



# Constitution

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## **Part 1 - Summary and Explanation**

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## Aims of the Council

County Durham is a large county with a wide range of settlements and landscapes. The Council is made up of an elected assembly of 126 councillors accountable to over 500,000 people in County Durham and is responsible for:

- providing a wide range of public services to the people of County Durham;
- representing and promoting the interests of County Durham when dealing with regional, national and international affairs;
- Helping local people to look after their own affairs and to decide how and where money is best spent in their area.

The County Durham vision is structured around three strategic ambitions:

- **More and better jobs** - This ambition has a wide-ranging focus which includes not only development of the economy and creating jobs, but also working with young people and adults to help them into work, through good quality education and training.
- **Long and independent lives** – The ambitions for longer and independent lives focuses strongly on the health and wellbeing of the local population, including ensuring that all of our children and young people get the best start in life, and services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are improved. The ambitions have a strong focus on improving mental as well as physical wellbeing.
- **Connected communities** – This is a dual ambition of safer communities and sustainable communities. In respect of safer communities this ambition focuses on making life better in local communities across the County. On how we ensure children and young people have safe lives in safe communities where people support each other, and have access to high quality housing, good transport links and vibrant town and village centres. In respect of sustainable communities, focus includes consideration of the quality and sustainability of the natural environment as well as housing and transport, and towns and village centres.

## The Council Structure

The powers and responsibilities of the Council are determined by Parliament with County Council elections held every four years. The most recent election was held in May 2021. As a 'unitary' council, Durham County Council provides the majority of council services in County Durham and works with a range of partners to provide services in the best possible way.

The Council's decision-making structure includes:

- A Cabinet of ten councillors which meets on a monthly basis to make decisions to implement the Council's policies and budgets. Cabinet is also required to set out its programme of work prior to taking a key decision and before making a decision