education and jobs and our network of friends and family. Both life expectancy and the number of years a person remains in good health are lower in Durham than in other parts of the country.

The proportion of people with long-term limiting conditions is also higher than national levels. An ageing society will create different demands for products and services including new care technologies and housing models. Central to our plans is to provide a more joined up service for health and social care. We also want to do everything we can with partner organisations to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our residents and prevent mental illness and suicide.

We want all people to lead independent and fulfilling lives and continue to contribute to society.

Achievements

- Life expectancy has increased by three years for men and two years for women since 2001-02.
- 20,000 fewer people smoke now than in 2012.
- Teenage pregnancies have halved since 2012.
- Effective discharge planning and joint working between health and social care services means that County Durham is one of the best performing areas in the country at delayed transfers of care from hospital.
- We have excellent levels of satisfaction from clients in receipt of adult social care services compared to national figures.
- To date (September 2020), we have turned around the lives of over 5,100 families through our Stronger Families Programme.
- 100% of our maintained nursery education providers are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted.
- The tonnage of carbon emissions from council operations has been reduced by 51% since 2008-09.
- The Council has actively worked to eliminate single use plastics from all its operations encouraging over 200 organisations to sign up to our plastics pledge and work to eradicate unnecessary plastics from their business.
- Less than 5% of the household waste that we collect now goes to landfill compared to over 60% in 2008.
- To facilitate greater investment, over 18,000 council houses were transferred to the social housing sector in 2015, one of the largest housing transfers in the country.

Ambition: People Live Long and Independent Lives

Issues to address

- The COVID-19 pandemic has led to challenges regarding sustainability within the care home sector.
- The risk of further waves of the virus or a local outbreak which will have major health impacts on vulnerable people and possibly result in the introduction of further restrictions.
- The virus has led to changes in demand for social care services.
- COVID-19 affects more severely those in poor health, those living with excess weight, those who are older, those less economically advantaged and those from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.
- Some environmental improvements in carbon emissions in air quality have occurred during lockdown.
- Life expectancy at birth is 1.4 years lower for males and 1.7 years for females in County Durham compared with the average for England.
- Healthy life expectancy, the number of years a person lives in good health, is around five years lower than national figures and there is a 10-year difference in healthy life expectancy between the most and least deprived communities in County Durham.
- A quarter of the population in the county will be aged 65+ by 2032.
- One in four children are overweight in reception year rising to over one in three at Year 6 and to two in three in adulthood. These figures are above national levels.
- Levels of women who are still smoking in pregnancy in County Durham is significantly higher than the national average. The rate in Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgfield area is one of the highest in the country.
- Breastfeeding prevalence rates amongst new mothers remain nearly 17 percentage points behind national figures.
- Increased responsibilities, changing needs and reducing government funding are placing greater pressure on our ability to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- The Council has declared a climate emergency and has set an ambitious 80% reduction in carbon emissions from the 2008-09 baseline by 2030 and become carbon neutral by 2050.
- Mental health is a priority. Indicators for hospital admissions for self-harm, suicide rates and patients registered with depression are high.
- We need to diversify the range of older persons' housing provision to meet growing demand from an ageing population and free up larger family accommodation.

Ambition: People Live Long and Independent Lives

Approach

A critical issue for the lifetime of this plan is to mitigate the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak and how it affects our communities and residents. We want to develop our County Durham Together community hub to promote and enable easier access to preventative services available in local communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to challenges regarding sustainability within the care home sector. We also need to review the approach to care home commissioning, taking into account changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim of ensuring a sustainable and high-quality care market.

The county has a legacy of heavy industry and suffers from poor health across a range of measures. We intend to tackle this inequality through a number of programmes across the life course. We aim to support mothers to address tobacco dependency in pregnancy and increase breastfeeding initiation for newborn babies. We will implement a range of measures to tackle oral health inequality in children across the county and improve health protection by increasing take-up of vaccinations in children. We have a range of measures to support children with special educational needs and disabilities to achieve the best possible outcomes.

It is important that our environment is conducive to good physical health. Poor air quality is a major contributor towards early deaths globally. Levels of pollutants are low in the county but there are some hot spots where government standards are exceeded at certain times and we have a plan to reduce these. Climate change caused by carbon emissions is a threat to health and wellbeing. Through the council's Climate Emergency, we plan to become carbon neutral as an organisation by 2050 with an interim target to reduce our carbon emissions by 75% from a 2008-09 baseline by 2025. We recognise that we need to mitigate the effects of climate change that we are already experiencing and have a series of planned flood mitigation works in place. We want to encourage physical exercise in our residents and reduce unnecessary journeys by car. We will promote positive behaviours through becoming a smoke free county and reducing dependency on, and deaths caused by drug and alcohol addiction. We want to improve the mental health of young and old alike and tackle the stigma of mental health. We will provide a more integrated health and social care model and both specialist housing and assistive technologies for older and disabled people to allow people to live more independent lives into their old age.

Further detail of the programmes we plan to implement to ensure that **people live long and independent lives** are provided in our delivery plan.

Ambition: Connected Communities

Approach

Our residents are rightly proud of their county. We want to have caring and welcoming communities where everyone is valued, and can help and support each other. We want a county that gives everyone the opportunity to realise their potential.

People want a range and choice of housing which is accessible, well designed and meets their future needs. Our 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.

People also expect local travel to be convenient, with good-quality direct links between centres of population, to employment locations such as business parks and leisure opportunities. Communities therefore need to be connected by appropriate transport and technological infrastructures.

Achievements

- Significant investment in increasing workforce capacity both at a managerial and social worker level and effective workforce planning has led to reduced caseloads, better quality and timeliness in children's social care.
- Investment in new IT systems has transformed children's social care performance information available and management oversight has improved compliance in most areas of performance.
- Since 2016, the council in collaboration with a range of partner organisations has played its part in the UK's commitment to support some of the world's most vulnerable refugees and has been recognised nationally as best practice for its resettlement programme.
- A local lettings agency has been established to help secure suitable housing for homeless people and people who find it difficult to access the housing market.
- Durham County Council is only one of two local authorities in the country to achieve the maximum under the Department for Transport's incentive fund in recognition of its efficiency rating and has managed to prioritise and increase investment in its highways.
- The Council invests £3.7 million per year on town centre regeneration, purchasing derelict buildings and land and environmental improvements.
- Over the last 10 years, our Area Action Partnerships have completed over 7,000 community projects, benefiting over 30,000 people and helping to secure over £100 million funding.

Ambition: Connected Communities

Issues to address

- One of the biggest impacts on our communities is the COVID-19 pandemic and the range of restrictions that have been introduced by the Government to control the spread of the virus and minimise its impact on health and social care services.
- There has been an increased demand for services provided by voluntary and community sector organisations, just as the sector loses a significant proportion of its revenue.
- County Durham follows the national trend in seeing large increases in demand for children's social care, whilst at the same time, suffering budget cuts in this area.
- Children's social care services in Durham County Council have been judged as 'requires improvement' by Ofsted, although they have recognised that the local authority has taken swift and decisive action to strengthen services. Pace has increased and solid improvements can be seen in many service areas including at the front door and for children in care. They have acknowledged that firm foundations are in place to sustain and build on the improvements made.
- Low house prices have resulted in a high proportion of privately rented accommodation in the county and a need for greater regulation to ensure more consistent standards.
- The national issue of high street decline with the growth of online shopping and major retailers closing stores has affected our town centres.
- Internet sales as a percentage of total retail sales has risen nationally from 2.5% in December 2006 to 26.1% in September 2020. This poses increasing competition to high street shops leading to major changes in our high streets and town centres, the most visible effects are store closures, empty shops and fewer shoppers.
- The highly dispersed settlement pattern in County Durham with over 300 recognised settlements, 21 of which have a population of 5,000 or more, presents a challenge for the provision of transport and public services, particularly in rural areas.
- The county has good north-south transport links with the A1(M) and East Coast Mainline but east-west links are seen as an opportunity for development.

Ambition: Connected Communities

Approach

We want people in our communities to feel connected to, and supportive of each other. We want to build on the indomitable spirit of our people and ensure that the most vulnerable in our communities are supported. Whether this be children in need of support, victims of crime, people with a disability or different communities of identity.

The Council has teamed up with charities, local groups and volunteers to help with a range of requests for help through County Durham Together, a virtual hub to help those most at risk from coronavirus and has provided an additional £1.5 million funding to Area Action Partnerships to help residents and businesses adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are developing plans to further integrate health, social and welfare support in a preventative way to help our local communities. This means looking more closely at individuals' and community needs to see where we can improve people's wellbeing and reduce inequalities in our county. We are undertaking a programme to improve social care services provided to children and young people and a range of initiatives to tackle antisocial behaviour in our communities in partnership with the police and others.

Some communities have been blighted by poor housing management practice, so we have plans to raise housing standards in the private rented housing sector and help improve these communities. We want to provide a range of new housing to meet the needs and aspirations of our residents. The design of new development in rural areas will be sympathetic to the environment and reflect local distinctiveness. We aim to deliver more affordable housing. We expect all homes to be connected digitally and for speed and capacity to keep pace with the latest developments. This is the aim of our Digital Durham programme. These issues are particularly acute in our rural areas.

High streets have seen some decline nationally and County Durham is no exception to this. We have developed a programme to regenerate our towns and villages and improve their use, making them a more attractive proposition to visit and spend time in. This includes a range of approaches varying from introduction of free WiFi, changing the mix of retail, leisure and residential use, making our centres more attractive and tackling community safety concerns. Residents and visitors need to be able to travel around our county and get to and from our towns and villages. We have therefore developed a pipeline of infrastructure projects and transport plans to improve accessibility.

Further detail of the programmes we plan to implement to ensure that **our communities are connected and supportive of each other** are provided in our delivery plan.

Ambition: An Excellent Council

The government's programme of austerity has led to unprecedented reductions in public spending. Technology has also been developing at pace and residents have come to expect that our services will be provided digitally and on a 24/7 basis. This required us to rethink the way in which many of our services are delivered. There is a history of good partnership working in County Durham. In a time when resources are scarce, it is even more important that organisations work more collaboratively and that our efforts are focused on the right things. Working more seamlessly across organisational boundaries and delivering services differently that are designed with residents is at the heart of our ambitions. We need to equip ourselves with the skills to be able to achieve this and develop a workforce for the future. Delivering existing services in different ways and developing new services for the benefit of our residents is both challenging and exciting and something that we need to excel at in order to become recognised as an **excellent council**.

Achievements

- Durham County Council has delivered £242 million of savings and lost just under 3,000 posts since the introduction of the Government's austerity programme in 2011.
- Durham County Council leads on Digital Durham, a £35 million initiative to transform broadband speeds for residents and business across the North East which has already provided access to fibre broadband to over 105,000 properties.
- Over 100 council services are available digitally and more than half of residents access our services this way.
- The Council has had almost 850 apprenticeship starts since 2017-18. We have 268 people employed in apprenticeship posts and 233 existing staff are accessing the apprenticeship levy to increase their skills.
- The Council holds gold status in the Better Health at Work Award, which recognises the efforts of employers regionally in helping to address health issues of its workforce. We also work with local companies and other organisations to help them achieve the award.
- The Council has 200 trained mental health first aiders and 82 'Time To Change' (mental health) champions.
- The Council has been awarded the Disability Confident Leader status by the Department for Work and Pensions in recognition of its commitment to be a good employer of people with a disability and will support local businesses to become Disability Confident.

Ambition: An Excellent Council

Issues to address

- Financial effects of the pandemic on the council in terms of additional expenditure pressures and loss of income are forecast to be around £75 million.
- There have been several changes to the delivery of frontline council services to comply with government regulations and to prioritise essential services. This has included the introduction or expansion of online service delivery.
- It is expected that the council will lose a further £10 million of funding as a result of the Fair Funding Review and that this will be transitioned over a five-year period from 2022/23.
- Anticipated changes to the public health grant apportionment methodology as part of the Fair Funding Review is forecast to result in a loss of £18 million (37%) of the council's public health funding from 2022/23
- Major redeployment of 1,850 staff working at Durham County Hall to the new headquarters in Durham City (1,000 staff) and other strategic sites throughout the county (850 staff)
- Superfast broadband and the national rollout of 5G networks will enable greater digital connectivity for our residents and offer opportunities for new digital services.
- Durham County Council has an ageing workforce with 42% of its staff at the end of 2020-21 being over the age of 50 which has an impact on sickness absence rates and requires effective workforce planning.
- Society is experiencing a technological revolution where progress is accelerating, and innovations can be identified and rapidly deployed making it difficult to keep pace and ensure that the skills of our staff are up to date.
- The Council should seek to maximise the value of every pound it spends and seek to deliver social value outcomes. Social, economic and environmental outcomes should be delivered for the local community by adopting a strategic approach during its commissioning, procurement, development and planning projects.
- The Council needs to recognise the data we hold is an asset and manage it more efficiently to better understand service users, generating benefits such as predicting and managing demand, providing the services that residents want and supporting better decision-making.

Age Profile of Durham County Council workforce

Percentage of staff under 25	2019-2020 Q2 7.28%	2020-2021 Q2 7.14%
Percentage of staff over 50	2019-2020 Q2 41.64%	2020-2021 Q2 42.29%

Ambition: An Excellent Council

Approach

The current COVID-19 national crisis has required the council to adapt working practices to continue to deliver services safely. We have had to close a number of our buildings such as leisure centres, theatres and libraries. Our ICT infrastructure is allowing many of our employees to work remotely. Many of our staff who cannot work in their substantive role have also been redeployed in priority areas. Several services have now moved online. In the immediate aftermath of lockdown, the council temporarily postponed the delivery of certain services while we ensured that the correct safeguards were in place to protect the public and our employees and ensure that our priority services were not affected. The pandemic has had a significant financial impact in terms of additional expenditure incurred and loss of income. However, there have been some unintended benefits such as reductions in carbon emissions. The council will look to build on this and use technology to reduce our impact on the environment.

The Council has faced significant cuts to its funding through austerity over the last 10 years. Uncertainties with future local government funding make financial planning extremely difficult. We still await both the government's Comprehensive Spending Review and Fair Funding Review which will determine our future funding. This means that we have been unable to plan for the long-term with most of our financial planning being limited to only one year of certainty. Key actions for us will be to assess the implications of these reviews when they are published and to amend our Medium-Term Financial Plan accordingly.

We want our workforce to be fit for any future challenges and so we need to ensure that our future plans recognise and address any risks such as skills shortages, ageing workforce, recruitment difficulties and changes in service user behaviour and demand. The health and welfare of our workforce is important, and we have a range of actions we plan to implement to support the physical and mental health and wellbeing of employees and ensure that we have an inclusive staff culture.

Expectations of our residents are changing. People expect to be able to transact business with the council on a 24/7 basis and would like self-serve online. Our services should be co-designed with service users and we plan to improve our engagement mechanisms, particularly with children and young people. Managers need access to real-time data to support good decision-making and we have a programme to develop our business intelligence capability and provide better analysis to help understand our performance and facilitate better planning and service delivery. Some of our services are delivered in partnership with other agencies and we have plans to further join up our delivery to offer a more seamless approach for the benefit of our residents.

Further detail of the programmes we plan to implement to be **an excellent council** are provided in our delivery plan.

Council Plan Key Performance Indicators



More and Better Jobs

- Employment rate
- Jobs created
- Business space created
- Occupancy rates of strategic employment sites
- Productivity rates
- Gross value added
- Superfast broadband coverage
- Visitor economy numbers
- Educational attainment rates
- Inequality gap in educational attainment
- Secondary school Ofsted ratings
- Disability employment rate
- Average income levels
- Deprivation indices
- Child poverty rate
- Fuel poverty rate
- Benefit processing times



People Live Long and Independent Lives

- Life and healthy life expectancy
- Smoking at the time of delivery
- Breastfeeding prevalence
- Childhood obesity rates
- Early years foundation stage
- Early years and childcare Ofsted ratings
- Primary school Ofsted ratings
- Key Stage 1 and 2 attainment
- Education and healthcare planning for SEND
- Attainment rates for children with SEND
- Adult obesity rate
- Mortality rates
- Smoking prevalence
- Drug and alcohol treatment rates
- Suicide rate
- Self-reported life satisfaction
- Older persons housing
- 80% reduction in carbon emissions (from 2009 levels) by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050

Council Plan Key Performance Indicators



Connected Communities

- Ofsted rating for children's services
- Children's social care assessment times
- Children's social care demand measures
- Care leaver progression
- Looked after children attainment and health assessments
- Youth offending rates
- Low housing demand
- Town centre vacancy rates
- Travel times
- Overall crime rate and sub-analysis
- Anti-social behaviour
- Hate crime rates
- New housing completions
- Affordable housing completions



An Excellent Council

- Collection rates
- MTFP targets achieved
- Audit opinion
- Employee absence rates
- Employee satisfaction
- Service response rates
- Satisfaction levels
- Complaints
- Channel shift
- Self-service rates
- Transformation programme progress reporting

Delivery Plan: More and Better Jobs

Key programmes of work

Employment sites

- Preparation of the County Durham Plan (2020)
- Developing key locations for business including Aykley Heads, Forrest Park, Jade Enterprise Zone, NETPark Phase 3, Merchant Park, Peterlee Industrial Estate, Low Copelaw and Station Place (2023)
- Relocate council headquarters to facilitate development of Aykley Heads strategic employment site (2021)
- Development and delivery of pipeline of major transport infrastructure projects to support employment sites (2023)
- Develop key locations for business attraction and growth (2023)
- Deliver sites within Business Durham remit and enhance Business Durham Property Portfolio (2023)

Competitive economy

- Support business to achieve growth through the County Durham Growth Fund, Finance Durham, Business Durham key account management programme and enterprise and start up offers (2023)
- Develop an Economic Strategy for County Durham that integrates with national, regional, sub-regional and local strategies (2020)
- Support local businesses with regulatory issues associated with the exit of the UK from the European Union (2020)
- Develop online licensing products and further services under the 'Better Business for All' initiative to help reduce the burden of regulation on local businesses (2023)
- Assess and address the economic implications of the pandemic and provide assistance to business needs to restart and grow the economy in County Durham (2020-23)

Visitor experience

- Review the County Durham Tourism Management Plan (2021)
- Bring together the history and heritage of the county into the Durham History Centre (2023)
- Review the programme of events and festivals and prepare for lottery submissions for 2022-2026
- Support the delivery of a new visitor offer across County Durham (2023)

Delivery Plan: More and Better Jobs

Key programmes of work



Education, training and employment

- Implement an Inclusion Strategy following development of a new approach to inclusion and use of alternative provision in County Durham (2022)
- Ensure the effective delivery of the DurhamWorks programme to support 10,000 young people (2021)
- Support more young people with vulnerable characteristics into employment, including young people who are looked after, care leavers, young people who have SEND and young people supervised by the Youth Justice Service (2023)
- Support care leavers to achieve good education and employment opportunities, including work experience and apprenticeships (2023)
- Continuously review school organisation and the education estate across the county and develop options to help address school provision in areas where unsustainable financial issues are being experienced (2020-23)



Helping people into work

- Deliver employability programmes that help people access and sustain regular employment (2022)
- Focus on closing the gap in employment opportunities for those with a long-term health condition or disability, through the development of supported employment and the rollout of a pilot with learning disability day services to support people into volunteering and employment (2022)
- Support carers to gain and maintain employment across work sectors, through Job Centre Plus and the Adult Learning and Skills service (2023)
- Increase the number of businesses in the county achieving the North East Better Health at Work Award (2022)
- Increase the number of organisations involved in career development related to mental health (2022)
- Improve access to high-quality and impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance in schools and further education settings to ensure young people are clear about progression pathways, including apprenticeship opportunities (2022)
- Through commissioned services, write into every contract that providers will commit to improving the health and wellbeing of their workforce, either through 'Thriving at Work' standards or by achieving the Better Health at Work Award (2022)

Delivery Plan: More and Better Jobs

Key programmes of work



Reducing
deprivation and
poverty

- Review the Poverty Action Plan Steering Group and coordinate delivery of the work programme (2020)
- Deliver initiatives that support rough sleepers, ex-offenders and other vulnerable people into accommodation (2021)
- Delivery of a range of initiatives to alleviate fuel poverty (2021)
- Increase income levels for the most vulnerable through greater awareness of and access to benefit eligibility (2022)
- Development of reducing parental conflict multi-agency working group, planning tool, training programme, County Durham Local Family offer and Reducing Parental Conflict Plan on Page (2021)
- Provide a programme to help alleviate financial hardship suffered by residents (2021)
- Implementation of Earned Autonomy Plan to help families achieve significant and sustained change as described in County Durham Family Outcomes as per Stronger Families programme (2021)

Delivery Plan: People Live Long and Independent Lives

Key programmes of work



Best start in life

- Improve health protection for children and young people and reduce inequality by increasing immunisation levels (e.g. flu vaccine uptake) (2023)
- Introduce a healthy schools programme and health standards into early years and schools (2023). Reduce unintentional injuries in the 0-19 population, through the County Durham Prevention of Unintentional Injuries Framework (2022) Consider a range of population approaches to improve children's oral health (2023)
- Improve mental health support for children and young people through the implementation of the Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience Local Transformation Plan (2023)
- Complete a Health Needs Assessment of further education, with a focus on 16 to 18 year-olds (2021)
- Develop a Sexual Health Strategy for County Durham, to ensure equitable access to services and focus on good contraceptive health (2023)
- Support women to achieve a smoke-free pregnancy through whole system change and tackling tobacco dependency in pregnancy as an addiction, not a lifestyle choice (2023)
- Increase the percentage of women who initiate breastfeeding and continue at 6-8 weeks, through the County Durham 'Call to Action' to change the culture of breastfeeding in the county (2023)
- Ensure children and young people residing in Aycliffe Secure Centre have access to high-quality emotional and mental health support, drug and alcohol services, physical health care and specialist health interventions (2020)



Special educational needs and disabilities

- Co-produce a revised SEND Strategy for County Durham (2020)
- Embed and maintain a joint commissioning cycle that improves access to integrated support in Education Health and Care Plans (2020)
- Increase speech, language and communication skills in the early years to ensure that children are ready to learn at two and ready for school at five by improving access to local speech enrichment services across each locality, according to identified need (2023)
- Introduce a County Durham approach to improving the ability of young people with SEND to travel independently to access education, employment and training opportunities (2020)
- Develop and deliver a post local area SEND re-inspection plan (2021)
- Implement the High Needs Block Sustainability Plan (2020-23)

Delivery Plan: People Live Long and Independent Lives

Key programmes of work



Physical environment

- Implement the local Air Quality Action Plan and improve air quality within Durham City to meet the standards set within the National Air Quality Strategy (2021)
- We will review our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Surface Water Management Plan and deliver flood prevention schemes (2021)
- We will implement our Climate Change Emergency Response Plan (2023)
- We will develop a countywide strategy for woodland and trees (2022)
- Develop a countywide offer around physical activity and good nutrition, specifically targeting vulnerable communities (2022)
- Increase the use of active travel to encourage physical activity (including cycling and walking) to reduce traffic emissions related to respiratory illness and carbon emissions (2023)
- Work with a range of partners to increase physical activity by promoting Active 30 in schools (2022)
- Delivery of transport infrastructure projects to encourage more sustainable transport choices (2023)
- Deliver flood risk mitigation schemes (2021)
- Re-procure our waste contracts (2023)
- Coordinate the public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic (2020)



Positive behaviours

- To support the ambition to reduce smoking in County Durham to 5% by 2025, ensure that the redesigned Stop Smoking Service is effectively reaching people in our local communities (2023)
- Encourage people to reduce the amount of alcohol they drink through targeted campaigns for council staff and our local communities and by promoting and supporting Dry January and National Alcohol Awareness Week (2023)
- Deliver Making Every Contact Count training to staff, enabling every contact to be a health contact (2022)
- Complete a sector led improvement peer review on drug-related deaths, to inform service delivery (2022)

Delivery Plan: People Live Long and Independent Lives

Key programmes of work



Mental health

- Improve children and young people's emotional wellbeing and resilience by delivering the Durham Resilience Programme to schools and increasing the uptake of the Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) Initiative (2021)
- Develop and implement a strategy to support and sustain the Voluntary and Community Sector in County Durham, enabling resilience of our wider communities (2023)
- Deliver the key components of the 'Time to Change' programme and increase the number of mental health champions within the council, to encourage open conversations about mental health and signpost employees (2021)
- Support schools to develop their ability to promote the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils (2020)
- Support mental health and wellbeing of residents following COVID-19 pandemic (2021)



Health and social care integration

- Implement an Integrated Strategic Commissioning Function for the county, to ensure more effective management of resources, joint contract monitoring and improved quality of service provision (2023)
- Further develop the Trusted Assessor model to facilitate smooth transfers of care between primary and social care and improve service users' and carers' experiences of these services (2022)
- Work with Primary Care Networks to ensure that social prescribing provides new opportunities for support within the community and the Voluntary and Community Sector (2023)
- Support providers through the changing, complex health and social care system to ensure that they are equipped to deliver the volume and standards of care required (2022)
- Identify gaps across the county regarding communities yet to become dementia friendly and provide support to help them achieve dementia friendly status (2023)
- Provide training and resources to staff in frontline services, to enable them to make reasonable adjustments for those with social, communication and sensory needs relating to autism (2021)
- People of all ages with autism are given inclusive access to initiatives such as the Wellbeing for Life Service and the Active Durham Partnership (2021)

Delivery Plan: People Live Long and Independent Lives

Key programmes of work



Homes for older
and disabled
people

- Deliver homes to meet the needs of older people within our communities and support people to live independently for as long as possible (2023)
- Work with partners and providers to reduce the incidence of falls and fractures in older people, through training and assistive / digital technologies (2023)
- Provide equipment to support reablement, progression and sustainable outcomes, including community equipment and provision in care homes (2023)
- Change our social care model and ensure that people have access to robust advice and information to enable them to live healthy and independent lives in their community, preventing delaying the need for formal service provision (2022)
- Engage with stakeholders to develop, test and deliver future provider / partner / service user portals for better information-sharing and to streamline processes (2023)
- Develop the Personal Assistants market for direct payment users (2022)
- Review the approach to care home commissioning, taking into account changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim of ensuring a sustainable and high-quality care market (2023)

Delivery Plan: Connected Communities

Key programmes of work



A safe childhood

- Deliver our Children's Social Care Improvement Plan to ensure we provide good and outstanding social care services to children, young people and their families who need social care support (2023)
- Improve support to children and families across our early help and social care services through the continued implementation and embedding of strength-based and relationship focused practice (Signs of Safety) (2021)
- Continue to recruit, develop and support a skilled, experienced and confident social care workforce (2023)
- Implement and embed a Quality Assurance Framework across our early help and social care services to ensure we provide high-quality practice (2021)
- Continue to promote the role and responsibility of the council as a corporate parent ensuring we are committed and ambitious for all our children in care and care leavers (2023)
- Target our resources on those young people committing the most offences (2023)
- Put victims, especially young victims and restorative justice at the heart of everything we do (2023)
- Develop and deliver a post Ofsted inspection of local authority children's services improvement plan (2021)
- Work in partnership with external providers to develop and shape the market to ensure the most appropriate, local and value for money placements are available which meet the needs of our children and young people who are looked after (2023)



Housing standards

- Raise standards across the private rented-sector through seeking greater licensing powers in order to tackle poor landlords as well as continuous engagement with landlords and the extension of the Private Landlord Accreditation Scheme for responsible landlords (2021)
- Deliver a range of targeted interventions to improve housing and living standards (2021)
- Work with those communities most affected by long-term empty properties including working with property owners and landlords with the aim of bringing empty properties back into use wherever possible (2023)

Delivery Plan: Connected Communities

Key programmes of work

Towns and villages

- Deliver a programme of regeneration within town centres and wider towns and villages by encouraging new town centre business, establishing a network of town centre WiFi systems, facilitating the reoccupation/re-use or clearance of vacant and vulnerable property (2022)
- Deliver the Auckland Castle, Bishop Auckland Heritage Action Zone, Future High Street Fund and Stronger Towns Fund (2023)
- Review and transform leisure facilities in line with the needs of our residents (2020)
- Review and transform library services in line with the needs of our residents (2020)
- Develop and deliver in collaboration with partners a programme of area- based initiatives to improve local environments and community safety (2021)

Access to services

- Construction of new bus station in Durham City (2021)
- Development of North East Strategic Transport Plan and supporting County Durham delivery plans (2020)
- Development and delivery of pipeline of major transport infrastructure projects to improve connectivity across the County (2023)
- Development of the County Durham Together community hub to promote and enable easier access to preventative services available in local communities (2022)

Community cohesion

- Extend the wellbeing approach across the council and within commissioned services (2023)
- Develop and deliver in partnership with other agencies a model to prevent and manage antisocial behaviour across the county (2021)
- Establish a multi-agency task force to deliver a local problem-solving approach within our most deprived are-as and through integrated working and community engagement restore cultural norms and build cohesive communities (2021)
- Provide additional support to community groups adversely affected by the pandemic (2021)
- Develop and deliver a programme to help manage individuals, households and communities through recovery from the pandemic

Delivery Plan: Connected Communities

Key programmes of work



- Maximise opportunities for North East One Public Estate Partnership to realise estates savings and delivery of shared objectives (2022)
- Delivery of the Chapter Homes Business Plan (2020)
- Delivery of the Housing Strategy (2023)
- Supplying Seaham Garden Village development with geothermal heat from mine water treatment scheme (2023)
- Manage and deliver the Housing Infrastructure Fund Newton Aycliffe Housing Growth Programme (2021)
- Maximise the delivery of affordable homes, both by securing developer contributions as part of new housing development and through close partnership with registered providers and Homes England (2023)
- Deliver community housing schemes through the Town and Village Centres Programme (see above) (2022)

Delivery Plan: An Excellent Council

Key programmes of work

Resource management

- Review implications of anticipated legislation for the long-term reform of the social care system (2021)
- Support teams to develop smarter ways of working in preparation for the move to transformed strategic sites and new headquarters (2021)
- Complete the Polling Place Review (2021)
- Review the implications of the government's Fair Funding Review (2023)

A workforce for the future

- Extend the mental health workforce development programme across the council, to increase awareness and support available for staff (2023)
- Achieve the Better Health at Work Award 'Continuing Excellence' status for the council (2022)
- Develop a strategy for employee health and wellbeing (2022)
- Support our staff to work flexibly by developing plans for modern ways of working (2021)
- Assess risks, protect and support public and employees during COVID-19 pandemic and through the restoration of services (2021)

Services designed with service users

- Work towards the sharing of information about a person's assessments, treatment and care through the Great North Care Record, to ensure that staff, patients and service users can make informed decisions about services (2022)
- Review the assistive technologies offer for adult care and develop a new Assistive Technology Strategy (2023)
- Prepare to relocate the registration service to Mount Oswald whilst maintaining service delivery and income generation (2021)
- Increase self-service of performance data by developing business intelligence dashboards (2023)
- Produce a scope and outline plan for delivering the integrated service user service model (2021)
- Continue to deliver the digital transformation programme at a service level (2023)
- Further develop specific engagement mechanisms with children and young people to understand the voice of the child in service provision including development of a Youth Council (2022)
- Restoration of council services that have been interrupted by the pandemic as government guidelines allow (2021)
- Plan and deliver effective communications to build trust, support and keep stakeholders informed and promote safety messages (2020-23)

Delivery Plan: An Excellent Council

Key programmes of work



Use of data and technology

- Implement and realise the benefits for staff and managers of a new adult care case management system (2021)
- Maximise the use of existing technology and trial new technologies to improve efficiency (2023)
- Work with NHS partners to roll out Health Call in care homes, to improve the transfer of information to health professionals (2022)
- Develop a strategy for a 'smart city' type infrastructure (2020)
- Develop a digital skills programme and invest in new ways of working (2023)
- Expand automation and self-service to employees (2023)
- Develop a road map for the comprehensive rollout of business intelligence capability across all services and systems within the council (2021)
- Develop a broadband services business plan (2021)
- Implementation of modern electronic systems and mobile technologies to help deliver operational efficiencies and high-quality services (2021)



Performance management

- Implement a new management framework for Adult and Health Services, to enable more timely analysis of data, improved business intelligence and real time presentation of data (2022)
- Further develop the performance management framework for children and young people's services linked to the new case recording system to improve managers' grip on all areas of performance (2022)
- Develop a well-managed strategic planning framework (2020)
- Review performance management arrangements to focus on restoration and recovery from the pandemic (2020)

Glossary of Terms

5G

Fifth generation or latest iteration of telecommunications networks which is designed to greatly increase the speed and responsiveness of wireless networks

Attainment 8 score

A measure of the average attainment of pupils in up to eight qualifications at KS4

Better Health at Work Award

An award recognising the efforts of employers in the North East and Cumbria in addressing health issues within the workplace

Bishop Auckland Heritage Action Zone

A regeneration area in Bishop Auckland's conservation area that has been agreed by Historic England and has been created to improve the town's historic centre and bring it back to be a vibrant market town for both locals and visitors

Brexit

The withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union

Channel shift

The degree to which residents are moving to dealing with the council through digital means from more traditional methods such as face-to-face and telephone

Council Tax Hardship Fund

A reduction of £300 on your Council Tax bill awarded to people who have been significantly financially impacted by COVID-19

County Durham Together

A virtual hub developed to help support people to stay in their own home and protect them from contracting the coronavirus by putting them in touch with people who can support with access to food and essential supplies, medicines, financial help and social interaction for those experiencing loneliness and isolation

COVID-19

Coronavirus Disease 2019, the respiratory disease caused by the new strain of the coronavirus

Deprivation indices

Widely used datasets used to classify the relative deprivation of an area. The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) measures relative deprivation for small areas or neighbourhoods and ranks every area from the most deprived to the least deprived in England

Disability Confident

A government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. Level 3 or highest level of the Disability Confident scheme which recognises the commitment towards disabled staff and acting as a champion for Disability Confident within local and business communities

Education and Health Care Plan

A legal document that describes a child or young person's special educational needs, the support they need and the outcomes that they would like to achieve

Furlough

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme operated by HMRC. All UK employers will be able to access support to continue paying part of their employee's salary for those employees that would otherwise be laid off during the COVID-19 crisis

GCSEs

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Great North Care Record

An initiative to allow healthcare practitioners from emergency departments, mental health, 111 services, ambulance and out of hours services access information from a patient's GP record

Hate crime

A range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity

Healthy life expectancy

The proportion of life spent in good health or free from a limiting illness or disability

HMRC

Her Majesty's Customs and Revenue

Homes England

A non-departmental public body that funds new affordable housing in England

MTFP

Medium-Term Financial Plan. This is a three-year plan which sets out the council's funding outlook, spending priorities and planned efficiencies over the medium-term

Ofsted

The Office of Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. The organisation responsible for inspecting services providing education and skills for learners of all ages and inspection and regulation of services that care for children and young people

Ofsted rating

The rating scale that Ofsted use in their inspections of education providers such as schools and children's social care providers such as the council. There are four grades:

1. Outstanding; 2. Good; 3. Requires Improvement and; 4. Inadequate

R number

The reproduction number is the average number of secondary infections produced by a single infected person. An R number of 1 means that on average, every person who is infected will infect one other person meaning that the number of infections is stable. If R is greater than 1 then the epidemic is growing. If R is less than 1 then the epidemic is shrinking.

Reablement

Services for people with poor physical or mental health to help them accommodate their illness by learning or relearning the skills necessary for daily living

SARS-CoV-2

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 is the strain of coronavirus that causes COVID-19, the respiratory illness responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic

SATs

Standard Assessment Test

SEND

Special Educational Needs and Disability

Signs of Safety

A strength-based and safety-focused approach to child protection casework originally developed in Australia and now adopted and used by local authorities in many other countries including the UK

Trusted assessor model

Trusted Assessor schemes are a national initiative designed to reduce delays when people are ready for discharge from hospital.

Welfare Assistance Scheme

Short-term support for people in crisis. There are two types; daily living expenses for up to seven days when your circumstances change unexpectedly and settlement grants to help you stay at home or move back into housing

WiFi

A wireless network allowing computers, tablets, smartphones and other devices to connect to the Internet or communicate with one another wirelessly within an area

Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) Initiative

A programme for helping teenagers explore how to protect their own mental health and support those around them. YAM shows promising results. Groups that have completed the programme show with significantly reduced levels of moderate to extreme depression, and reductions in suicide attempts and ideation

Durham County Council Strategic Planning Framework

