

Cabinet

15 June 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 Cabinet on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP). The report also includes updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.

### Executive summary

- 2 On 18 March the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced that County Durham is one of just four places to be shortlisted for **UK City of Culture 2025** out of the 20 locations that originally applied.
- 3 Although Durham has missed out on the title, the publicity surrounding the Durham 2025 campaign has helped strengthen its reputation as a place where creativity and innovation thrive.
- 4 At the end of January 2022, a wide-ranging consultation exercise, called the '**Big Econ-versation**' to gather views of residents, stakeholders and businesses on the development of a new County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy was launched. A large programme of consultation events took place, and the **Economic Partnership** is supporting this to encourage businesses and partner organisations to contribute their views to the consultation which closed on 22 April 2022.

- 5 During April / May an independent review commenced of the **'Community Engagement' services** offered by DCC, including the AAP structures, governance, and funding processes to ensure it is fit for purpose moving forward. The outcome of the review is expected in the Autumn.
- 6 **All 14 Area Action Partnerships (AAPs)** have consulted their communities on what their local priorities for the 2022/23 financial year should be via the Countywide 'AAP Priority Survey'.
- 7 Durham's allocation for the **Holiday Activities with Healthy Food** programme for 2022 is **£2,338,740**.
- 8 Durham County Council along with 32 other local authorities across the North East and Yorkshire have been identified as a pilot area by the Home Office and Counter Terrorism Policing for **Publicly Accessible Locations** management in relation to protecting people and places from a terrorist attack. This is a part of the Protect Duty, expected to be enacted in 2023.
- 9 A number of schemes have been developed by the Government to support **Ukrainian Refugees** and the Humanitarian support working group is leading our response.
- 10 The **Advice in County Durham (AiCD) Partnership** is supporting residents to deal with the range of cost of living rises by undertaking a webinar with a range of organisations that can support this.
- 11 Through the work of the AAPs the Council has allocated £59.5 million to **over 10,000 community-based projects**, leveraging in £69.7 million of external matched funding. Resulting in a funding return ratio of £1.29 for every £1 of DCC investment.

## **Recommendation**

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

## Background

- 13 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

- 14 The **County Durham Partnership** Board met in January and March.
- 15 The January meeting focused on the City of Culture bid and the Armed Forces Covenant which promoted the key principles of the covenant across the County Durham Partnership, which are:
- (a) no member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen
  - (b) in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved.
- 16 The March meeting brought the standard agenda item for the past 18 months of Covid-19 to a close with an update about the work that is taking place on transition and living with Covid-19 at a Northeast level as well as local arrangements.
- 17 The March meeting saw the first of a series of regular updates from Thematic Chairs to focus on a key area of their work for the County Durham Partnership. The first was from the Health and Wellbeing Board and focused on the Integrated Care System including the abolition of Clinical Commissioning Groups and what that means for County Durham.

## UK City of Culture 2025

- 18 On 18 March the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced that County Durham is one of just four places to be shortlisted for **UK City of Culture 2025** out of the 20 locations that originally applied.
- 19 Although Durham has missed out on the title, the publicity surrounding the Durham 2025 campaign has helped strengthen its reputation as a place where creativity and innovation thrive.

- 20 Partners in the bid, the Council, Durham University and Culture Durham are still committed to deliver on the ambitious plans within the bid, creating a county of culture that attracts tourists from across the UK and beyond, delivers thousands of new jobs and improves wellbeing.
- 21 As well as working with local and international artists and producers to create a spectacular programme, the partners will support communities to bring cultural regeneration to their neighbourhoods. This will ensure the whole county is connected and celebrated through art, sport, food and science.
- 22 Thousands of residents, businesses and creative practitioners were involved in the bid's development, contributing a range of ideas. This spirit of collaboration will also live on, with the bonds forged between cultural organisations during the journey stronger than ever before, and many new connections formed.
- 23 For the first time in the competition, County Durham as a runner up, will receive a grant of £125,000 to support the development of key elements in the bid.

## **Review of Community Engagement**

- 24 An independent review is taking place to review the County Council's community engagement processes. The review will focus on assessing our current structures and governance with a view to ensuring the Council has a community engagement mechanism that provides support for our communities in line with the Council's future vision and priorities and also reflects the needs of the wider County Durham Partnership.
- 25 It is anticipated that the initial review findings will be received in Autumn 2022.

## **AAP priority survey**

- 26 **All 14 Area Action Partnerships (AAPs)** have consulted their communities on what their local priorities for the 2022/23 financial year should be via the Countywide 'AAP Priority Survey'.
- 27 Residents have been asked if anything has changed for them where they live, work, go to school or even volunteer, and have been asked once again to help steer the AAPs' work. AAPs have additional funding to invest in towns and villages and asked what, if anything, will make life in their town or village better.
- 28 The survey took place with 2,490 responses received, numbers for each AAP are as follows: Teesdale AAP (521), East Durham AAP (226),

Durham AAP (224), Weardale AAP (199), East Durham Rural Corridor AAP (191), Great Aycliffe and Middridge Partnership (190), Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP (142), Stanley AAP (130), Derwent Valley AAP (128), 3 Towns Partnership (114), 4 Together Partnership (112), Chester-le-Street and District AAP (99), Mid Durham (84) Spennymoor (69).

- 29 An electronic survey method was primarily used to capture views; however, individual AAPs used an array of methods to make the survey as accessible as possible. The survey was promoted countywide, by each individual AAP, through their Facebook pages, e-bulletins, and invitations to all existing AAP Forum members. AAP staff delivered paper-based versions of the survey to key local groups and also attended various local events to promote the survey. Key partner organisations and Elected Members were also engaged, on a countywide basis, to help promote the survey. Partners included: Business Durham, Durham Community Action, Countywide Youth Forum and Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services (UTASS).
- 30 Countywide the results of the survey highlighted that:
- (a) 81.5% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed to keep Community Recovery as a priority for AAPs;
  - (b) 7.4 % disagreed with keeping Community Recovery as a priority for AAPs;
  - (c) 11.1 % % neither agreed nor disagreed with keeping Community Recovery as a priority for AAPs.
- 31 194 people asked to join the forum of their local AAP.

### **10,000 AAP projects**

- 32 Through the work of the AAPs the Council has allocated £59.5 million to over 10,000 community-based projects, leveraging in £69.7 million of external matched funding. Resulting in a funding return ratio of £1.29 for every £1 of DCC investment.

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

- 33 At the end of 2021, the Government announced a further investment of over £200 million per year over the next three financial years for the holiday activities and food programme (HAF) which follows the successful roll out of the programme across England in 2021.
- 34 Durham's allocation for the **Holiday Activities with Healthy Food** programme for 2022 is **£2,338,740**.

- 35 A delivery plan has been submitted to DfE outlining plans for Durham's Fun and Food programme in 2022, and work continues to further develop Durham's Delivery model.
- 36 During 2021, **381** Fun and Food projects were allocated funding for the Easter (90), Summer (129) and Christmas (162) holidays through the funding from the DfE, **engaging 32,423 Children and Young People including 2355 with additional needs.**
- 37 The DfE funding does not include half term holidays, however additional funding was secured from Durham County Council to provide enriching activities and experiences with healthy food for the May and October 2021 and February 2022 holidays, funding 181 different projects in total.
- 38 A dedicated web page has been set up for the project [www.durham.gov.uk/funandfood](http://www.durham.gov.uk/funandfood) along with a Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/funandfoodcountydurham/>. Videos of previous activities can be viewed at [Videos of previous activities - Durham County Council](#)

## Humanitarian Support

- 39 A number of schemes have been developed by the Government to support Ukrainian Refugees:
- (a) Sponsorship Scheme – Homes for Ukraine Scheme:
    - (i) People asked to offer Ukrainians a rent-free space in their home or a separate residence for at least six months. Each household housing a refugee will be offered £350 a month, tax-free, for up to 12 months;
  - (b) Ukrainian Family Visa Scheme:
    - (i) Family members of British nationals, UK settled persons and certain others to come to or stay in the UK;
  - (c) Supporting UK based Ukrainians to remain in the UK:
    - (i) Ukrainians already in the UK with a visa will be able to extend their stay by extending their visa or switching to another immigration route, where eligible, even if their visa does not normally allow them to do so.
- 40 The Humanitarian support working group is tasked with working on key issues as follows:
- (a) Translation services

- (b) Accommodation inspections
- (c) Wrap around support
- (d) Safeguarding
- (e) Sponsorship connection
- (f) Benefits
- (g) Language support
- (h) Education
- (i) Health care
- (j) Communications.

41 Over 130 people have currently put themselves forward for the sponsorship scheme and work is taking place to support both the sponsor and the refugees coming to County Durham.

42 The government has informed all local authority areas, including Durham, that they will be part of a wider dispersal scheme for asylum seekers across the country. To support this scheme the Home Office has committed to undertake a new burdens assessment to better understand the costs associated with asylum dispersal.

### **Cost of living rises**

43 The **Advice in County Durham (AiCD) Partnership** is supporting residents to deal with the range of cost of living rises by undertaking a webinar with a range of organisations that can support this.

44 Due to the increase in fuel prices and other financial increases to households, the **Advice in County Durham (AiCD) Partnership** hosted a “Cost of Living” webinar for AICD members in April 2022.

45 The webinar brought key partners together to demonstrate how collaboratively those providers can support with these increased costs and to give money saving tips to individuals and families who need advice on a range of issues:

- (a) benefits;
- (b) energy bills;
- (c) employment;
- (d) housing;

- (e) debt management;
  - (f) support for those who are in fuel poverty.
- 46 The Partnership has already had a range of successful interventions that have underpinned its work to establish a coordinated referral approach in the county to ensure that there is 'no wrong door' for anyone seeking advice support. These have included the establishment of an online referral portal that supports clients to access services but also brings AiCD members together regularly to share information and best practice, improve the quality of services offered, and undertake training together.
- 47 The Partnership is also in the early stages of commissioning a Network Survey to partners across the County which is being led by Durham Community Action on behalf of the Advice Partnership. This survey will look at:
- (a) gaps in advice services;
  - (b) digital capacity and provision;
  - (c) training requirements;
  - (d) network expectations and needs.
- 48 This piece of work will form the development of the membership survey tool to ensure it provides the right information to enable AiCD to rescope or reshape the support it provides to the advice sector in County Durham and facilitates the response to the economic and social pressures it faces, particularly as we learn to live safely with Covid-19.

## **Covid-19**

- 49 The Government published its Living with Covid-19 Guidance in April and moved to a position of managing Covid-19 like other respiratory illnesses.
- 50 The **Health and Wellbeing Board** received an update of the LA7/North East Living with Covid-19 plan which has been developed with key objectives as follows, delivered through five workstreams: settings, governance, oversight and policy, interdependencies for service response, funding, escalation and surge response:
- (a) provide strategic level co-ordination of the transitional arrangements for our response as it de-escalates into a 'Living Safely with Covid-19' approach;

- (b) embed the Covid-19 response into the wider Health Protection System;
- (c) inform wider system planning and response;
- (d) take with us the principles and goals in the Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP);
- (e) identify lessons learned and retain local expertise, good practice and stronger collaborative relationships;
- (f) build on the strengthened relationship with regional colleagues UK Health Security Agency Health Protection Team and effective regional processes;
- (g) align to regional LA7 programme of work to live safely with Covid-19.

51 **Spennymoor AAP** has provided funding to the Saint Pauls Centre to operate the Moving On project. The initiative is designed to support vulnerable people who have been isolating during the Covid-19 pandemic to start attending a range of activities to reduce social isolation and enable more social interaction to improve individuals' mental health and wellbeing. A range of monthly events have been developed to support this objective which include:

- (a) organising an exhibition of art and photography work;
- (b) games/film afternoons which will encourage people away from the support group setting by helping them to move forward into some form of normality, through building their confidence and self-esteem by participating in group activities;
- (c) bereavement support – research has shown that people who have suffered a bereavement of a close friend or family member during the pandemic, need additional support. A new group is being established with support from local health practitioners in Spennymoor to provide additional support to individuals who have been affected by a bereavement;
- (d) Supper Club – will bring people together to enjoy a meal and a local speaker will also attend these sessions.

## Vision 2035: More and better jobs

52 The **Economic Partnership** has supported a wide-ranging consultation exercise, called the 'Big Econ-versation' to gather views of residents, stakeholders and businesses on the development of a new County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy. Between January and April 2022, a large programme of over 80 consultation events for the public, businesses and partner organisations to contribute their views were attended by over 1,500 people. Survey responses included 443 from young people and 93 from businesses. These will now be analysed and used to inform the next stage of the development of the strategy.



53 A **Faith Focus Group** with representatives of different faith communities took part in a faith focus group as part of the big [Econ-versation](#). They considered the question of what an inclusive economy means and highlighted the importance of ensuring fairness, equality, social justice, and balancing growth with sustainability. A strong case was made for encouraging organisations and businesses to become accredited [real living wage](#) employers to increase job retention and enable employees to contribute more to the local economy thus making it more inclusive and sustainable.

54 Delivery of the **Towns and Villages programme** is currently accelerating with significant activity across all investment themes. Enquiries for support from retail businesses continue to rise with 192 enquiries for retail business support received by the Community Economic Development team during 2021/22. This in turn led to 19 businesses receiving building grant support, returning eight properties into productive use and supporting the creation of 39 FTE jobs. Property reuse applications remain strong, while vulnerable buildings remain a focus across the County with works to demolish the former Trust Building at Horden undertaken during quarter 1 2022/23. £625,000 has been spent to date on minor improvements to Neighbourhood Retail Parades to date with 38 areas scoped for potential improvements.

55 Repurposing property to meet current and emerging needs continues with three schemes currently being progressed to create new residential accommodation units at Shildon, Coundon Grange and Chester le Street, while work is ongoing with AAPs and Durham Community Action

to identify community facilities requiring support in order to alter their service offer to local communities as part of the Community Resilience project.

- 56 The Towns and Villages programme also continues to address opportunities to improve open spaces through the continuation of Enhanced Environmental Maintenance programmes in settlements including Peterlee, Coundon and Tudhoe. A significant feature of the last consultation round, undertaken through the AAPs, was a focus on creating more walking and cycling opportunities within the County, including establishing links between residential and town centre areas and the established walking and cycling network. As a result, work has now commenced on the design and delivery of a £3.75 million walking and cycling investment programme which will see new routes brought forward, improvements to existing routes and some feasibility work for new stretches of connections.
- 57 At a local level, the allocation of Towns and Villages funding to each AAP has led to the formation of Task and Finish groups under all 14 AAPs with a significant number of new project opportunities being identified. These will be explored for funding not only under the current AAP Towns and Village funding but also through a closer alignment with monies available through s106 planning obligations or as schemes which may fit under other emerging funding opportunities.
- 58 **Chester-le-Street AAP** has funded the Town Centre Marketing Project, designed to support Chester-le-Street town centre retailers as they recover from the pandemic. This project comprises of different elements:
- (a) a new town centre map and notice board;
  - (b) further support for the shop Chester-le-Street campaign;
  - (c) further support for the roll out of ROAM (digital tool which can be used by local businesses to promote offers and events);
  - (d) a selfie wall for the town.
- 59 The town map will depict landmarks rather than businesses and will be professionally designed. It will be A2 for display in the notice board and could also be reproduced in smaller sizes to hand out.
- 60 **4 Together AAP** supported REACH (The Cornforth Partnership) to provide opportunities for individuals to access structured mentoring



support to aid them to build financial resilience, upskill, re-train and move closer to the employment market. Examples of how individuals have been supported include:

- (a) 4 participants have completed and achieved their Level 2 Working as a Door Supervisor Qualification and received their licences;
- (b) 5 participants have gained employment, 3 from completing their Security Industry Authority qualifications and obtaining their licences, and 2 in Amazon Bowburn, one of which has been given a permanent contract;
- (c) 1 participant completed their Level 2 Food Safety Qualification online. She had never used a computer before but with the support from staff managed to complete and achieve this;
- (d) 4 new participants with various support including job search, general information, advice and guidance, housing and benefit advice;
- (e) 1 Participant after helping him with moving after a relationship breakdown has moved into further education in engineering. He was also supported with household items.

61 **Stanley AAP** are supporting STEAM Ahead CIC with funding to deliver a Supporting Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) through a child-centric Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM) activities project. This six-week project, working in conjunction with a local wellbeing charity and chartered child psychologist will support children to improve their mental health and wellbeing, through the delivery of skills-focused activities within the area of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM). The activities support children to become upskilled in considering potential careers within the Science and Technology sector, as well as improving their own skills to be the best version of themselves possible. Once successfully complete, the evidence of impact from the pilot scheme will be used to roll this out across the county into local schools, improving the support offer to children locally.

- 62 At the **Economic Partnership** meeting in March 2022, the Chair of the **Environment and Climate Change Partnership** attended for a presentation and discussion about how the two partnerships can work together to promote growth of the green economy and business participation in the environmental agenda.



- 63 A number of areas of collaboration were discussed including the development of a practical toolkit for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), opportunities for knowledge transfer from larger businesses to small companies, promotion of the Business Energy Efficiency Programme (BEEP) programme, building of capacity for future 'green' market opportunities and designing in environmental goals to mainstream business support. A small group has been convened to progress this work.
- 64 During February 2022, the Government provided pre-launch guidance for the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)**. The guidance confirms that all areas of the UK will receive an allocation via a funding formula rather than a competition, and local authorities will lead the management of the funds in their areas. The guidance outlines a key role for partners and stakeholders to work with local authorities to develop a local Investment Plan which will form the basis for the commissioning of UKSPF activities. The first meeting of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund subgroup took place on 22 April and membership consisted of Board member organisations', specialists in external funding, and will be used as the technical group to support the **Economic Partnership**. County Durham received £30.8 million from the UKSPF and £2.8 million Multiply which needs to be spent as part of a three-year plan in the following priority areas:
- (a) communities and place;
  - (b) supporting local businesses;
  - (c) people and skills.
- 65 A Local Investment Plan needs to be submitted by between 30 June and 1 August with an anticipated date for first Investment Plans to be approved in October 2022.
- 66 Previously, County Durham as a Transition Region. had a ring-fenced allocation of €156 million (£121.7 million) for EU funding for the 2014-2020 programme.

67 Consultation will be undertaken with key stakeholders and other existing consultation will also be used to help in developing the offers including the Big Econ-versation. Cross border collaboration and opportunities are also to be considered as part of this. The next stages for the group were agreed to form themed technical groups with members that understand funding based on subject matters:

- (a) community and place;
- (b) creating jobs and networks;
- (c) innovation;
- (d) town centre footfall and markets;
- (e) people and skills.

68 Each group will look at investment priorities using an evidenced based approach and take into account funding from elsewhere as well as balancing innovation with what we know already works.

69 In partnership with Spennymoor AAP, **Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP** has funded the South Durham Enterprise Agency to deliver Pandemic Business Support Grant for new and existing businesses in the Bishop Auckland and Shildon and Spennymoor areas. The funding will match Community Led Local Development funding which without AAP intervention would have been lost.



Supporting business recovery following the pandemic

70 The project has created a small business Pandemic Recovery/ Restart Grant aimed at SMEs located in, and residents of the Bishop Auckland and Shildon and Spennymoor AAP areas. The grant supports businesses to recover, grow or sustain their operations and will be eligible for capital and revenue purchases. SMEs will be located in (or locating in) the AAP areas and be able to demonstrate a clear adverse effect on their business caused by the pandemic or changes in market behaviour or a clear opportunity to grow, change or pivot as a result of the same.

- 71 Individuals seeking to start small businesses will be supported with the availability of a capital and revenue grant. Programmes funded elsewhere will support the individual with a business plan and appropriate start-up support, leaving the grant fund to help the individual raise the necessary start-up capital for their venture.
- 72 The project encourages and supports sustainable businesses and sustainable business ideas. Net zero, sustainability issues and environmental stewardship will be encouraged within the support and the project will be fully committed to net-zero.
- 73 **East Durham AAP** have supported East Durham Business Service to support fledgling businesses that may have struggled as a result of the pandemic or returning to normal function afterwards. A variety of businesses have come forward for this support including a local community radio venture.
- 74 Our **Armed Forces Forum**, which brings together public sector partners with representatives of the military and charities supporting veterans, met in March. They heard from the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) which is the official provider of resettlement to the Ministry of Defence offering a comprehensive package of support to service leavers to help them make the transition into employment. Work is underway to look at how the CTP can develop better links with the council to bolster the success rate of those who apply for jobs using our guaranteed interview scheme for veterans. Links have also been established with Building Heroes to offer veterans work experience taster sessions, apprenticeships, employment support, and links to contractors of major developments across the county for onsite training and potential employment.

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

- 75 Following the success of the virtual County Durham Care Partnership Executive (CDCPE) Forum on 29 November, the next meetings have been arranged for 20 June 2022, to facilitate discussions ahead of the Integrated Care System (ICS) implementation in July, and 29 November 2022, to facilitate timely discussions around winter planning / preparedness.
- 76 Plans are progressing regionally for the Integrated Care System/Integrated Care Board, and a development session took place on 15 March 2022 with **Health and Wellbeing Board** members, where Dr Neil O'Brien outlined the developing picture and presented the operating framework. Feedback from the session was fed into the ICS programme board's survey to ensure Durham's view is represented and can influence the next stage of development of the ICS at a place based

level, with strong views expressed that County Durham is not disadvantaged in the new system, that elected member engagement is extended to the sub-regional level and we ensure the future system takes account of our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The new Chief Executive for the ICB attended the Health and Wellbeing Board on 11 May to discuss her vision for the area as well as answer questions relating specifically to County Durham and our aspirations.

77 The **VCS Better Together Forum** which brings together senior leaders of countywide and specialist VCS organisations continue to meet on a regular basis to share best practice and look for opportunities to collaborate. A key focus is looking at how VCS organisations can play their part in the new Integrated Care System (ICS) and being realistic about expectations for both commissioners and providers.

78 Smoking is the single largest cause of preventable deaths and one of the largest causes of health inequalities, and a range of tobacco control work continues to support the ambition to reduce smoking prevalence across County Durham to 5% or less by 2025 (2030 for pregnant smokers, manual groups and those with mental health issues).

79 The **Health and Wellbeing Board** received a Smoking update in January 2022, which was followed in March by a presentation from FRESH asking ‘can smoking really end?’ Ten high impact actions for the local authority were presented, as well as some low-cost policy intervention suggestions to de-normalise smoking. It is felt that smoking can be addressed, however bold action will be needed. On the back of the presentations, the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board wrote to local MPs to lobby for their support for a “tobacco levy” on manufacturers to put back into the health and care system.



80 The current Children and Young People’s Strategy 2019-2022 comes to an end this year and is due for review. Coproduction sessions have taken place with children, young people, parents and carers to develop a new Children and Young People’s Strategy. The “Growing Up in County Durham” Strategy will be based on what is important to those who use and need support from services.

81 **East Durham Rural Corridor AAP** supported a project providing sports packages for teenagers at Trimdon Village Hall, which engaged with teenagers, delivering sports equipment to each household and having

access to larger sports equipment so that parents and teenagers could interact with each other more within Trimdon Village and Trimdon Grange. Each child received their own sports and healthy food pack.

82 This project engaged with over 50 individuals, supported 2 community facilities and 4 volunteers were involved in the project.

83 From 1 April 2022 the Leisure Centre discount rates already available to serving personnel and reservists was extended to include veterans of all ages. Our Public Health team are currently carrying out a Health Needs Assessment for Veterans in County Durham. We know from national research that whilst people in the military are very active it can often be a challenge to maintain physical activity on leaving the armed forces. Extending the discounts to veterans is not only an expression of our **support for the Armed Forces community** but will also encourage healthy lifestyles and thus help reduce health inequalities.

84 **Durham AAP** has supported Durham Action on Single Housing (DASH), a local organisation that help vulnerable people with housing issues. With a grant from the AAP, they have been able to provide practical workshops for their vulnerable women's group. These have proven to be very beneficial giving the young women new experiences and skills.



Enjoying a boxing session with support from DASH

The AAP are also supporting DASH to employ a volunteer coordinator, a new post that will help DASH deliver their vital work.

85 The Health and Wellbeing Board received an update on the **Ageing Well Health Needs Assessment**, which is being undertaken and focuses on people aged 50+, outlining how public health prevention can be used to help people age well in a healthy way. The Health Needs Assessment will make recommendations for this age group, which will be used to inform the Ageing Well Strategy.

86 **Derwent Valley AAP** is working with MHA Communities, a community-based organisation who provide services to enable older people to live well in later life and reduce social isolation. The project will support older people in accessing services through digital inclusion. In partnership with local social enterprise group, Digital Voice, the project

will deliver a series of workshops in group settings for residents to work on and each produce a “Digital Lifebook”. A Lifebook is a ten-week programme that allows older people to tell their life stories using ipads, music, photographs and memories. The project will enable members to grow in their digital confidence and keep connected through MHA’s weekly online activity group, titled ‘The Geordie Variety Show’, which was born out of the pandemic as a way of keeping connected and providing an array of activities.

- 87 The project aims to address social isolation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and improve wellbeing by organising creative, social digital storytelling workshops around life stories among peers. The project will also boost participants’ digital skills to make them more empowered, independent and resilient, and will be an inroad for some to start going online independently.

- 88 **Mid Durham AAP** has funded the Willowburn Hospice Alternative Therapy project to employ a Complementary Therapist two days per week at Willow Burn Hospice for day service clients and in-patients so that they can deliver therapies to enhance and develop the treatment experience for patients. National research by Kings College London found that good pain and symptom control is one of the issues that is most important to patients with an untreatable palliative diagnosis, and this is what they aim to achieve.



Staff from the Willowburn Hospice Alternative Therapy Project in their Christmas jumpers

- 89 It is well documented by health research organisations (e.g., Mind, Cancer Research UK, Macmillan, Marie Curie etc) that complementary therapies are beneficial in helping with depression, anxiety and stress, all conditions which are associated with living with a life limiting illness. It is also reported by patients, that following complementary therapy, they have seen the intensity of physical symptoms reduced. Willowburn did not provide these services routinely, however, they now have a volunteer reiki therapist and the patients' feedback shows great positivity for this service.
- 90 As well as meeting a need for patients, they have identified a gap in the current nurses and carers' skills. Training for the staff from a

complementary therapist would develop their skills and ensure the hospice always has a level of ability to deliver some kind of complementary treatments.

## **Connected communities**

- 91 Anti-social behaviour is a key priority for the **Safe Durham Partnership**. The multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Strategic Group (a subgroup of Safe Durham Partnership) has been reinstated to address the increasing incidents/perceptions of anti-social behaviour across the County. The group will provide leadership, oversight and co-ordinate the response to anti-social behaviour.
- 92 To support this work, funding has been obtained via the AAPs Countywide funding pot to run the Fearless Social Media campaign which is a branch of Crime Stoppers focussing on engaging young people and encouraging anonymous reporting of crime and criminal activity. Fearless resources have been delivered by Police Community Support Officer's in early February and an invite to schools to attend a virtual workshop to promote the use of the resources in schools and also inform of Fearless Workers funded through AAPs who will be able to support schools deliver workshops to young people.
- 93 Durham County Council along with 32 other local authorities across the North East and Yorkshire has been identified as a pilot area by the Home Office and Counter Terrorism Policing for Publicly Accessible Locations/Zones management in relation to protecting people and places from a terrorist attack, which is a part of the Protect Duty expected to be enacted in 2023.
- 94 The Home Office, Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and Counter Terrorism Policing have identified the pilot will start from 1 April and will involve identifying, risk assessing venues and locations and agreeing any actions required in order to stop or mitigate publicly accessing locations across the County from being subject to a terrorist attack.
- 95 Concerns have been expressed to the Home Office about the scale of this work for County Durham without any additional resources however a Protect and Prepare Group will be set up to take forward this work with key partners involved, for example, the police and university.
- 96 The **Horden Together Project** was launched in September 2021 and brings together a range of partners including Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary, County Durham & Darlington Fire Service, Police and Crime Commissioner, Horden Parish Council, East Durham Trust and many others to work together with the community and address the needs of residents of the County Durham village and their

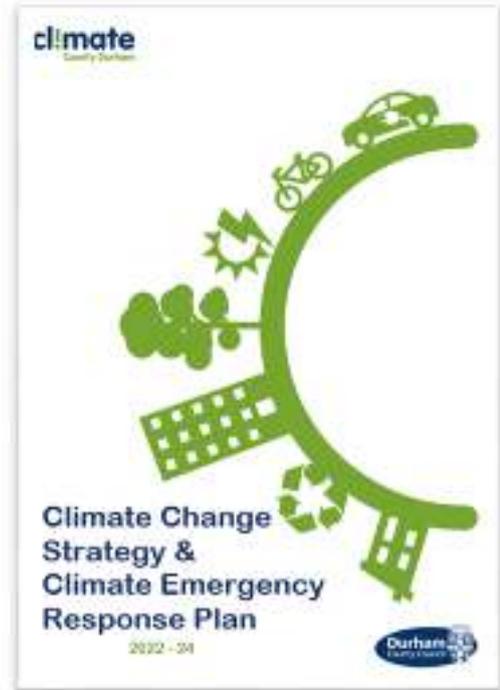
priorities. This links into the emerging **County Durham Together** approach to place-based working.

- 97 Over the next three years, the project team, based in a neighbourhood hub, within Horden village will combine efforts to tackle issues such as crime, anti-social behaviour, housing and environmental problems in the village.
- 98 The work of the partnership will complement ongoing regeneration work in the area and support the long-term aspirations of the Horden Masterplan. The masterplan, which was created in 2019, looks to address issues with poor housing, the environment and access to amenities in the village, with a particular focus on the part of the village known locally as the 'numbered streets'.
- 99 Since the launch, partners have been actively working with the local community to identify emerging issues and take action to solve the problems that people say most affect their daily lives. This community engagement has resulted in some positive interventions around the locality particularly in relation to the 'Making Every Adult Matter' (MEAM) Initiative where we are experiencing high demand for support services. In the first six months of the project, there have been over 100 referrals as part of the 'Making Every Adult Matter' (MEAM) Initiative which aims to provide support and better access to services for individuals within the area who are facing multiple disadvantages.
- 100 In addition, the Horden Together project has been chosen as a pilot place under the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities - Partnerships for People and Place programme. £100,000 of funding has been received to further develop 'Theory of Change' proposals which will identify new ways of working across local and central government to deliver innovative, locally led solutions to key challenges that communities face.



101 The **Environment and Climate Change Partnership (ECCP)** adopted the new ECCP Plan 2022-25 at its meeting in March 2022. The plan's strategic objectives are to address the climate change and ecological emergency challenges as they apply to County Durham and promote engagement and activity in our communities to improve sustainability and health and wellbeing across the county. The plan focuses on four strategic priorities:

- (a) developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for County Durham;
- (b) actioning the partnership elements of the new countywide Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP2);
- (c) engaging with communities to promote environmental action across County Durham;
- (d) increase cross thematic partnership collaboration with the Economic Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board.



102 The **Environment and Climate Change Partnership's** Ecological Emergency workstream has started to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for County Durham. This is a requirement of the Environment Act 2021, which became law in November last year. Whilst waiting for detailed guidance from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) following the evaluation of the results from the five pilot areas, partners have begun to prepare for the development of the strategy. Two subgroups have been set up to:

- (a) gather data and evidence to support the development of a Local Habitat Map for the LNRS;
- (b) draft material towards the statement of biodiversity priorities.

103 Durham County Council has been accepted by the Environment Secretary as the 'responsible authority' to lead on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

- 104 The Local Councils Working Group discussed the issues Climate Change and Ecology Challenges. The **County Durham Association of Local Councils** has expressed a desire to sign the Climate Change Pledge which was welcomed. This will be arranged for later this year. The County Durham Association of Local Councils is also encouraging its members to consider the sustainable management of green spaces and the group discussed the declaration of an Ecological Emergency in the county which has recently been adopted by Cabinet. Future presentations will be made to the Local Councils Working Group on the countywide Climate Emergency Response Plan and the Ecological Emergency, and it was agreed that these are key areas where both tiers of local authority can work closely together.
- 105 To keep our communities connected and support environmental sustainability for our food, **3 Towns AAP** have supported Sunnyside Community Association to set up a community Pantry for the village of Sunnyside and opening of a community café to provide not only food but also a social opportunity for those in the village. Sunnyside hilltop village does not have a shop, café or take-away and only has a limited bus service, creating challenges for some, particularly older people.
- 106 The community pantry, stocking a wide range of food items has been set up by converting storage space into a food pantry with shelves, freezer and fridge. Sunnyside Community Shop opened on 10 March 2022.
- 107 The organisation has become a member of Fareshare UK with weekly food deliveries and Fareshare go to Tesco's at Dragonville to collect food surplus 3 times a week, with a similar arrangement with Greggs.
- 108 Local residents are now able to fill a basket with food for a £1 donation and food orders can be delivered to residents who are unable to leave the home.
- 109 The project will save food from landfill, engage, and bring the community together for additional activities, and tackle food poverty whilst providing choice and reducing stigma for the increasing number of local people who now rely on foodbank deliveries to feed themselves and their families.
- 110 The community café has been serving lunches twice a week enabling people of all ages to come together for a nutritious cooked meal, chat, shop at the pantry and engage in other community activities if they wish. The café is an enormous success, and they are now excited to use food collections to maintain the café.

- 111 Funding also paid for a baking/cooking tutor, 3 hours a week and several baking classes have already ran with 3 groups in the community. It now has demand for parent/carer and child baking classes.
- 112 The **Bread-and-Butter Thing** is a food surplus redistribution charity offering an affordable food service which helps to make life more affordable for people on a low income, builds stronger communities and reduces food waste using an innovative and self-sustaining approach to the redistribution of surplus food and non-food items.
- 113 Its long-term aim is to address the premiums that people in poverty pay for everyday essentials simply because of their personal circumstances. It works in collaboration with local partners and national networks to create bespoke packages of support for our local communities - offering advice and practical solutions for dealing with debt, managing utilities, accessing mental health support and available grants and funding.
- 114 Volunteers are at the heart of the operation, with almost 200 volunteers working with it each week. This has been recognised formally by a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.
- 115 **Teesdale AAP**, provided Teesdale Sailing Club with funding along with match funding from the Council's BEEP team which will help the club provide off grid solar power to the Clubhouse. Teesdale Sailing Club is based at Grassholme Reservoir and the Clubhouse is an old stone building which was used by the construction workers of the reservoir dam wall many years ago. The facility is a well-used resource for the Dales with local groups and tourists regularly participating in water sport activities.
- 116 Junction 7 secured funding through **Great Aycliffe and Middridge AAP** to complete renovations to their garden area, with essential garden refurbishment works and providing equipment and furniture to make the space more user friendly.
- 117 Enhancing the space has provided a great place for the community to come together, to share and learn new skills, whilst also growing fresh local produce. The garden is helping to provide a multitude of therapeutic and wellbeing benefits to all residents and user groups. Junction 7 has also received support from the local Veterans Hub which made contact and offered support from its members with various skills such as carpentry, joinery and gardening, for some of the 'trickier' jobs in the garden.

- 118 Following the success of the Through Soldiers' Eyes Exhibition held last Autumn which attracted nearly 9,000 visitors, our Community Arts Team has developed an 'Art of Wellbeing' legacy programme with support from both Covid Outbreak Management Fund and the AAPs. The programme provides a range of creative engagement activities to support the transition and integration into civilian life for veterans and their families and provide engagement for family members when partners are deployed. Feedback received has included: "For me it has opened doorways to recovery and a hoped-for better life" and "it gave me a purpose and a new beginning . . . raised my sense of self-worth".
- 119 A number of AAPs have focused on community resilience work, particularly in response to recent storm events. Storm Arwen left a majority of Weardale residents without a permanent electricity supply for 10 days and to compound the lack of electricity to resident homes, communication was affected as mobile phone masts were down, with British Telecom lines and internet where also interrupted.
- 120 To support community resilience, **Weardale AAP** is currently working with four hamlets to work up a localised resilience plan, working with our Civil Contingencies Unit and Environment Agency colleagues. Working holistically and at the pace of the group, a training course has been developed working is also ongoing in engaging Village Hall committees to look at building resilience.
- 121 Partners from the **Environment and Climate Change Partnership's** Place, Health and Community workstream supported DCC to run a non-designated heritage assets project. These heritage assets are buildings, archaeological sites, street furniture, maritime, landscapes, monuments etc. that have heritage value but are not nationally designated. The group encouraged the people of County Durham to identify and tell the council what nationally unrecognised heritage was important to them, needed protecting and which they value most for inclusion on list. DCC has received £60,000 in funding to deliver the project.

**EUSTON STATION GATES SHILDON**



A non-designated heritage asset in Shildon

- 122 The North East Community Forest Partnership, which works with the **Environment and Climate Change Partnership's** Ecological Emergency workstream has secured £480,000 from Defra's Nature for

Climate Fund. This will enable thousands of trees to be planted across County Durham. A Forest Team, hosted by Newcastle City Council, will deliver the planting working with local partners. In addition, an extra £6,000 of funding from the Trees for Climate fund has been received to support the establishment of 10 hectares of woodland under the Durham Woodland Creation programme to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June.

- 123 A partnership made up of members from the **Environment and Climate Change Partnership's** Ecological Emergency workstream, DCC's Low Carbon Team and Durham Community Action (DCA), along with representatives of the local community in Horden, the East Durham Trust and East Durham Business Services supported a scoping study into the minewater heat at Horden to see if it could be used as a renewable heat source.



The land in Horden being investigated as a site to generate minewater renewable heat

- 124 Working with the help of a specialist consultancy, District Eating, DCA had a brief to see if it was viable to use the heat generated as an energy source for community food growing in greenhouses. It discovered that there is a substantial body of usable heat at Horden, likely to be about 1.36 MW. An action group has been formed to take the work forward.

## Conclusion

- 125 As we adapt and learn to live safely with Covid-19 we will protect and enable our communities at greatest risk from Covid-19 and its consequences to live a healthy and fulfilled life. We will continue to work in partnership to enable the recovery and further progress of education, economic activity and social connectivity as well as strengthening system-wide prevention and preparedness for future waves and learn the lessons of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 126 Our relationships with other agencies and with our communities are built on a robust foundation and will continue to provide a basis for improving outcomes for our local people through this difficult time.

## 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.