

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny  
Management Board**

**21 January 2022**

**County Durham Partnership Update**

**Ordinary Decision**



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**Report of Corporate Management Team**

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

**Councillor 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 Excellent partnership working has always been the County Durham Partnership's strength and it continues to be of paramount importance as we support our communities through the coronavirus pandemic. Our County Durham Vision 2035 was agreed before the pandemic but has put the partnership in good stead to address the ambitions for our County during a challenging time – the Vision Ambitions are for:
  - (i) more and better jobs;
  - (ii) people live long and independent lives;
  - (iii) connected communities.
- 3 Following the COP26 conference in Glasgow in November 2021, which saw global leaders discussing what actions are needed to protect the

planet for future generations, the **County Durham Partnership** held an event aimed at building on COP26 at a local level.

- 4 Since the previous report, the programme for **Holiday Activities with Healthy Food** continued in the Summer and Christmas holidays during 2021. Recognising that the need and demand for holiday activities with healthy food remains during half term holidays (which the Department for Education (DfE) does not provide funding for) an additional £70,000 was secured from the Poverty Action Steering Group (PASG) for the May and October half terms 2021.
- 5 **All 14 Area Action Partnerships (AAPs)** now have additional funding to help improve their local towns and villages. This is a dedicated 'Towns & Villages Fund' allocation of £210,000 per AAP that will add value to our local communities. Equally, all our local Councillors also have an additional £10,000 to spend within their divisions for related Towns & Villages projects.
- 6 A new and refreshed **Armed Forces Covenant** has been signed by the Leader of the Council. This demonstrates our continuing commitment to ensuring that members of the Armed Forces Community are treated fairly and that no one is disadvantaged in accessing public services because of their military service.
- 7 County Durham has made it to the next stage in the **UK City of Culture 2025** competition. County Durham is among the eight locations to have been selected from the 20 bidding locations and now has until January 2022 to finalise its bid. This exciting opportunity can support the county's efforts in becoming carbon neutral by 2050 by utilising the breath-taking landscapes, outstanding cultural attractions, unparalleled grassroots sport, world-first heritage, spectacular events, world class research and a growing sector of artists and entrepreneurs.
- 8 **Lumiere** took place on 18-21 November 2021. For the first time since it began in 2009, Lumiere linked city and the wider county through six commissions that transformed significant landmarks across County Durham from the Apollo Pavilion at Peterlee to Raby Castle at Staindrop.
- 9 **Storm Arwen** hit the north east of England on the afternoon of Friday 26 November 2021 and that night caused extensive damage all the way across northern England. In County Durham, 14,891 utility customers were affected by a loss of power. This included 3,000 plus residents with multiple health and social vulnerabilities who would need extra support. The outages affected all parts of the county and many residents were without power for several days before power was restored to all properties on Thursday 9 December.

- 10 In response to the storm, the **County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (LRF)** implemented its multi-agency incident procedures on the morning of Saturday 27 November, to coordinate response to storm damage incidents. Durham County Council, in partnership with the police and fire services, responded to fallen trees and debris affecting the highways network, damaged and dangerous structures and snow drifts on the A66. Services also responded to requests for help from residential care homes affected by power outages.
- 11 A major incident was declared on 30 November and military support was agreed in order to support residents and also to ensure consistent communication.
- 12 Effective partnership working through the LRF (including Area Action Partnerships) took place directly with communities, the voluntary and faith sectors and those affected residents were provided with help and support ranging from welfare centres, hot meals, food, stoves, heaters and support supplies and where required, arranging alternative temporary accommodation.

### **Recommendation**

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

## Background

- 14 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 Adults 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

- 15 The **County Durham Partnership** Board met in September and November 2021. At the meetings, partners were updated on work taking place to address Covid-19 as well as an update on how the flu vaccine programme has been delivered to support the expected increase in flu cases over the winter. 'Contain' Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) was received from the government totalling £19.4 million. Partners received some examples of how funding had been spent, including children and young people's emotional wellbeing and bereavement counselling, reopening of school swimming pools, mutual aid and VCS emergency support and community grant schemes.
- 16 At the September meeting, partners looked at the work taking place to support our Better Health at Work Award. The scheme has reached over 40,000 employees with 79 signatory organisations.
- 17 At the November meeting partners discussed how the **Poverty Action Steering Group** was supporting those residents/families experiencing poverty issues in the County. Taking a holistic view of issues relating to the pandemic whilst delivering targeted interventions to support the poorest household in greatest need, has been key. This approach has had a focus on preventative work to avoid households getting into financial difficulties, where possible. Some examples of partnership working were shared, including:
- (a) Advice in County Durham Referral portal as a one stop shop to signpost and refer residents for support;
  - (b) Private landlords "stop before you serve" in relation to housing evictions;
  - (c) GP – Warm Homes Referrals for support with insulation and other heating related issues;

- (d) “The Bread and Butter Thing” grant funding to support those who require food for the fraction of the price;
  - (e) Credit Union – promoting safe credit.
- 18 A revised Poverty Action Strategy and Plan will be developed for 2022/23 to outline the actions partners will take to support those in greatest need in terms of the impact of deprivation and poverty, given that 21.5% of County Durham resident population are said to be living in relative poverty (before housing costs) compared to the North East average of 21.5% and the England average of 17.1%.
- 19 This wider work is supported by the **Advice in County Durham (AiCD) Partnership** which held a Development Day virtually in December with a good mix of partners in attendance. The revised Terms of Reference were agreed, and the main focus of the day was the development of a AiCD Members’ Survey that will be distributed in the new year. The AiCD is also carrying out implementation of the next phase of the Advice Referral Portal refresh. This is looking at user journeys and ensuring a smooth transition from the existing portal to the new and improved one. Other workstreams are looking at further web development as well as communications and engagement.

### County Durham Partnership Annual Event/Durham COP

20 Following the COP26 conference in Glasgow in November 2021, which saw global leaders discussing what actions are needed to protect the planet for future generations, our local events to support Environment and Climate Change activities in County Durham took place.

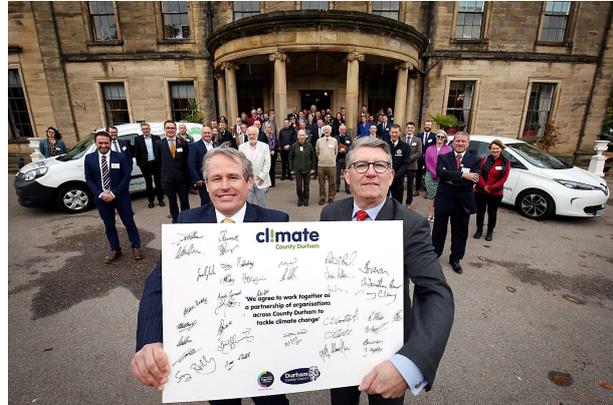
21 Culminating in our County Durham Partnership event on 26 November 2021, our keynote speaker was television presenter, podcaster and author, Tom Heap who was joined by representatives from the County Durham Partnership at an event aimed at strengthening County Durham’s response to climate change.



Tom Heap speaking at the CDP annual event

22 Durham County Council was among the first local authorities in the country to declare a climate emergency in 2019 and at the event partners discussed further actions that could help the county reach its target of being carbon neutral by 2050. They also looked at ways to conserve natural assets for future generations to enjoy and how to ensure County Durham is more sustainable and resilient.

23 In addition, at the beginning of November, leaders from key organisations across the North East signed the County Durham Climate Change Agreement, demonstrating their commitment to tackling climate change. A new website



County Durham Climate Change Agreement

[www.climatecountydurham.org.uk](http://www.climatecountydurham.org.uk) was also launched for members of the public, community organisations and small businesses to find out how they can play their part.

## UK City of Culture 2025

24 County Durham is among the eight locations to have been selected from the 20 bidding locations and now has until January 2022 to finalise its bid.

25 We submitted the initial expression of interest with principal partner Durham University on behalf of Culture Durham. Our bid is on behalf of the whole of County Durham and we believe it is our diverse heritage, landscapes and communities that make it so special. Our aim is to deliver an inclusive cultural programme that resonates with our communities and reflects our desire to innovate, inspire and grow. This exciting opportunity can support the county's efforts in becoming carbon neutral by 2050 by utilising the breath-taking landscapes, outstanding cultural attractions, unparalleled grassroots sport, world-first heritage, spectacular events, world class research and a growing sector of artists and entrepreneurs.

26 As one of the final eight locations, County Durham will receive £40,000 from the government department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to develop its bid.

27 It is expected that the overall winner will be declared in May 2022. The winning location will then take on the baton from Coventry, UK City of

Culture 2021, which has so far attracted more than £100 million in capital investment to support cultural projects.

## Lumiere

28 Lumiere took place from 18 to 21 November 2021. It is 12 years since the County Durham Partnership agreed to the first Lumiere, and for the first time the festival took world-class light art across the county for people to view in their immediate surroundings, both in the city and the surrounding countryside and coast.

29 For Marks in the Landscape, international artists have responded to iconic landmarks spanning 500 years of history, from the 13<sup>th</sup> century ruins of Finchale Priory to the Penshaw Monument, a 70ft Victorian structure which can be seen from 20 miles away. Other locations which have been transformed include Raby Castle, Ushaw Historic House, the Apollo Pavilion and Seaham Marina.



'Solitude' artwork at Finchale Priory

30 Commissioned by Durham County Council and produced by Artichoke, Lumiere wouldn't be possible without the support of major event partners that include Durham University and Durham Cathedral; backing from a wide range of local businesses for example Believe Housing and Atom Bank; and the assistance of partners Durham Constabulary and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service. However, key to the success of the festival has been the support of more than 12,000 local people across County Durham, who have been involved in making Lumiere happen since the UK's leading light festival began in 2009. In 2021 alone, Lumiere has worked with community groups including school children, mental health service users, veterans and young carers through creative projects. This includes 685 individuals, 25 schools, six BRILIANT artists, across five Learning and Participation projects.

31 This community focused approach is also at the heart of County Durham's bid to be UK City of Culture 2025, which aims to build on the success of events like Lumiere to create even more opportunities for people to engage in the arts.

## Covid-19

- 32 The **Health and Wellbeing Board** received an update at its November 2021 meeting, outlining the inequalities of the Covid-19 vaccine take up across the county, which is driven by multiple factors, and identifying where we can do more to encourage people to get vaccinated.
- 33 Uptake at County level is comparable in Durham to anywhere in the North East, however mapping at sub county level shows that there is significant variation in Durham for both doses across age, gender and social gradient, and this information has been used to identify where targeted work should take place, for example, pop up vaccination centres.
- 34 The County Durham Vaccine Inequalities Group has been established and a comprehensive action plan has also been developed to underpin this work to ensure no one is left behind.
- 35 Much of the focus across all 14 AAPs is on being visible and supporting communities to recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. **Durham AAP** has funded the Waddington Street Centre, which provides essential support for young people living with mental health issues. Last year, it piloted online sessions for young people who were moving from child to adult services very successfully, but this still left a gap for 22-25 year olds. The online support sessions have been now extended to ensure that this service continues. As one service user put it, "I'm 21 now but I'm 22 in a few weeks and I do worry that this is the end of the road for me, I'd be so grateful if there was another group like this so it could continue."
- 36 **Stanley AAP** provided a grant to PACT House to support it in the delivery of its Weekend Warmers project. PACT House has seen a dramatic increase of local people who require support either through food parcels, collection of prescriptions, providing community meals, and mental health support. More and more working age families are facing financial hardship, older residents are socially isolated and younger people are struggling to have active community lives. This has resulted in a culmination of anxieties and fears which is having a detrimental impact on people's health and wellbeing.
- 37 The Weekend Warmers project enables PACT House to re-engage with local people by offering two hot meals over the weekend period, one each day. This weekend opening allows people to reconnect with the world, breaks down isolation and brings a normality back into lives, whilst supporting those most vulnerable to food poverty. The project will be a mix of sit in / take away meals that will be offered depending on

Covid-19 guidance and numbers of people allowed to sit in or outside the premises.

- 38 Due to Covid restrictions, classroom cohesion has had a massive impact on the wellbeing of our children. In **Weardale AAP**, 550 school attending children have benefitted from a whole school enrichment programme, working with specialists, children have been engaging in team building, mindfulness and structured activities, with the desired output of preparing the school children to re-engage in the school environment.

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

- 39 As previously reported, the holiday activities with healthy food countywide programme continues with the Child Poverty Working Group responsible for coordinating the programme in County Durham to ensure that for children who attend provision:
- (a) eat more healthily over the school holidays;
  - (b) are more active during the school holidays;
  - (c) take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character, and wellbeing along with their wider education attainment;
  - (d) are safe and not socially isolated;
  - (e) have greater knowledge of health nutrition;
  - (f) are more engaged with school and other local services and children and families develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting and are effectively signposted towards other information and support for example health, employment, and education.
- 40 Since the last report in July 2021, a total of 19,127 children and young people took part in activities including 984 children with additional needs. A total of 128 projects have been delivered over 243 community venues and 29 schools.
- 41 Provision over the summer holidays was predominantly face to face, delivery partners worked hard to develop a creative and engaging programme whilst supporting children and young people to feel safe and engage with activities in their community. Activities delivered

included gorge walking, woodwork, laser quest, dance, tennis, day trips, climbing, sailing and much more. A short video has been produced to showcase some of the fabulous projects that took place over the summer - [Summer 2021 Fun and Food Video](#).



- 42 DfE funding does not cover half term holidays, but additional funding of £47,000 was secured from the Poverty Action Steering Group (PASG) for the October half term, which supported 74 projects across the AAPs.
- 43 **Spennymoor AAP** provided Fun and Food funding to Step to the Occasion to operate a holiday club which operated during the October half term.
- 44 The sessions were oversubscribed and a total of 20-25 children attended the sessions on a daily basis. A variety of activities were undertaken with children which included:
- (a) **Physical activity** – including daily walk/jog in the park, stretching exercises, fun cardio activities, ball games, skipping games, crazy golf, football, tennis, cheer leading games, parachute activities;
  - (b) **Healthy Eating** – each day a healthy packed lunch was provided for each child along with free fruit and vegetables which were provided to families from Spennymoor Community Garden. Healthy eating advice was also provided to children and at the end of the programme and a leaflet was provided to each family which included information on healthy eating options and suggested recipes;
  - (c) **Mental Health with Poppy Bear** – using the organisations mental health mascot Poppy Bear the project also undertook a mental health and emotional well-being session with the children, discussing their feelings;
  - (d) **Arts & Craft Activities** – a selection of arts and craft activities were also undertaken with a focus on Autumn and Halloween. Activities included autumn canvas painting, Halloween mask making, colouring activities and clay model making;
  - (e) **Preparing Food** - the children also helped to prepare pumpkin soup which they had for their lunch during one of the sessions.

- 45 Following the project an evaluation report was produced and positive feedback was received from the children who attended the sessions.
- 46 A range of activities have been delivered at venues across the county and the wider region during the Christmas holiday period, including locally run Christmas parties, visits to the panto at the Gala theatre and ice skating at the Centre for Life in Newcastle. Information from the projects is currently being collated.

## **Safeguarding**

- 47 The Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnership (DSAP) continued working towards achieving the Strategic Plan for 2020-2022. The coronavirus pandemic continues to remain an area of focus. The DSAP regularly shares and promotes relevant key messages for safeguarding adults. Statutory and relevant partners, as well as wider stakeholders, continue to inform and assure the DSAP of local safeguarding adults' activity (including where Covid-19 may be a feature).

In recent months the DSAP has shared key briefings with all partners which include:

- (a) Practitioner Newsflash related to 'Professional Curiosity';
  - (b) Mental Capacity Act Assessments – 'what good looks like';
  - (c) DSAP newsletters (including Covid-19 themed updates).
- 48 The DSAP has shared more than 28 e-bulletins which include:
- (a) learning from national Safeguarding Adult Reviews and related analysis;
  - (b) briefings related to local and national emerged themes;
  - (c) Hate Crime Awareness Week and related e-learning opportunities;
  - (d) 16 days of action against Domestic Abuse.
- 49 In November 2021, the DSAP hosted its fourth safeguarding week, (and its second virtually). That week took place in parallel to the National Safeguarding Adults Week 15 to 22 November 2021. The event was supported by the Safe Durham Partnership and Durham Community Action. The DSAP Independent Chair launched the week reiterating the responsibilities for all statutory and relevant partners to ensure practitioners, professionals and volunteers who work with adults are confident in recognising and reporting abuse.

- 50 More than 20 learning opportunities were made available during the week and through a range of dedicated workshops which included Mental Capacity Act 2005, Safeguarding and Supporting Alcohol Dependent Drinkers, Understanding Safeguarding for Voluntary and Community Organisations, Workshop to Raise Awareness of PREVENT (and the related duty).
- 51 **Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP)** continues to fulfil its obligations under the Statutory Guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 which 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.
- 52 In October 2021, the DSCP published its Annual Report, a statutory requirement every 12 months. The focus was around the achievements the DSCP made as a partnership and the impact this work was having on children and their families.
- 53 The report also gave an overview of the work of the various sub-groups and the intended focus for the coming year, with added emphasis on scrutiny and the assessment of the impact of our services in keeping children safe.
- 54 Additionally, in terms of communication, the DSCP is in the final stages of the development of a new website, due for launch in early 2022. The new e-bulletin is now well embedded with evidence that it improves stakeholder access to key information and DSCP messages.

## **Storm Arwen**

- 55 Storm Arwen hit the north east of England on the afternoon of Friday 26 November 2021 and that night caused extensive damage all the way across northern England. The storm was followed immediately by a period of cold weather with freezing temperatures and snow in the high Pennines areas.

- 56 As well as causing damage to property, trees and localised flooding, the storm caused significant and extensive damage to the power distribution network with widespread power outages affecting tens of thousands of properties across the wider region.
- 57 In County Durham, 14,891 utility customers were affected by a loss of power. This included 3,000 plus residents with multiple health and social vulnerabilities who would need extra support. The outages affected all parts of the county and many residents were without power for several days before power was restored to all properties on Thursday 9 December.
- 58 In response to the storm, the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (LRF) implemented its multi-agency incident procedures on the morning of Saturday 27 November, to coordinate response to storm damage incidents. Durham County Council, in partnership with the police and fire services, responded to fallen trees and debris affecting the highways network, damaged and dangerous structures and snow drifts on the A66. Services also responded to requests for help from residential care homes affected by power outages.
- 59 Initially it was understood that most properties would be reconnected by midnight on Saturday 27 November and then Sunday 28 November. However, it was discovered that the damage was far more extensive than initially thought and by the beginning of the following week it was clear that it would take days to get customers onto temporary generated power, and weeks to rebuild and repair parts of the power distribution network.
- 60 On Tuesday 30 November, the LRF stood-up a strategic coordination Group (SCG) and on Wednesday 1 December it declared a major incident. A request for Military Assistance to Civil Authorities (MACA) was submitted and approved by the military and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on Thursday 2 December. From the morning of Friday 3 December, 100 plus troops from the Royal Lancers operated from two bases in the county to help with checks on isolated residents, vulnerable people and to distribute food and support packages.
- 61 The military deployment augmented the work which had been on-going throughout the week by the voluntary and community sector, local residents, the Council, the area action partnerships, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Durham Constabulary, NHS trusts, the North East Ambulance Service, utility companies, housing providers, local Elected Members, town and parish councils and faith groups. The agencies worked together with local communities to

contact and visit vulnerable people, and to provide affected residents with help and support ranging from welfare centres, hot meals, food, stoves, heaters and support supplies and where required, arranging alternative temporary accommodation. The Council also assisted (and continues to assist) with welfare and hardship payments while people wait for compensation claims to be processed.

- 62 In total, over 5,000 visits were made to check on vulnerable residents. This was in addition to checks made on people in receipt of social care packages via commissioned services and the Council's in-house social care teams. 330 care packs containing heaters, stoves, torches, batteries and other emergency items were issued where they were required. The Council commissioned 41 visits by mobile catering units to 11 different localities across the county between 1 and 8 December and helped place 14 households in emergency alternative accommodation.
- 63 As with previous incidents and the response to Covid-19, community, voluntary and faith groups across the county were outstanding in rallying-round and providing rapid and spontaneous support, which ranged from checking on isolated people, providing food and supplies, to opening-up community centres, halls and churches to provide places for shelter, company and warmth. Given the duration and widespread nature of the outages, community, voluntary and faith groups responses were invaluable in helping people affected by the storm.

### **Vision 2035: More and better jobs**

- 64 The **Economic Partnership** is continuing to develop an economic statement setting out the county's high-level economic strengths and challenges. A robust consultation process will take place in January to March 2022 ensuring that local businesses, and the public have the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to the strategy at the early stages to ensure ownership. A 12-to-18-month timetable is proposed to consult, develop, sign off and launch the strategy, utilising various and innovative methods of engagement will be key to this process.
- 65 The UK Government published the UK Innovation Strategy, setting out its vision to make the UK a global hub for innovation by 2035:
- (a) The Strategy makes clear that research and innovation are central to the UK's domestic plan for growth and its global aspirations. The Strategy lays out a long-term vision, while also providing a plan for action for the next three to twelve months. The Innovation Strategy recognises the UK Government's role in creating an effective innovation system across four pillars;
  - (b) The four pillars of the strategy are:

- (i) **Unleashing Business** - Fuelling businesses who want to innovate;
- (ii) **People** - Creating the most exciting place in the world for innovation talent, individuals and teams;
- (iii) **Institutions and Places** - Ensuring that research, development and innovation institutions serve the needs of businesses and places across the UK;
- (iv) **Missions and Technologies** - Stimulating innovation in technology to tackle societal and global challenges.

- 66 The £220 million UK Community Renewal Fund was launched by the Government as part of a number of funding measures, including the Levelling Up Fund in the Budget Statement 2021. The aim of the fund is to trial new approaches to support communities and the local economy and help areas prepare for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, due to launch in 2022.
- 67 On 8 November, Durham County Council received confirmation it was successful in its £800,000 bid for an Emerging Markets Innovation Accelerator, working in partnership with Durham University and CPI (Centre for Process Innovation). The project comprises four work packages designed to further develop an innovation culture in County Durham, focusing on opportunities in emerging markets and harnessing the capabilities of the three key innovation partners in the County – Durham University, CPI and Durham County Council (Business Durham).
- 68 The four work packages are:
- (a) Durham Advanced Materials Innovation Alliance (DAMIA);
  - (b) Innovation Acceleration Plans;
  - (c) Emerging Markets Animation;
  - (d) Apprenticeship Programme Development Fund.
- 69 The **Derwent Valley Partnership AAP** is financially supporting the ‘Fit for The Future’ project being delivered by the Do Business Network. This is an intensive programme of support for micro and small businesses in Derwent Valley delivered by local experts and comprising of 24 online business training workshops to enable businesses to:
- (a) plan for the future;
  - (b) improve risk management and efficiency;

- (c) improve adaptability;
- (d) win new customers and trade over a bigger area;
- (e) enter new markets;
- (f) enhance business resilience for the future;
- (g) build management confidence and impact.

This project will also deliver business resilience and continuity tests and action planning with 30 businesses, offer 1-1 advice to any small business in the Derwent Valley such as signposting and links to support and grants, facilitate peer to peer mentoring and expand a video training library for small businesses to access on-demand training.

- 70 Through **Teesdale AAP's (TAP)** Town and Village funding a targeted business improvement scheme will be offered to businesses throughout Teesdale. TAP is contributing £65,000 to the scheme, with a further £46,000 in match funding contributions coming from DCC and grant beneficiaries.
- 71 Durham County Council Regeneration Team has run a business improvement grant scheme for the last 7 years mainly in Barnard Castle and latterly also Middleton in Teesdale. In the last 3 years this has supported 12 new businesses, creating 10 new FTEs, and gaining match funding of £124,901. TAP funding will be used to enhance and expand the current Barnard Castle and Middleton in Teesdale Targeted Business Improvement Scheme to cover the smaller retail centres in Staindrop, Evenwood, Cockfield and Gainford. Typically grants are offered at a maximum contribution of 70% or a grant average figure which is set each year. Teesdale Business Improvement Grant Scheme will provide grants to local businesses to carry out capital works to vacant premises or to improve/develop existing business premises. The overriding aim of the scheme is to support new or existing businesses to improve premises or bring vacant premises back into use for retail/office or overnight accommodation uses. Works can include exterior improvements as well as internal works to lower and upper floors. The project will look to support local businesses in major employment sectors such as retail, tourism, and services.
- 72 **Bishop Auckland and Shildon (BASH) AAP**, supported by other AAPs funded the Employability, Upskilling & Discretionary Project. This project is delivered by Bishop Auckland College and provides funding support to individuals to help them overcome barriers and move closer to, or into employment, further training, or volunteering. The amount of funding that can be applied for is capped at £1,000 and funds available are:

- (a) Employability Skills Fund aimed at responding to specific training needs, where there is no mainstream funding available, for example, forklift truck training, tiling, plumbing and plastering, security training etc;
- (b) Upskilling Fund, aimed at responding to specific training needs, where there is no mainstream funding available to upskill and acquire skills/qualification to be able to change career, direction or gain additional work in a new sector;
- (c) Discretionary Fund aimed at removing barriers, for example, travel, childcare, resources that prevent clients from accessing training.

### **Case Study**

Ron was unemployed, after being made redundant, and had just relocated to the North East. He was determined to gain employment, but finances were an issue to complete relevant training to secure available jobs.

Ron said "Thankfully through the BASH funding, I was able to undertake forklift truck training, and secure relevant qualifications. I completed the training with Forklift Truck Academy, Seaham, and Scott Court and his team were brilliant and would highly recommend them, without hesitation. This training has assisted me tremendously in my current employment. I am very grateful, to say the least, for the assistance I have received. This included Bishop Auckland College, National Career Service, Funding Provider, Course Tutors etc. I'm very happy working for my employer and can actually see myself retiring there. Again, much appreciation for the assistance, support and funding provided."

### **People live long and independent lives**

- 73 The **County Durham Together Partnership (CDT)** met in November and invited updates from the number of workstreams actively progressing the work previously agreed. The co-production workstream is now progressing and there is a focus on rolling out varying levels of training initially so that partners understand how to work with residents

to ensure they help shape services and initiatives. Evaluation is also important for this area of work as it will be integrated into many other areas of the broader work. A key role of the workstream will be to look at DCC forward plans and those of partners to identify potential for co-production of these. This will be presented in more detail at the January meeting. An element that may also be co-produced is the 'Community Book', engaging with potential users of a digital solution for signposting to community and health information as to the current options and any gaps before developing any potential solution.

- 74 Another key area of the CDT work is around Connecting Communities with several different elements to this. A Link Workers Network for those who work with residents, patients and services users in the community has been developed and evaluation and engagement work are continuing, with Teesside University supporting on this.
- 75 Sam Allen has been appointed as Chief Executive of the Integrated Care Board for the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS). It is anticipated that she will take up the post at the end of January 2022 ahead of the ICS becoming a statutory organisation from April 2022.
- 76 As reported previously, the County Durham Care Partnership Executive (CDCPE) arrangements to further integrate health and social care service are formalised. As part of this, it has been agreed that a Forum will meet 2/3 times a year as an informal meeting of governing body lay members, ICS leads, senior Councillors and NHS Trust non-executives. The Forum will focus on the ICS and health inequalities across the County, which will feed into the CDCPE to influence the place-based integration work. The first Forum took place on 29 November where it was agreed that the focus of the Forum would be to have a joint voice for Durham, to communicate key messages and be an influencing Forum in relation to the integration of health and care. The next Forum is scheduled for March 2022. **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.
- 77 A Health and Wellbeing Framework for schools and education settings has been launched to develop 'healthy settings' and improve outcomes for children and young people, staff, and the education settings. This aligns into the 'starting well' and 'living well' priorities in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 78 **Great Aycliffe and Middridge (GAMP) AAP** supported the development of a new Sensory Room at St Mary's Primary School in Newton Aycliffe, facilitated outside the main school building to create a safe environment and a space for children to feel their needs are being

met through nurture and sensory support. Additionally, there will be a separate facility to make this easily accessible to the wider community, other schools and external users. This will provide a facility to the local community for parental groups, toddler groups, and parent/carers outreach support to cater for the needs and emotional wellbeing of individuals. The project will



St Mary's Sensory Room in Newton Aycliffe

help the emotional wellbeing for families and their children, having a sensory building provides an enriched learning environment and a place for children and families to access throughout the day.

- 79 **Mid Durham AAP** has supported the Handcrafted Care Leaver Support project specifically aimed at care leavers to support them during the lockdowns and help transition those young people who are struggling with a wide range of issues into a healthier lifestyle.

- 80 The project engaged with Care Leavers in the Mid-Durham area who lacked some basic living skills and confidence and ran a two weekly dedicated woodwork and cooking session at their Langley Moor hub. From the skills, training and self-esteem built by this project this helped care-leavers improve their mental health, enter employment and build self-sustaining lives.



Handcrafted Care Leaver Support staff

Since the lockdown began in March 2020, the project will have housed a minimum of 6 care leavers in a stable living environment to break the patterns of a chaotic lifestyle.

- 81 The Premier Foundation secured funding from the **4 Together AAP** to deliver a school holiday programme of multi-sport activity, to traditionally 'hard to engage' young people (5-12 years). The programme has provided a total of 20 days' worth of provision, during school summer holidays. Sessions were attended by 707 young people across the 20 days.

- 82 Young people took part in a range of activities such as soft archery, football, cricket, scooter-board games, dodgeball, and other multi-skill games. The programme worked with 10 local schools to target young people who would not normally have access to such activities due to their socio-economic status. All activities were developed and delivered to support children in a collaborative, community-focused environment via these themes: resilience, perseverance, having a 'Can do' attitude, try something new, make new friends, and respect each other. The activities had a positive impact on young people's physical and mental wellbeing following lack of opportunities during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown.
- 83 There are clear links between the quality of housing and the influence this has on a person's health and wellbeing, for example physical housing conditions such as cold and damp can affect health, as can factors such as accessibility.
- 84 **Chester-le-Street AAP** has provided funding to "Moving On" Durham, which provide transitional housing in local communities for young people who find themselves homeless. Its accompanying support programme is intended to enable each young person to live independently when their stay with the charity has finished. Support workers, part funded through the AAPs in the North of the County, help their clients to build up independent living skills whilst maintaining close contact to prevent social isolation.
- 85 Our **Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)** is rooted in local people, places and in action. We have a stable, creative and resilient sector, working effectively together and sharing resources, insight and support. County Durham is a great place to volunteer because of it. We have launched a 'Talking Heads' [video](#) to showcase our wide and varied voluntary and community sector and volunteering opportunities.
- 86 The **Better Together VCS Forum** held an online policy conference bringing together VCS leaders with public sector commissioners. This was an opportunity to hear some of the key asks from Health and Social Care, as well as show case examples of current work which is supporting vulnerable people in our communities and which adds value to the range of NHS and Local Authority care and support services. The aim was to explore connections and ways of working which can help the sector to engage effectively. Also, to identify what we need to be in place to make relationships between commissioning and operational delivery of community support, more responsive and targeted to where it is needed most.

## Connected communities

- 87 Anti-Social Behaviour is a key priority for the **Safe Durham Partnership** (SDP) and the Police and Crime Commissioner, and both are working together to review the way in which we deal with anti-social behaviour across the County including a strategic approach to set the direction for a new Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference to complement the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group and work across the Area Action Partnerships. A directory of diversionary services has been shared across the partnership so that partners are aware what is available in communities for children and young people in order to provide places to go and things to do for young people. The SDP continue to provide reports through to the **Safer Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** in relation to this issue.
- 88 **East Durham AAP** have supported Durham Constabulary with over £65,000 for the purchase of ANPR surveillance cameras giving police the opportunity of covering a number of avenues into East Durham not previously covered.
- 89 One specific area of anti-social behaviour included in the Safe Durham Partnership Plan is nuisance off-road motorcycles and quads. A Time Limited Action Plan Group has been established to address the issue and includes partners from a range of agencies including Durham Constabulary, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Housing providers, Durham County Council departments and many others. The key messages of the action plan are:
- (a) the improper use of motorbikes, mopeds and quads is illegal;
  - (b) they are a public nuisance;
  - (c) often linked to other crime and disorder issues;
  - (d) often cause damage and are uninsured;
  - (e) risk to public safety.
- 90 The action plan will be continually reviewed over its lifetime and the outcomes reported back to the Safe Durham Partnership once completed and fully assessed.
- 91 Durham Constabulary hosted virtual events as part of this year's National Hate Crime awareness week which took place from 9 to 16 October. National Hate Crime Awareness Week is a week of action to raise awareness of hate crime, to remember those we have lost and

support those who need our ongoing support. The events held included:

- (a) What happens when you report a hate crime?
- (b) The Criminal Justice System and how your experience then translates into an offence going through the various stages to court.
- (c) What support is available to victims of hate crime.

92 A cyber security event was held at New College Durham by members of the Safer Cyber Group (subgroup of Safe Durham Partnership) on Wednesday 17 November (digital safeguarding day as part of National Safeguarding Adults Week). Various sessions took place including Cyber Lego, password resilience and online safety. Feedback noted *“Fantastic event which was very informative and well received by all of the students present”*.



Students at a Cyber Lego event

93 **East Durham Rural Corridor (EDRC) AAP** supported its Youth Forum with a project that involves Cyber Harm Reduction Officers from Durham Constabulary working with young people to divert them away from cybercrime, advise the public on how to stay safe online and prevent it from happening. A high number of those that commit cyber offences are teenagers, so they work along the line of PREVENT to ensure that they are aware of cybercrime and divert them away from getting involved in it. Work is taking place with the existing EDRC AAP Youth Forum to help them learn about cybercrime, and to train them to be able to support others to learn about it.

94 The EDRC AAP Youth Forum had already developed a Facebook group 'Live, Listen, Speak Project' to allow relevant information to be circulated quickly and enable children and young people in the area to have continuous dialogue and have a say. Working with the Cyber Harm Reduction Officers has made sure that the online Youth Forum is safe and secure.

95 The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (a subgroup of the Safe Durham Partnership) delivered the 16 days of action against domestic abuse campaign started in November 2021 to support workplaces to be better equipped to acknowledge the signs that indicate it may be going on. The 16 days of action against domestic abuse campaign started on 25 November, the International Day for the

Elimination of Violence against Women, and ran until 10 December, Human Rights Day. Several online events took place which highlighted what multi agency partners and companies can do to aid their employees who endure domestic violence, to train those who witness it, and to protect staff, with the goal of securing safety.

- 96 The domestic abuse workplace champions programme was also relaunched during the 16 days to offer greater support to all its employees, regardless of age, gender and sexuality, as part of its commitment to support employee health, wellbeing and safety at work.

- 97 The Council commissions Harbour Support to help families and individuals affected by domestic abuse. Harbour Support Services offers advice, guidance and support to people across the county experiencing abuse, as well as those displaying abusive behaviour. As part of the 16 days campaign, Harbour has also worked with children across the county to produce artwork and poems which highlight the impact of domestic abuse. Some of the artwork was shared on social media during the campaign to help raise awareness of the issue and develop a better understanding of abuse among members of the public.



Children's artwork from the 16 days campaign

- 98 The 32<sup>nd</sup> County Durham Environment Awards, run by the **Environment and Climate Change Partnership (ECCP)**, were launched on 10 June with a litter pick at the entrance to Kynren, in Bishop Auckland. The categories for 2021 were climate change, community partnership, craftsmanship, greener business, natural environment, places and spaces, schools and colleges and volunteer groups. Entries were submitted throughout the Summer and the judging panel met in the Autumn to consider the applications. The panel shortlisted 35 entries as either category winners or highly commended entries. The winners will be announced at a virtual ceremony, which will be broadcast on the Council's You Tube channel, in early February 2022.
- 99 The ECCP has been successful in a joint bid to the European Union Cities Fund to support a project to 'green' underutilised car parks across the county, adding renewable energy and biodiversity features. The

Durham bid was the only successful UK application, one of 60 across Europe, and will receive €60,000 to support the project.

- 100 The **3 Towns AAP** has supported a number of environmental projects in its area to support a sense of civic pride and community spirit as well as support resident's health and wellbeing. This includes the Willing to Bloom project which includes a year-round "Welcome to Willington" display, rainbow of hope on the town green, healing and calm garden, midwinter fire feature and snowdrop path. The project links in with the local primary schools who will be involved in the planting.



Young people creating a Willing to Bloom display

- 101 The **County Durham Faith Network** which seeks to promote, and foster inter faith dialogue in an atmosphere of mutual respect and to help people from different faith, traditions and those with none, to engage with one another to increase mutual understanding, held an evening of virtual inter faith encounter in November to celebrate Inter Faith Week. Contributors from six different faiths addressed the topic of 'Human Flourishing: Living Well in Challenging Times'.
- 102 A new and refreshed **Armed Forces Covenant** has been signed by the Leader of the Council. This demonstrates our continuing commitment to ensuring that members of the Armed Forces Community are treated fairly and that no one is disadvantaged in accessing public services by their military service.
- 103 **The Armed Forces Forum** held a meeting hosted by 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Rifles in Bishop Auckland. The Forum heard about the development of a new Veterans Community Hub in Newton Aycliffe which brings together seven different organisations to support veterans in the community with their health and wellbeing.

## Conclusion

- 104 The impact of the coronavirus pandemic is set to remain for the foreseeable future. As we continue to follow Government guidance, we will work in partnership to ensure we do our collective best for our communities.

105 The County Durham Partnership, including our Safeguarding Boards, Better Together VCS Forum and our 14 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.

### **Background papers**

- None.

### **Other useful documents**

- None.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

None.

### **Finance**

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

### **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.