

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

2 September 2021

County Durham Partnership Update

Ordinary Decision



Report of Corporate Management Team

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

Councillor Amanda Hopgood, Leader of the Council

**Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy
and Partnerships**

Electoral division affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to update the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) 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 As we continue to follow the government roadmap out of lockdown, we are continuing to work together in partnership with both our statutory and non-statutory agencies so we can support our communities as we begin to slowly interact with each other more and reopen our economy.
- 3 A new Chair for the **Economic Partnership** has been appointed, who will lead the Partnership in very difficult circumstances and changing conditions for the local economy.
- 4 **All 14 AAPs** have received increased resources of £1.4 million to carry on the work around Covid-19 recovery. The work that Area Action Partnerships has carried out around Covid-19 emergency support has been recognised as good practice.

- 5 On 8 November 2020, the government announced that the holiday activities and food programme will be expanded across the whole of England in 2021. To further support the work that has been undertaken, and was highlighted in the last report in relation to holiday activities with healthy food, Durham County Council has received an indicative allocation of £2,383,860 from the Department for Education to coordinate and deliver Holiday Activities with Healthy Food in the Easter/Summer and Christmas holidays during 2021.
- 6 The **Health and Wellbeing Board** agreed the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25 at their meeting in March 2021. The plan is underpinned by evidence in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment focussed on health, wellbeing and the wider determinants of health. This has been coupled with the major policy drivers for improving health and reducing health inequalities.
- 7 The **Safe Durham Partnership** agreed the Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2021-25 at their meeting in March 2021. The plan has been informed by the community safety Strategic Needs Assessment which provides the evidence base on which the priorities have been developed.
- 8 The National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) will transform into the new Probation Service as of 25 June 2021. This will mean the NPS and Durham Tees Valley CRC will no longer exist. The new Probation Service will come into being and will be undertaking a business as usual approach to service delivery.
- 9 The Domestic Abuse Bill passed both Houses of Parliament and was signed into law on 29 April 2021. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 will provide further protections to the millions of people who experience domestic abuse, as well as strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators.
- 10 The **Better Together Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Forum**, which brings together senior representatives of larger or specialist VCS organisations with a countywide remit to share best practice and look for new opportunities to collaborate are actively engaged with the **County Durham Together Partnership (CDT)**. 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.
- 11 Eleven VCS leaders are contributing to six of the CDT Workstreams to ensure the VCS voice is heard as an equal partner and that their role in

recovery is recognised. One of the workstreams is specifically focussed on VCS sustainability and how to empower the VCS to grow and play a stronger role in achieving the County Durham Vision.

- 12 In April, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visited the Cheesy Waffles Project in Belmont, a project for children, young people and adults with additional needs from across County Durham, funded by **Durham AAP**. They joined in with fun events and social activities and learnt more about the project.
- 13 The **County Durham Partnership** has hosted two successful annual events, with the 2018 event focusing on tackling the stigma and discrimination attached to mental health and the theme for 2019 event being the new County Durham Vision and the impact cultural events can have on achieving the vision ambitions, as part of County Durham's Year of Culture.
- 14 The **County Durham Partnership** event did not take place in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. The event this year will take place in the autumn and will focus on green recovery and support the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference (known as COP26), which is scheduled to be held in Glasgow from 1 to 12 November 2021 under the presidency of the United Kingdom.

Recommendation

- 15 COSMB is recommended to:
 - (a) note the contents of this update.

Background

- 16 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 **Durham Safeguarding Adult Partnership, 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 and forum

- 17 The **County Durham Partnership** Board met in January to give partners an update on the work taking place to address Covid-19 and an opportunity to discuss their collective local response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which included the vaccination programme, local tracing partnership and business compliance, which is very good across the County. Covid-19 is a standing item for discussion on this agenda to ensure partners are kept up to date on the changing landscape.
- 18 Discussion also focused on the work of the Durham Youth Council (DYC) and the DYC awards which took place in April. Partners used the opportunity to make links with the Youth Council for their respective areas of work, including the impact of the pandemic on young people and young people's views about volunteering and local community services.
- 19 The DYC's Young People's Awards Event 2021 recognised the achievements of children and young people across County Durham. The young people planned and facilitated the awards. Young people and advocates of young people were nominated for awards and their accomplishments were celebrated over a weeklong Facebook event. The event played host to a number of guest speakers who introduced the award categories and gave words of encouragement and congratulations. The event also included some exclusive live music recordings from some local musicians.



Oxhill Youth Club – Youth Group category winners at the DYC Awards 2021

- 20 The Award winners each received an award, which was posted out to them. Following this event, the Youth Council have been approached by a number of other youth groups wanting to organise similar Youth award events and seeking advice on how to organise this.
- 21 In March, in addition to continuing discussions relating to Covid-19 the focus was on levelling up and investment for County Durham and emphasised the external opportunities for strategic funding and the importance of County Durham receiving significant government investment to ensure levelling up is delivered.
- 22 In February 2021, **the County Durham Partnership Forum** meeting resumed virtually after not meeting for a year due to the pandemic. The focus of the meeting was two workshops relating to:
- (a) Covid-19 and how we work with and engage our communities to take forward the road map as announced by the government on 22nd February and
 - (b) Towns and Villages and how we can work with AAPs to ensure the opportunity to revitalise their towns and villages is maximised

County Durham Partnership Annual event

- 23 The event this year will take place in the autumn and will focus on green recovery and support the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference (also known as COP 26), which is scheduled to be held in Glasgow from 1 to 12 November 2021 under the presidency of the United Kingdom.
- 24 Green recovery focuses on policies and solutions that will benefit people and the planet for years to come. Safeguarding the environment, through protecting ecosystems and fighting the climate crisis, is a big part of it, but so is investing in clean-energy jobs, ensuring everyone's health, safety, and civil rights, and prioritising climate justice.



Gala Theatre LED lighting

- 25 Covid-19 has further exposed and deepened inequalities, and threatens to undermine progress towards climate, nature and development goals. Unless recovery measures are fair and inclusive, decades of development gains could be wiped out, which highlights the importance that everyone has a role to play in the climate challenge.
- 26 Potential keynote speakers, ranging from national speakers, local speakers who influence national and local developments and representation from the Durham Youth Council to support youth participation are being currently being finalised.
- 27 A number of themed seminars at the event based around green recovery are also being developed, including showcasing innovation of businesses in County Durham, the latest developments on energy decarbonisation and developing a local strategy for improving the natural environment and biodiversity and addressing our ecological emergency as identified in the current Environment Bill.
- 28 The event will support the work of the newly formed Environment and Climate Change Partnership, who had their inaugural meeting in March 2021. Feedback from the event will form part of the consultation mechanism for developing the new Climate Emergency Response Plan 2022-24 and the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy to improve the natural environment and biodiversity and address our ecological emergency as highlighted in the current Environment Bill.

County Durham Together

- 29 The **County Durham Together Partnership (CDT)** has met three times and made positive progress in all areas. The seven established workstreams have all met and agreed their key deliverables. This approach to working with communities (not doing to) will see a significant shift and will put co-production very much at the centre of how services and solutions are explored and developed. Through the full partnership approach, including DCC, Police, County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group, VCS and the public, work areas including the following are being developed:
 - (a) Skills and competencies framework including link worker/connector roles using the Making Every Contact Count approach
 - (b) digital alignment and consultation regarding an online signposting solution so that residents are aware of what is available within their community to help them support themselves
 - (c) working with residents to co-produce deliverables – people know what solutions work best for them. A group of volunteers will help

focus this workstream on what communities already have and need

- (d) Place Based approaches in Horden and Bishop Auckland.
- 30 The leads of all workstreams now also meet bi-monthly to ensure collaboration and shared learning and leadership is happening and to avoid duplication.
- 31 **The Better Together VCS Forum** which brings together senior representatives of larger or specialist VCS organisations with a countywide remit to share best practice and look for new opportunities to collaborate, are actively engaged with the County Durham Together change programme. Eleven VCS leaders are contributing to six of the CDT Workstreams to ensure the VCS voice is heard as an equal partner and that their role in recovery is recognised. One of the workstreams is specifically focussed on VCS sustainability and how to empower the VCS to grow and play a stronger role in achieving the County Durham Vision. The last Forum meeting had a focus on safeguarding, ensuring the VCS were aware of the work of the Durham Safeguarding Children/Adults Partnerships.

Covid-19

- 32 Accurate information is crucial to ensuring people are safe and supported during the pandemic. Our **Covid-19 Community Champions** programme empowers County Durham residents to become trusted voices in their local areas, sharing key public health messages, while also highlighting the support available. Since launching the programme in November, more than 80 people from across the county have signed up.
- 33 The **VCS Local Infrastructure Organisation**, Durham Community Action (DCA), has been funded by the NHS County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group to coordinate volunteer recruitment for Covid-19 vaccination clinic support marshals to support the local Primary Care Networks deliver their Covid-19 vaccination programme across County Durham. They have also recruited volunteers to help at Lateral Flow Testing sites.



- 34 By mid-April, 313 Vaccine Support Marshalls and 118 Lateral Flow Testing Volunteers had been recruited through the County Durham Volunteering website managed by DCA. Sixty-Six people are undertaking both roles.
- 35 The **County Durham Armed Forces Forum** met virtually in March and duly acknowledged the role of the Armed Forces contribution to the Covid-19 response through membership of the Local Resilience Forum and assistance with vaccination centres.

Holiday activities with healthy food countywide programme

- 36 On 8 November 2020, the government announced that the holiday activities and food programme will be expanded across the whole of England in 2021. To further support the work that has been undertaken, and was highlighted in the last report in relation to holiday activities with healthy food, Durham County Council has received an indicative allocation of £2,383,860 from the Department for Education (DfE) to coordinate and deliver Holiday Activities with Healthy Food in the Easter/Summer and Christmas holidays during 2021. DCC will receive the money in instalments and be required to report on the total numbers of children accessing provision across these holiday periods to ensure ongoing funding is secured.



- 37 A communications and marketing plan has been developed to ensure the programme is promoted and that children, young people and families know what provision is available near to where they live. The programme has been branded as 'Fun and Food' in County Durham. A dedicated webpage is now available for families and providers www.durham.gov.uk/funandfood.
- 38 The first DfE funded holiday activities with food took place over the recent Easter school holidays. 90 projects took place across the county, 73 were funded through the AAPs, 6 schools, 4 short breaks providers and 7 Family Centre hubs.

- 39 A total of 6,862 children and young people took part in Easter activities including 757 children with additional needs.
- 40 Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the majority of activities were delivered remotely, including online cookery and physical activity sessions. A range of activity packs were also provided and either delivered to family's homes or collected from community venues, these included growing kits, arts and crafts and cooking on a budget. There was limited face to face delivery which included the production of an interactive experience the 'Beatrix Potter Experience'.

Safeguarding

- 41 The **Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnership (DSAP)** have continued working towards achieving its Strategic Plan for 2020-2022 with a focus upon Covid-19. Recent developments have included a refresh of the DSAP Communications Plan and the accessible information through posters and contact cards to support all agencies in providing essential contact information to ensure adults remain safe. In April 2021, a regional radio campaign took place sponsored by the Association of Directors for Adult Social Services (North East) in support of reaching wider communities with details of how to raise concerns.
- 42 In recent months the DSAP has shared key briefings with its partners and workforces related to Covid-19 which include:
- Information related to Covid-19 test, trace and vaccination scams
 - Domestic Abuse and the national 'Ask for ANI' domestic abuse codeword scheme
 - Publication of DSAP newsletters
 - Raising awareness of whistleblowing and how to report concerns
- 43 The DSAP has continued to seek assurance from statutory and relevant partners in line with its programme of work which continues to place a focus upon the recovery of Covid-19. In addition, the DSAP is proactively learning from emerging themes during Covid-19 to inform its activity moving forward and beyond the pandemic.



- 44 **Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP)** continues to fulfil its obligations under the Statutory Guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 who operate under a now well-defined set of Vision and Values:
- (a) **Prevention Through Early Intervention** – we will work together to prevent harm at the earliest opportunity
 - (b) **Joined up Response** - we will respond promptly drawing on appropriate expertise of others
 - (c) **Listening** – we will listen to and observe children to ensure their voice is heard even when they don't or can't speak out
 - (d) **Identifying** – we will identify those most likely to be harmed by sharing information and data effectively
 - (e) **Challenging** – we will challenge, learn and continuously improve.
- 45 Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic it has been about working differently and more flexibly to ensure that across partner agencies key frontline services are maintained and supported to keep children safe. Agencies have supported each other through their own Business Continuity Plans, so gaps did not develop in service provision. A notable example of this is how the training offer has been modified from being predominantly face to face to one which is entirely online using technology, and this will continue to play a big part of any hybrid approach to multi-agency learning and development.
- 46 Over recent months a significant amount of work has taken place examining the learning from local, national and regional sources. These findings have been streamlined into four Practice Improvement Themes which the partnership will focus on over the next 12 months:
- (a) Voice and Lived Experience of the Child
 - (b) Risk Assessment and Cumulative Harm
 - (c) Decision Making and Management Understanding
 - (d) Child Sexual Abuse
- 47 The DSCP has taken an active role in supporting the implementation of the Signs of Safety Practice Framework, led by Children and Young People's Services, with strong engagement across a number of agencies.
- 48 There is strong evidence of effective partnership working, a good example being the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), and the

use of the Child Exploitation Vulnerability Tracker to identify those children most at risk of harm. Through this, early and appropriate interventions are followed.

- 49 Additionally, in terms of communication the DSCP are due in the summer to launch a new website and a new e-bulletin will improve stakeholder access to key information and DSCP messages.

Domestic Abuse Act

- 50 It is estimated that over 2.4 million people are affected by domestic abuse each year in England and Wales. In order to tackle this the government has passed the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 51 This act aims to support victims, including children and young people to live lives free from abuse, coercion, and control. The act received royal ascent on 29 April 2021 and has introduced a range of legislative measures to support victims of domestic abuse including their children.
- 52 Key changes include an update to the statutory definition of domestic abuse which now includes children and young people as victims in their own right and recognises emotional, coercive and controlling and economic abuse as well as physical violence. It also places a statutory requirement on local authorities to provide residents of County Durham, and those who travel from different local authority areas, a range of safe accommodation options and broader wrap around support.
- 53 Durham County Council (DCC) have received over £1.8m through the New Burdens Fund for the financial year 2021/22 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure that the requirements of the act are successfully implemented.
- 54 It will also establish in law the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, to stand up for victims and survivors, raise public awareness, monitor the response of local authorities, the justice system and other statutory agencies and hold them to account in tackling domestic abuse.
- 55 Just for Women received **Stanley AAP** funding for the delivery of their counselling and crafting to wellness programme. This programme provides counselling sessions and crafting to wellness and anxiety workshops to support the mental health of victims of abuse, and to alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety. The sessions teach coping strategies,



Taking part in the Crafting for Wellness programme at Just for Women

help women to develop healthy behaviours, reduce stress, and improve their general wellbeing. To adhere to social distancing, groups of four meet twice per week for two hours to reduce social isolation. This allows the women the opportunity to meet new friends and create a strong support network, offering and receiving support. As the women's situations improve, they are moved onto other support programmes to allow other women to benefit from the programme.

- 56 The programme is available for all who need it with no time restrictions, and Just for Women try to ensure low waiting times. This weekly contact with their counsellor is provided in a supportive and safe environment. This is essential as women who are victims of abuse (especially domestic abuse) require a safe space outside of the home to receive this support. All women who receive support at the Just for Women Centre can access wraparound support of training, workshops, 1:1 support, craft therapy and bespoke programmes.

Vision 2035: More and better jobs

- 57 Glyn Llewellyn has been appointed as the new chair of the **Economic Partnership**. Glyn is a director at the North East law firm, Mortons Law and he brings with him a wealth of experience in business consultancy and manufacturing and will lead the Economic Partnership in very difficult circumstances and changing conditions for the local economy.
- 58 An Economic Statement has been developed which is a short document setting out the county's high-level economic strengths and challenges. The Economic Statement will bridge the gap until a new Economic Strategy is published in summer 2022.
- 59 The Statement builds on research that has been commissioned from external consultants, who will also support the development of the Strategy. Many of the impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit are yet to be understood so, as these emerge over the coming months, they will be interpreted as part of the evidence for the Strategy.
- 60 The Levelling Up Fund for England is £4 billion and as a Tier 1 area, County Durham should receive priority funding. County Durham is identified as one of the areas of greatest need in the UK and local areas (based on parliamentary constituency areas) will be able to apply for up to £20 million from the fund to spend on projects which command local support, including from local MPs.
- 61 The Community Renewal Fund has £220 million available nationally. A maximum of £3 million is available for County Durham for submission to UK government. Bids will focus on business development, innovation, employment, skills and green recovery.

62 **East Durham Rural Corridor AAP** supported Livin to set up a discretionary fund to be delivered through their Livin Futures Employability team, with grants payable to applicants who can demonstrate that there are jobs available upon completion of the training or that the skills and support gained will enable applications to be made into the essential skills sector. The maximum grant that is given is £400 per person and is not a cash payment and supports, for example:

- (a) Training courses and qualifications
- (b) Clothes/travelling expenses for interview
- (c) Tools for the job

63 **Chester-le-Street AAP** have supported a project to support young adults, and adults who are at a disadvantage because of physical, learning or mental health needs. Back from the Edge participants will be provided with free, practical training and education to develop woodcraft, DIY, traditional crafts and trade skills. This will enhance their employability skills while also creating a sense of value and self-worth. The concept is to find a unique interest within each individual to enhance and develop their skills in that area and will have a positive impact on their quality of life and may even lead to them setting up a micro business.

64 Following discussion at the **Health and Wellbeing Board** meeting in January 2021, a letter has been written to government relating to levelling up across the country and more support for people in County Durham who are living in poverty. Particularly with reference to County Durham seeing increasing demands on public services, coupled with the reduction of resources, the pressure on our communities is increasing which has been further exacerbated by the impact of Covid-19 on our local economy plus the ageing demographic of our population.

65 To support our vision that fewer people are affected by poverty and deprivation in the County, a number of **AAPs** have provided a range of valuable support for the local community, including hot meal provision to families during the schools holidays and those that are isolating and help for



Preparing care packages in Teesdale with support from Teesdale AAP

community centres to be used as local distribution points for foodbanks.

- 66 Business Durham ran a campaign on Facebook promoting support through the Durham Business Opportunities Programme. The social media campaign targeted rural areas and areas with low support engagement across County Durham including Barnard Castle, Stanhope, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Willington, Spennymoor, Crook, Ferryhill, Seaham, Easington, Quarrington Hill, Wheatley Hill, Kelloe and Fishburn.
- 67 The campaign targeted businesses with a postcard demonstrating how engaging with the Durham Business Opportunities Programme could benefit them using examples from others. This generated 47 leads, including a number of new businesses that have not previously engaged with Business Durham or taken up support.

- 68 As part of support for rural communities, Barnard Castle will get free public wi-fi as part of plans to boost the resilience of County Durham communities. It is hoped the installation of wi-fi in Barnard Castle will increase footfall and encourage visitors to spend more time in the town centre once coronavirus restrictions are eased.



Chocolate Fayre benefiting from free public wi-fi in Barnard Castle

Funded by Durham County Council and **Teesdale AAP** the project will also provide another way for businesses to connect with customers, with new local apps being developed to promote special offers and encourage people to explore the town.

People lives long and independent lives

- 69 The **Health and Wellbeing Board** agreed the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25 at their meeting in March 2021. The plan is underpinned by evidence in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment focussed on health, wellbeing and the wider determinants of health. This has been coupled with the major policy drivers for improving health and reducing health inequalities.
- 70 The vision of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy is 'County Durham is a healthy place, where people live well for longer' with priorities of Starting Well, Living Well and Ageing Well and the six objectives of how success will be measured being:

- (a) Improve healthy life expectancy and reduce the gap within County Durham and between County Durham and England
- (b) We will have a smoke free environment with over 95% of our residents not smoking and an ambition that pregnant women and mothers will not smoke
- (c) Decrease overall levels of unemployment and specifically close the employment gap between the general population and those living with a long term physical or mental health condition, or with a learning disability
- (d) Over 90% of our children aged 4-5 years, and 79% of children aged 10-11 years are of a healthy weight
- (e) Improved mental health and wellbeing evidenced by increased self-reported wellbeing scores and reduced suicide rates
- (f) Increase the number of organisations involved in the Better Health at Work Award (to improve health and wellbeing interventions at work)

- 71 The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy also includes how addressing climate change also realises benefits to health and wellbeing (for example through active travel) and how the **Health and Wellbeing Board** will work with the **Environment and Climate Change Partnership** to realise these benefits.
- 72 The new 'County Durham Care Partnership Executive' arrangements to further integrate health and social care services came into place in April 2021. This will stand County Durham in good stead for the proposals outlined in the Health and Social Care White Paper relating to integrated care systems coming into force. Health and Wellbeing Boards will continue to have a leadership role at the place-based level in these new arrangements to represent the views of County Durham.
- 73 Physical Activity is a key priority area for partners and is key to delivery of the County Durham Vision 2035 and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Physical Activity Strategy Committee (a subgroup of the Health and Wellbeing Board) is responsible for encouraging partners to work together and promote change that ensures an active lifestyle is an easy choice for all residents of County Durham, which also positively impacts on mental wellbeing.

74 A number of AAPs have supported a range of initiatives relating to promoting an active lifestyle. This includes **Bishop Auckland and Shildon (BASH) AAP** who have supported the Active Families Project, delivered by Family Action to bring families together to improve health and wellbeing by increasing their physical activity through fun, educational activities. Sessions include at least 30 minutes of physical activity and a food bag will be provided each week with ingredients to make a meal at home including recipe cards and a video tutorial. As lockdown restrictions ease, they hope to be able to make a hot meal using the school kitchens and families eat together during the sessions.



Learning new skills and having fun at an Active Families session

75 Family Action work closely with schools to identify and engage the families who will benefit from this project most. Sessions are delivered outside by a Project Worker and supported by volunteers. Each 12-week programme will be based in a primary school in the BASH AAP area and they aim to work with seven schools over a 12-month period and will accommodate a group of around 15-20 participants at each school.

76 Residents in the **4 Together AAP** area also benefited from improved health and wellbeing through the Learn Healthy Live Healthy project which aims to encourage members of the community to live healthier and happier lives and to increase knowledge and awareness of serious illness with advice on how even simple lifestyle changes can help prevent it.



Learn Healthy Live Healthy participants

77 Prior to lockdown and during lockdown restrictions the Ladder Centre successfully delivered a range of activities to support active lifestyles and improve mental wellbeing:

- (a) Taster Seated Exercise sessions
- (b) Small group health walks
- (c) Jog and Talk introduction to running session
- (d) Virtual Tai Chi (video sessions provided by a qualified Tutor)
- (e) Healthy eating courses with wellbeing for life
- (f) An understanding mental health focus group
- (g) An improving physical and mental health through exercise focus group
- (h) Park Football "kick abouts".

78 In addition, they delivered 25 Health at Home packs to project members during lockdown and set up a very popular virtual walking group and mentored those taking part. Eight project members completed Durham County Council Walk Leader training and are regular contributors to Thrive Durham Volunteer Health Walks. Two of them have completed Durham County Council Run Leader training and going forward will be delivering Couch to 5K and Run Happy sessions in the AAP area.

79 The **Derwent Valley AAP** have supported Clart About Ltd to develop a 'My Mammy/Mummy Matters' project which will create a facilitated support group for new parents who have given birth during the pandemic lockdown. The project will offer sessions around sensory play, peer support and bonding through parent led activities. The overall aim of the project is to promote positive mental health and reduce social isolation and it will be delivered to new parents over the course of 45 weeks.



80 **East Durham AAP** have funded Durham Deafened Support to support a community uniquely affected by some of the social distancing measures around mask wearing. This has made lip reading impossible (which for some people is their main form of communication) and can therefore lead to greater isolation.

81 The **Armed Forces** Covenant Local Action Plan annual report, amongst other things, highlights the work of the Armed Forces Outreach Service

(AFOS). In partnership with other local authorities, Durham County Council funds AFOS which provides help and support to all force's personnel, reservists, veterans and their families.

- 82 The AFOS are preparing to roll out an Armed Forces Awareness training package for front line workers, especially those in Adult Care.

Connected communities

- 83 The **Safe Durham Partnership** agreed the Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2021-25 at their meeting in March 2021. The key risks and threats contained in the community safety strategic assessment that crime and disorder pose to the communities of County Durham have informed the priorities of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan, which sets out the strategic approach that will be used to tackle crime and disorder throughout the County.

- 84 The vision of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan is 'Durham is a county where every adult and child will feel and be safe', with the six strategic priorities being:

- (a) Promote being safe and feeling safe in your community
- (b) Support victims and protect vulnerable people from harm
- (c) Prevent Strategy: Countering Terrorism, Radicalisation and Violent Extremism
- (d) Reduce reoffending
- (e) Alcohol and substance misuse reduction
- (f) Tackle and prevent cyber enabled crime

- 85 The National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) transformed into the new Probation Service as of 25 June 2021. This means the NPS and Durham Tees Valley CRC will no longer exist. The new Probation Service will be undertaking a business as usual approach to service delivery.

- 86 For the short term, all operational delivery will continue in the pre transition format and the move to integrate caseloads and service delivery will take place within a likely six-month timeframe. There should be no changes to overarching risk management, community safety or service delivery throughout the transition period and beyond.

- 87 Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". PREVENT is about working together to safeguard and support people who might

be vulnerable to radicalisation. Prevent is one of the four elements of CONTEST, the government's counter-terrorism strategy and aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

- 88 The new annual Counter Terrorism Local Profile has been produced, which identifies the current threat and risks within County Durham in relation to radicalisation, extremism and terrorist related activity. This document is produced by Special Branch within Durham Constabulary in consultation with partners giving a local context. Areas were identified that needed to be addressed, which included the need to improve the reporting of concerns about vulnerable people being radicalised from sources other than education. To address this, free training on Prevent is being rolled out to other agencies and voluntary groups so they are aware of how to make these referrals to ensure this issue is addressed.
- 89 The new **Environment and Climate Change Partnership** met for the first time in March 2021. Three strategic priorities for the new partnership have been established and three workstreams have been set up with partners who will use their shared knowledge and skills to find innovative solutions to environmental issues which affect County Durham.
- (a) Climate emergency: to support the reduction of carbon emissions from all sectors across County Durham to tackle the climate emergency and hit our target of net zero for the whole county by 2050 at the latest
 - (b) Ecological emergency: provides strategic but practical guidance to support organisations and communities in County Durham to reverse the decline in our biodiversity and restore habitats and species across the county. The priority for the first year is to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for County Durham
 - (c) Place, health and communities aims to promote engagement and activity to improve environmental outcomes in communities across County Durham and promote sustainability and health and wellbeing across the Environment and Climate Change Partnership.
- 90 Ecological mapping work is a practical example of a project the **Environment and Climate Change Partnership** is supporting. The mapping will provide the baseline for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, by providing information on core areas of habitat and where the most ecologically sound areas are for habitat creation in order to enhance core areas and create ecological connectivity. Partners have mapped grasslands and woodlands and work is currently taking place with the Environment Agency to map wetlands. Further mapping will be

required for accessible semi-natural habitats (which can also be used to support the health agenda) and potentially 'high carbon habitats' such as arable and grass leys in order to help direct woodland planting to sites that will create the best carbon reductions. Mapping is already used to inform woodland planting in the county, and has proved to be an invaluable project management tool.

91 The current Climate Emergency Response Plan 2020 – 22 has undergone a one-year review, which has shown there has been significant progress, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. A new Climate Emergency Response Plan is being developed for 2022-24, which will emphasise the importance of the cross-cutting issues of green recovery, skills development, rural decarbonisation, adaptation to a changing climate and a fair and just transition.

92 Groundwork North East have been awarded funding by **3 Towns AAP** to improve accessibility to Kitty Woods enhancing biodiversity, providing direct training and volunteering opportunities. It will increase access to nature for both participants and for local residents which will improve the health and wellbeing of the wider community tackling both obesity and social isolation. Alongside volunteering opportunities, the programme will provide engagement activities to safely involve the local community in the woodland and other underutilised green spaces in Crook and the wider 3 Towns AAP area. Examples of engagement activities will include guided walks, wildlife spotters, bio blitz, treasure trails, bird/bat box making, bug hotels, den making and seasonal activities such as bird feeders and dawn chorus walks.

93 **Weardale AAP** has been identified as a demonstrator area to support electric charging points. Stanhope will have ten charging points; this will broaden the offer to visitors to the Dales and increase the economic wellbeing of the area.



Introducing electric vehicle charging points

94 The 31st County Durham Environment Awards for 2020 could not happen safely in the usual format due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, an online programme went ahead which culminated in a virtual ceremony held on the evening of 19 February 2021. There was a 20-minute video of winning entries streamed on the council's You Tube channel and presented by the Awards judging panel. Numbers were understandably down on previous years but

applications were of a good quality, with much of the focus being on recognising and celebrating a continued strong community spirit and the relevance of the local environment in enabling a level of neighbourhood-based activity during the pandemic.

- 95 Increased resources of £1.4 million have been made available to all 14 AAPs to carry on the work around Covid-19 recovery. All AAPs have ensured their communities remain supported based on individual needs and a number of examples are shown below of projects which help support our communities as we are on the road to recovery from the pandemic
- 96 **Great Aycliffe and Midridge AAP** supported the Newton Aycliffe Play Café project who have provided much-needed food and household essential parcels to families across Aycliffe. The organisation was faced with an increase in demand for their service during the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, receiving more referrals week on week. The funding received helped greatly in supporting the additional families and the Play Café has provided an essential service to the community throughout the pandemic and continues to operate their service to those who require support. The Play Café received fantastic support from the community, including Newton Aycliffe Working Men's Club, who provided free use of their concert room, where all packs were prepared safely, adhering to government guidelines.
- 97 Brandon Carrside Youth and Community Project have been funded by **Mid Durham AAP** to provide free activity packs to more than 80 families. The packs included the materials to make sunshine window decorations and a live 'craft along demonstration' was included in an online event on Pancake Day, plus ingredients for pancakes with healthy fruit toppings. Children were encouraged to display their sunshine pictures in windows to raise people's spirits on their daily walks, runs and cycles.
- 98 Children also had the opportunity to engage in a live Toy Story show which included singing and dancing. Brandon Carrside have continued provision throughout lockdown providing much needed support to families, combating loneliness and isolation for the elderly with weekly doorstep chats and deliveries, wellbeing support via schools and online Youth Clubs. The project coordinator also jointly won North East Youth Projects with Pride Youth Worker of the Year Award for leading her staff with commitment and dedication to the local community during the pandemic. The staff and the project were also awarded the High Sheriffs Award for County Durham being the overall winner at the ceremony in March 2021.

99 The Cheesy Waffles Project which supports children and young adults with additional needs has received support from **Durham AAP** and the local County Councillors on a number of occasions. Over the last 12 months funding has helped them to keep in touch online and also run training sessions for the young people on Covid-19 awareness. The project offers a safe fun space and their hard work was recently recognised with a visit from the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge



The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge making friends at Cheesy Waffles

who visited the project at their base at Belmont Community Centre. The Duke and Duchess joined in with fun events, social activities and even played golf. One of the young people from the project summed the visit up when they said “Today has been brilliant. It’s the best thing that has happened to me in my heart”.

100 **Spennymoor AAP** has provided funding to Spennymoor Youth and Community Centre Association (SYACA) to develop a Community Takeaway service for 12 months. The project will support residents in the Spennymoor area who have been affected financially or socially by Covid-19 with twice weekly meals cooked in the Centre's community kitchen and delivered safely by SYACA drivers to those identified. The Community Takeaway will provide traditional nutritious meals and desserts with capacity for at least 50 meals per week (with all income reinvested into sustaining and developing the project).

101 The project will employ a cook, drivers and kitchen assistants as well as being supported by four volunteers who will be involved in the project including helping in the kitchen, delivering additional meals and promoting the project.

102 The project will also link with the SYACA Covid-19 helpline and volunteer team to provide safe social contact through doorstep conversations and regular wellbeing calls with vulnerable and self-isolated residents to ensure health and wellbeing needs are being met and referrals to professional support, advice and guidance which can help resolve other issues cause by the Covid-19 crisis.

103 **Churches and Faith groups** have continued their active support for local communities during the pandemic and play a vital role in helping communities come together and support each other. Faith groups and schools contributed poetry and artwork to the County Durham online Holocaust Memorial Day event on the theme ‘Be the light in the

darkness'. Members of the County Durham Faiths Network are being consulted and are contributing to the development of the Faith Museum as part of the Auckland Project. This will be the first museum in England to contemplate faith in Britain and what it means in the present day and help people to understand today's multi-faith society.

- 104 The **Armed Forces** Covenant Fund Trust has awarded £15,000 to the council to support community engagement for the 'Through Soldiers' Eyes' exhibition which will share through art the experiences of our Armed Forces, their journey in war, in peace and beyond. The exhibition will take place in Bishop Auckland Town Hall 10th September – 18th November 2021.

Conclusion

- 105 The scale of the coronavirus pandemic and is still having an impact on all services across the County Durham. As we continue to follow the government roadmap out of lockdown and begin to slowly interact with each other more and reopen our economy we continue to work in partnership.
- 106 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 during the recovery and restoration phases to meet the County Durham Vision.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None

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Appendix 1: Implications

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.

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 thematic 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