

Durham County Council

Council Plan 2012-16

Foreword

Welcome to the Council Plan which sets out what Durham County Council aims to achieve for people over the next four years. Our continuing vision is to build an Altogether Better Durham, which is better for local people and provides better places to live and work. We share this vision with other public, private and voluntary sector partners in the county. This Council Plan sets out the Council's approach to delivering its part in this vision.

A key focus of our approach is consulting and engaging effectively with local communities. This is to make sure that the Council is strongly focused on local people's needs. This focus is demonstrated in our ongoing commitment to 14 Area Action Partnerships across the county which are taking action to meet local priorities.

You will be aware that the government announced a significant reduction in local government funding in October 2010. It has been a major challenge for the Council to plan for the savings that we have had to make whilst trying to minimise the impact of our reductions on the communities that we serve. The scale of the reduction is unprecedented in recent times, and it is also heavily front loaded. The Council has to make reductions of £123.5 million over the 4 year period from 2011 with £66.4 million of savings being delivered in the first year. This Plan therefore sets out how we intend to maintain and in some cases deliver improvements to our services whilst making the required savings targets.

In 2010, we consulted widely with the public on where to make savings and where to protect services. As a result of the feedback received, we protected spending on winter maintenance, highways maintenance and repairs. We have invested in protecting children and have protected eligibility criteria on social care for adults and older people. This has meant that other areas including management and communications have had to face larger reductions. We have consulted those groups who are potentially affected by each of our savings proposals. We have listened to what people have to say and in many cases we have revised our proposals to accommodate their wishes. For instance, working with community groups and sports clubs, we have helped to retain five of the six leisure centres that were originally earmarked for closure.

Despite inevitable service reductions in some lower priority areas, we will continue deliver service improvements where possible. The Council recognises the need to invest in key infrastructure projects to support our priorities through its capital programme and is also pursuing opportunities for further service efficiencies, particularly following local government reorganisation.

Simon Henig, Leader of the Council

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The Council and the Community

County Durham

County Durham is a place of distinctive character with a strong sense of its own identity. It has a proud and unique history having been settled since ancient times by the Romans, Angles, Saxons and Normans. Durham city developed as a centre of Christian worship in the 11th century with the completion of the cathedral which is now a world heritage site. The Bishops of Durham were granted both spiritual and secular powers by William I effectively giving them the status of kings of the North East, a situation which lasted up until the Reformation. Later, County Durham became a centre for the industrial revolution providing the country and developing empire with coal, steel and ships. The area also saw the development of the World's first passenger steam railway in 1825.

Today, Durham is a county of economic, cultural and environmental contrasts. It stretches from the remote rural North Pennine area of outstanding natural beauty in the West to the more densely populated East Durham heritage coastline. The county covers an area of 223,260 hectares with 219,000 households and 12 major centres of population.

Following Local Government Reorganisation in 2009, Durham County Council, with around 510,800 residents, is now the largest council in the North East region¹ and the sixth largest all purpose council by population in England.

The economic history of the county has generated a spatially fragmented geography of around 250 settlements including rural villages, small and medium towns and a historic city with World Heritage status.

In common with the rest of the UK, the county's population is ageing with the average age of 40.9 years in 2009 rising to 44.2 years in 2026. Increases in life expectancy and the transition of the 'baby boom' generation from economic activity into retirement means that our older people cohort (aged 65 +) is predicted to rise by 45.6 per cent by 2026². Even greater increases are expected in the population of people aged 85 and over which is predicted to rise by 108.5% (over 11,520 people). An increase in the birth rate both nationally and locally will stem the decline in the number of people aged under 25, which is expected to remain fairly constant over the next two decades at its current level of approximately 30 per cent of the population.

Black and minority ethnic communities make up 1.03 per cent of the population³ and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community report a population of around 3,000⁴.

The 2010 Index of Deprivation show that County Durham is ranked as the 62nd most deprived out of 326 authorities nationally. There is a high proportion (45.4%) of the County Durham population living in the 30% most deprived areas. Within these communities, weekly wages and rates of car ownership are low; the health of the population is relatively poor; life expectancy is below the average for the country and there are high levels of disability and long term illness.

¹ Registrar general mid 2010 population estimates.

² County Durham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011/12

³ Census 2001, ONS as updated November 2004.

⁴ Local estimate based upon white British people representing 98.7 per cent per cent of the county's population.

In September 2010, 12,492 people were claiming Job Seekers Allowance, which equates to 3.8 per cent of the working age population. This is lower than the regional average of 4.7 per cent but higher than the Great Britain average, which is 3.6 per cent. In February 2010, 33,120 people were claiming Employment and Support Allowance and incapacity benefits, which equates to 10.1 per cent of the working age population. This is higher than both the regional average of 8.9 per cent and also the Great Britain average of 6.7 per cent.

Durham County Council

Durham County Council was established along with other county councils in England and Wales in 1888. The latest reorganisation of local government in Durham in 2009 saw the abolition of the seven district and borough councils in the county and the creation of Durham County Council as a single all purpose authority providing the full range of local government services to the public.

The council is made up of 126 Members representing 63 electoral divisions with the Labour Party having a controlling majority. The political makeup of the council is as follows:

Labour	69 Councillors
Liberal Democrat	26 Councillors
Independent	21 Councillors
Conservative	10 Councillors

The council operates a Leader and Cabinet style model of political governance and the Cabinet is made up of ten councillors with the following portfolios:

Councillor	Portfolio
Councillor Simon Henig	Leader of the Council
Councillor Alan Napier	Resources (and Deputy Leader)
Councillor Morris Nicholls	Adult Services
Councillor Claire Vasey	Children and Young People's Services
Councillor Lucy Hovvels	Safer and Healthier Communities
Councillor Neil Foster	Economic Regeneration
Councillor Clive Robson	Housing
Councillor Bob Young	Strategic Environment
Councillor Brian Stephens	Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships
Councillor Maria Plews	Leisure, Libraries and Lifelong Learning

The council's Overview and Scrutiny function is made up of six Scrutiny Committees with an Overview and Scrutiny Management Board providing an oversight of the work of these Committees which is made up of 26 councillors and 10 other representatives.

Our council is broadly comparable with a major company in size. We provide a huge range of services that include: teaching our young people and caring for our older people; lending the latest best sellers and protecting 900 year old documents; fixing road bridges and creating bridges in our communities; helping children to swim and helping adults to work; planting trees in nature reserves and recycling paper from our homes. In fact, any local service you can think of, we probably have a hand in it somewhere. We have a budget of £1.4 billion⁵, we employ 22,000 people and our services are delivered to a customer base of over half a million people. To help us manage this undertaking, we employ a Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and five directors who make up the Corporate Management Team of the council. Each of the six directors heads up a large service grouping as follows:

Chief Executive	George Garlick	Head of Paid Service
Assistant Chief Executive	Lorraine O'Donnell	Corporate policy, communications, corporate planning and performance, partnerships and community engagement, overview and scrutiny, civil contingencies
Corporate Director, Resources	Don McLure	Finance, procurement, legal and democratic services, human resources and organisational development, information and communications technology
Corporate Director, Adults, Wellbeing and Health	Rachael Shimmin	Adult social care, welfare rights, adult learning, libraries, theatres and museums, archives, community safety, health improvement, gypsies and travellers

⁵ £1,409,114 gross expenditure budget for 2011/12

Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services	David Williams	Child protection, fostering and adoption, looked after children, education development services, support to school governors, school admissions, school transport, attendance and exclusions, youth offending service, early intervention and partnership services and a range of support services
Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services	Terry Collins	Highways, street lighting, refuse collection and disposal, parks and grounds maintenance, bereavement services, maintenance of council housing and public buildings, sport and leisure, environmental health and consumer protection, neighbourhood wardens
Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development	Ian Thompson	Physical and economic regeneration, asset management, spatial policy and planning, support for business, tourism, strategic housing, landlord and tenant services, transport

The Council's Vision

Since becoming a unitary authority the council has refocused its vision and priorities together with partners and in consultation with local people and Area Action Partnerships. The new vision that was developed by the council reflected the views and aspirations of the community and opportunities for improvement. This vision focussed around an altogether better Durham and comprises two components being to have an altogether better place which is altogether better for people.

This vision provides a framework which guides all of our detailed plans and programmes which will turn our vision into a reality. This is achieved through organising our improvement actions into a structure comprised of five priority themes:

Altogether Wealthier – focusing on creating a vibrant economy and putting regeneration and economic development at the heart of all our plans;

Altogether Better for Children and Young People – ensure children and young people are kept safe from harm and that they can 'believe, achieve and succeed';

Altogether Healthier – improving health and wellbeing;

Altogether Safer – Creating a safer and more cohesive county;

Altogether Greener – ensuring an attractive and 'liveable' local environment and contributing to tackling global environmental challenges.

This vision is shared with our partners and set out in the county's Sustainable Community Strategy. It is reassuring to note that during the current economic climate with all public sector agencies facing large reductions in government funding, the council and its partners have reaffirmed their commitment to the above vision and the objectives that have previously been developed for each of the above priority themes.

The Council Plan sets out our corporate priorities for improvement and the key actions that the council will take in support of the delivery of the long-term goals in the Sustainable Community Strategy. It also identifies the improvements that the council wants to make in how it manages itself. These actions are captured in a sixth priority theme of an **Altogether Better Council**.

Each of the above priority themes is underpinned by detailed objectives and outcomes and a high level action plan for delivery set out in sections 4 to 9 of this Council Plan.

The Council's Values

The council has 5 values which support our vision and underpin our corporate priorities. These values demonstrate how staff contribute to the success of the organisation and what is required for us to be successful and deliver high class services to our residents. The Values are as follows:

- **Customer Focus**
Putting our customers at the heart of everything we do, treating internal and external customers the same.
- **Respect**
Delivering on promises and being open and honest. Treating everyone fairly. Reducing bureaucracy and simplifying how we do things.
- **Sharing**
Working together to improve how we provide services to customers and work with our partners. Helping each other through change.
- **Learning**
Encouraging questions and listening to our customers. Being innovative, learning to be different and improving.
- **Ambition**
Wanting to be the best and working together to achieve this. Making improvements through being efficient and delivering value for money.

Planning Assumptions

Our Plans have been developed after careful consideration of a number of "drivers for change" which set the context which we plan for.

These are:

National priorities

These include changes to national policy that require the council to make changes to the way in which it does things. These may include legislative and regulatory changes. The government has formulated its legislative programme following its election in May 2010. This has been characterised by significant changes in national

policies including the abolition of many of the agencies that we worked closely with. The government has in some instances, reduced the burdens and the degree of regulation and prescription placed on local authorities.

Welfare Reform - The Government's plans to reform the welfare system to help people move into and progress in work while supporting the most vulnerable in society. The Welfare Reform Bill has been introduced to make a wide range of reforms to make the benefits and tax credits system fairer and simpler. The aim of the Bill is to:

- Creating the right incentives to get more people into work by ensuring that work pays.
- Protecting the most vulnerable people in society.
- Deliver fairness to those claiming benefit and to the tax payer.

The Bill will have a significant effect on the Council's customers and on a number of services that the Council delivers such as welfare rights and housing benefits administration.

Localisation of Business Rates - Business rates are currently collected by local authorities and then paid to the Government who redistribute this income to councils according to a national formula. The Government has plans to localise business rates. The aims of this plan are to give local authorities more control of the resources they raise and also more certainty in financial planning for the long term. This is a fundamental change to the local government finance system and has the potential to impact negatively on County Durham as we are a net recipient from the current pooling system in that we receive more through the redistribution of business rates than we collect locally.

Reform of the National Health Service - The Health and Social Care Bill introduces some fundamental reforms to the NHS including:

- Clinically led commissioning which will see an abolition of Primary Care Trusts with clinicians directly commissioning health services for their populations.
- Giving greater freedoms to NHS foundation trusts.
- Giving a greater voice to patients through the establishment of new Healthwatch patient organisations.
- Transferring public health to local authorities and establishing Public Health England to drive improvements in public health nationally.

This legislation will significantly impact on the Council as a provider and commissioner of social care services and through its health and wellbeing role.

Localism Act - The Localism Act received assent in November 2011. This legislation gives greater powers to both local authorities and the general public regarding decision making and accountability. Key measures included in the Act are:

- General power of competence – Sometimes local authorities are prevented from doing things differently because they are not sure that the law allows them to. This power will allow local authorities to act more innovatively in service delivery and it will also give the private sector more confidence that

any contractual arrangements that they have with the council cannot be challenged as being ultra vires or beyond its powers.

- Community rights - Voluntary and community groups, parish councils and local authority staff will have the right to challenge to take over the running of local public services under a community right to challenge. Under the community right to bid, important local amenities and buildings - such as old town halls, community halls or the last village shop or pub can be nominated for listing by the local authority as assets of community value. If listed assets come up for sale, communities will have extra time to prepare a bid to take them over, making it easier to keep important assets in public use. Taxpayers in the county will also have the right to approve or veto any excessive council tax rises if they are proposed by the council.
- Neighbourhood planning – The Act creates provisions for parish/town councils or neighbourhood forums to prepare neighbourhood plans that can be adopted by the council and become a consideration in any future planning decisions.
- Housing – New powers will allow the council to offer homeless people tenancies in private sector accommodation instead of being obliged to offer social housing. It also gives the council the power to offer new social housing tenants shorter, fixed-term (minimum two year) tenancies. The council will also be able to decide who goes on the housing waiting list with central government setting out who it feels has the greatest housing needs. Rental income can also be retained to spend on housing investment locally.

NHS reform - The government's proposals for reform of the National Health Service include the abolition of Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts and the transfer of commissioning of health services to local consortia of GPs. The public health function will be transferred to local authorities. The council has set up a Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board which has brought together those who buy services across the NHS, public health, social care and children's services, elected representatives and representatives from HealthWatch to plan the right services for Durham.

Transparency and openness - The Government is encouraging all local authorities to be more open and transparent in the way they operate by making more data available to the public. They have published a code of recommended practice which contains minimum standards regarding information on payments to suppliers, councillor allowances and expenses, salaries, organisation charts, grants to voluntary and community organisations, policies, performance, external audit and inspection, contracts and tendering, public land and assets, election results, minutes from meetings and key decisions.

Local Enterprise Partnerships – Local Enterprise Partnerships between local authorities and business have been set up by the Government to play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. They have also been created as a key vehicle in delivering Government objectives for economic growth and decentralisation, whilst also providing a means for local authorities to work together with business in order to accelerate economic recovery. Local Enterprise Partnerships are based on meaningful economic areas. County Durham falls into the North Eastern Local Enterprise Partnership which also includes Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

Inspection and regulatory regime The Government has reduced the burden of inspection on local authorities. The Comprehensive Area Assessment regime has been dismantled and service inspections by the Audit Commission has ceased. The Audit Commission itself is to be disbanded. Central inspection will be focused on the most vulnerable to help maintain high standards in children's services and adult social care. Intervention will focus on cases of serious risk or failure. The audit of the Council's accounts is currently provided by the Audit Commission. The Government has opened the market to the private sector and a tendering exercise is currently underway to commission firms to procure the audit work in the public sector currently undertaken by the Audit Commission.

Public sector equality duty – The Equality Act 2010 places a new duty on public sector bodies. The Council being a public sector body as defined in the Act has a general duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across all characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. These include existing characteristics of race, disability and gender as well as some new characteristics including age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. There are also a series of specific duties which local authorities must comply with including the publication of information that they use in helping them meet the general duty.

Academies – Academies are publicly funded independent schools. They are given greater freedom than local authority controlled schools. They can set their own pay and conditions for staff, have freedoms around the delivery of the curriculum and have the ability to change the length of terms and the school day. Academies receive the same level of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the local authority as a maintained school plus additions to cover the services that are no longer required for them by the local authority. Academies can still buy in services from the Council but have greater freedom over how they use their budgets to best benefit their students. The governing body of maintained schools can pass a resolution to convert to an academy and must then follow an application process laid down by the Department for Education. There are currently ten academies within County Durham:

- The Academy at Shotton Hall
- The Hermitage Academy, Chester-le-Street
- King James I Academy, Bishop Auckland
- Staindrop School
- Teesdale School and Sixth Form Centre, Barnard Castle
- Park View School, Chester-le-Street
- The North Durham Academy, Stanley
- Framwellgate School Durham
- St John's School and Sixth Form College, A Catholic Academy, Bishop Auckland
- Consett Academy

Adult social care outcomes framework – The Government has developed a new framework for the delivery of adult social care. The framework signals a move away from the top-down performance management and centrally driven process targets towards a system focused on quality and the issues that matter most to those with care and support needs. It describes a set of outcomes for people who use social care services, their carers and families. The framework lays the foundation for future reforms in adult social care.

Police Reform - Forthcoming legislation aims to replace police authorities with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners with the aim of improving police accountability. These changes have the potential to affect the relationship that the local authority has with the police.

Local priorities

The council identifies local priorities for County Durham through a series of local assessments. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) carried out annually by the council in partnership with NHS County Durham provides an overview of the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the people of County Durham. This assessment shows that the health of residents has improved significantly over recent years with people living longer. However, health of the population remains poor in comparison with the national picture and health inequalities remain persistent and pervasive. Early deaths from heart disease, stroke and cancer are worse than England averages. Smoking is the biggest contributor to shorter life expectancy accounting for 66% of early or premature deaths. Levels of obesity and admissions to hospital for alcohol-related harm are increasing in the county. Local priorities for tackling health inequalities include reducing smoking, tackling obesity, reducing alcohol misuse, reducing teenage conceptions, promoting positive mental health and reducing early deaths from heart disease and cancer. Future needs centre around an increasing ageing population and the implications for health and social care.

The Safe Durham Partnership Strategic Assessment carried out by the council, Durham Constabulary and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service has highlighted seven priorities for the Safe Durham Partnership to work on including anti-social behaviour, tackling alcohol and substance misuse and protecting vulnerable people from harm as key priorities for the council and its partners on the Safe Durham Partnership.

Other key assessments include the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), and the Child Poverty Needs Assessment. The SHMA was completed in 2008 but is currently being updated to reflect the different economic climate we are now in. The updated assessment will be used to inform policy and strategy development for both housing and planning services.

The Child Poverty Needs Assessment was completed in December 2010 and was used to develop the council's first Joint Child Poverty Strategy. This is a major issue for County Durham with almost 1 in 4 children and young people are living in poverty across County Durham, with it being more than 60% in some neighbourhoods. The Strategy highlights a number of related themes within the county including the levels of deprivation, inadequate housing, life expectancy rates, teenage pregnancies, low educational attainment and worklessness.

The County Durham Regeneration Statement outlines how the underlying ambition of creating sustainable places where people want to live, work, invest and visit can

be achieved. The 5 core objectives outlined in the Statement, frame the 'Altogether Wealthier' section of this plan. The County Durham Economic Partnership has agreed 5 key measures to monitor change including: the employment rate; business registrations; household disposable income per head of population; the gross value added and the level of deprivation in local communities

Resources

By far the biggest driver for change which is affecting our plans, certainly in the medium to long-term is the reduction in government support in the form of grant funding. The government has stated that its most urgent task is tackling the structural deficit within the course of the current Parliament with the main burden of deficit reduction being borne by reduced spending rather than increased taxation. The two-year Finance Settlement received on 13 December 2010 confirmed the size of future grant reductions and the government's heavy front loading of reductions in 2011/12 and 2012/13. In total, the council is forecasting the loss of £92.5m of government Grant over the 4 year period of the council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) with £60.3m in 2011/12. After taking into account estimated budget pressures faced, the council is required to achieve £67.1m of savings in 2011/12 and £125m of savings over the whole of the MTFP. This is the equivalent of almost 30% of the council's 2010/11 Net Revenue Expenditure Budget.

The council has adopted a risk based approach to the achievement of savings that seeks to minimise the effects on frontline services. This is detailed in the Performance and Efficiency section of this Plan.

In order to protect front line services insofar as is possible, the council has agreed an approach to managing these reductions by achieving more than half the required savings through reductions to management costs, support services, realising service efficiencies and increases to fees and charges. It is expected that a reduction of 1,600 full-time equivalent posts will be necessary over the 4 year period from 2010/11 to balance the books.

These savings requirements are requiring all council services to fundamentally challenge each line of their budget and explore more innovative approaches to service delivery. Much of this review activity will dominate our work over the course of the Council Plan. A full list of savings and review work agreed by the council is at Appendix 2.

Risks and Opportunities

An essential part of corporate and service planning is the consideration of risks and actions that the council can take to minimise or eliminate their occurrence or their impact on service delivery. Risk management is integrated within the council's annual planning cycle and risks are kept under regular scrutiny with a formal review of all service and corporate risks being carried out on a quarterly basis by the council's Corporate Risk Management Group. The council's Audit Committee is also responsible for monitoring the development and operation of risk management and the overall corporate governance of the Authority.

Risks are assessed at two levels: gross impact and likelihood based on an assessment of the risk without any controls in place; and net impact and likelihood based on the assessment of the current risk after taking into account the existing controls and mitigating actions in place. The top 10 risks from the authority's corporate risk register are listed below

Corporate Risks – Net Impact and Likelihood

Impact					
Critical			Risks 1 and 2		
Major				Risks 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7	
Moderate					Risk 8, 9 & 10
Minor					
Insignificant					
Likelihood	Remote	Unlikely	Possible	Probable	Highly Probable

Ref	Corporate Theme	Risk	Direction of Travel	Anticipated date when risk will be at an acceptable level
1	Altogether Better Council	Slippage in delivery of the MTFP will require further savings, which may result in further service reductions/ job losses.		This will be a significant risk for at least the next 4 years and will be managed through integrated and robust programme management.
2	Altogether Greener	Failure to identify and effectively regulate Contaminated Land.		Once the first phase of inspections (i.e. the top 10 sites) has been completed during 2011/12, this will provide a clearer position on the resource and funding needed to inspect the remaining 130 sites.
3	Altogether Better Council	The Council may be liable to legal challenge if a single status agreement is not implemented in full.		The project to bring this risk to an acceptable level will be completed by April 2012.
4	Altogether Wealthier	The loss of Area Based Grant funding results in the CDP failing to narrow inequality and deprivation gaps.		An action plan for County Durham Partnership is in place. This will remain a significant risk for at least the next 4 years.
5	Altogether Better Council	Insufficient number of adequately skilled staff to maintain the expected level of services.		Plans will be in place outlining the policies that will be required to ensure succession planning. This is a long term goal, and will be considered after the unitisation of Human Resources has been completed.
6	Altogether Better Council	Potential claw-back from MMI (former insurers) under the Scheme of Arrangement (SOA).	Likelihood increased	Dependent on the Supreme Court ruling due early 2012.

Ref	Corporate Theme	Risk	Direction of Travel	Anticipated date when risk will be at an acceptable level
7	Altogether Better Council	If the fundamental recommendations in the Annual Governance Report (AGR) are not addressed this will result in continued problematic closure of accounts.	New risk	This will be addressed in line with the target dates of the action plan.
8	Altogether Better Council	Potential restitution of land charge search fees back to 2005.		Dependent upon the outcome of the negotiations/litigation currently being defended by lawyers instructed in group litigation
9	Altogether Better Council	Industrial Action arising from the period of significant change will adversely impact service delivery.	Likelihood increased	
10	Altogether Better Council	Increased demand for Housing Solution Service beyond current staffing capacity due to changes in Government Welfare legislation.	New risk	

Consultation

Our plans are informed by results from consultation and the council has strived to obtain opinion and feedback from customers and the public to assist us in making sure that we provide the services that people need. A major face-to-face doorstep survey of residents was carried out in 2010. This is one of the largest surveys of its kind ever to have been undertaken in County Durham. Data from this survey has provided a valuable insight into the perceptions of residents. The sample size is sufficiently large to provide segmented data down to Area Action Partnership (AAP) level and is capable of being analysed across different demographic characteristics such as age. Results demonstrate that residents' top 5 priorities for improvement are activities for teenagers, levels of anti-social behaviour, improving job prospects, reducing levels of crime and cleaner streets.

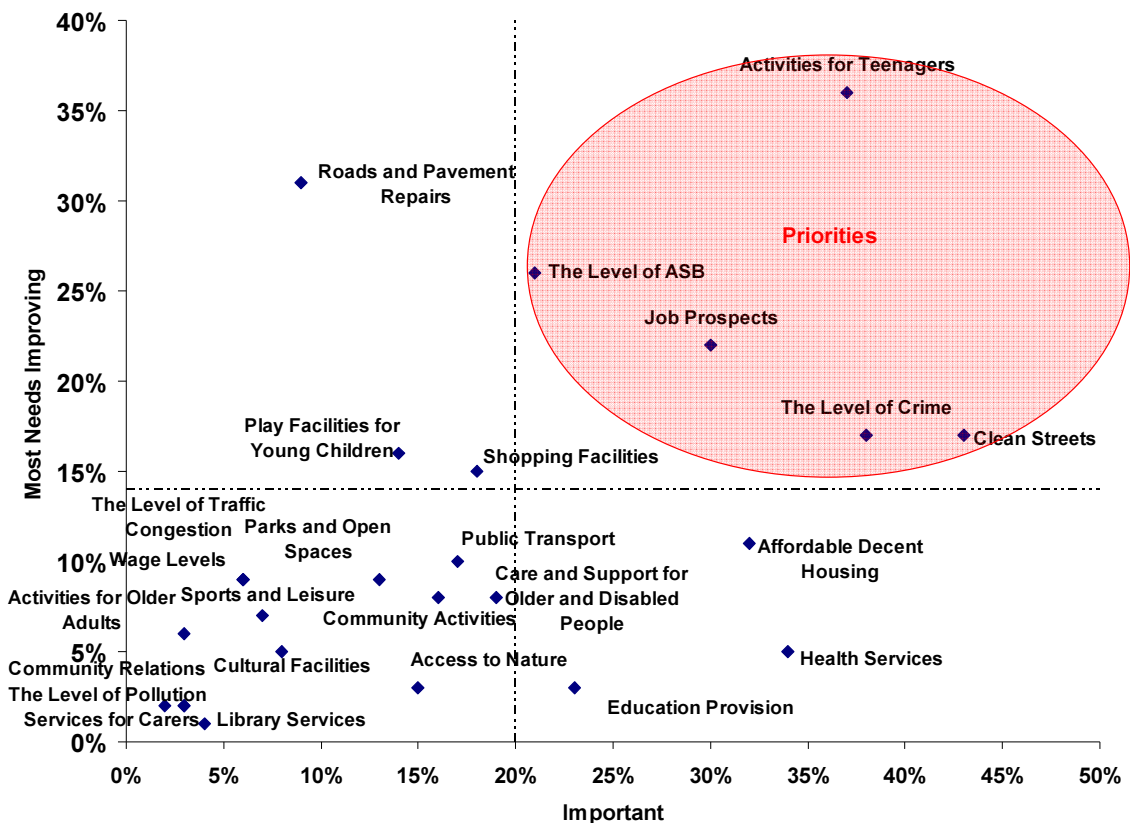


Figure 1 - Residents' Survey 2010: Priorities

Detailed consultation was also carried out on the MTFP during November and December 2010 using Area Action Partnerships (639 participants), an online survey (534 participants) and a postal survey (233 participants). The aim of this consultation was to determine areas where respondents felt there should be larger or smaller budget reductions over the term of the MTFP. Residents were asked to consider a comprehensive list of council service areas where we exercise an element of control over future resourcing decisions (i.e. excluding Direct Grants to schools and Benefits Payments). For the 35 service areas listed, respondents were asked to indicate whether the council should apply a standard reduction of say, 25% over the next 4 years or whether the level of reduction should be smaller or larger. Residents were asked for a balanced response so that if they suggested a larger reduction for one area then they should also identify a service of a similar size where a smaller reduction should be put forward. Analysis of the results show a clear indication that residents would prefer the following services to be protected:

- (a) Winter maintenance
- (b) Repairs to roads and pavements
- (c) Adult care services
- (d) Child protection/adoption/fostering
- (e) Refuse
- (f) Community safety and tackling crime and disorder

- (g) Youth offending
- (h) Youth centres and youth workers
- (i) Supporting people

Similarly, there was a clear indication that residents would be prepared to ‘pay’ for the protection to these services by agreeing to reduce the following services:

- (a) Resources
- (b) Policy, improvement and scrutiny
- (c) Planning
- (d) Communications
- (e) Members’ locality budgets
- (f) Arts, cultural services and museums
- (g) Area Action Partnerships – Area budgets
- (h) Home to school/college transport
- (i) Road safety
- (j) Adult education
- (k) Connexions

The Budget Consultation provided clarity on which services the public would prefer smaller and larger reductions to be made and this has been used to model savings targets.

Analysis of consultation results data from the residents’ survey and the MTFP consultation overleaf demonstrates the continued relevance of the council and County Durham Partnership’s priority themes as a framework for our plans.

Priority Theme	Key Consultation Findings
Altogether Wealthier	Job prospects identified as one of the five priority issues in the Residents’ Survey
Altogether Better for Children and Young People	Activities for teenagers identified as the top priority in the Residents’ Survey
Altogether Healthier	Adult Care Services identified as one of the top three service areas for protection in the Budget Consultation
Altogether Safer	Levels of anti-social behaviour and levels of crime were two of the five priorities identified in the Residents’ Survey
Altogether Greener	Winter maintenance and repairs to roads and pavements identified as two of the top three service areas for protection in the Budget Consultation
Altogether Better Council	Back office/support services consistently recognised in the Budget Consultation as areas to be considered for larger reductions

Consultation with Area Action Partnerships in the autumn of 2011 re-confirmed these priorities.

Performance and Efficiency

Performance is managed corporately through Cabinet who consider quarterly performance management reports. Comparison with other local authorities, inspection findings, deterioration in performance or failure to meet targets all act as drivers to prompt managers to develop plans to address current performance issues. Two examples of where poor performance in comparison with other councils is driving proposals for change are payment of invoices to suppliers within 30 days and the average time taken to process all new claims and change events in housing and council tax benefits. These issues are being addressed through plans to move to single systems (or unitisation) for both financial management and revenues and benefits alongside other improvement measures.

The Authority also received a number of external inspections of its services in 2011/12. Each inspection report contains a number of recommendations for improvement and the council responds to this by producing an action plan which details how and when we will take up these recommendations. These action plans are integrated into our service planning arrangements.

A key external inspection was the annual performance assessment of local authorities responsible for the provision of adult social care conducted by the Care Quality Commission. Judgements are made against seven outcomes from the Department of Health's White Paper, *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*. 2009/10 is the final time that the Care Quality Commission will publish these judgements. The Government has published a new vision for adult social care and is currently consulting on a new outcomes framework for the sector. It is pleasing to note that in the final year of the current inspection regime, the council received its best ever rating of an excellent assessment, having been judged to be performing well in previous years.

Ofsted carry out an annual assessment of children's services. This annual assessment is derived from the performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in the county. It includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which Durham County Council has strategic or operational responsibilities either alone or in partnership with others, together with performance data from the relevant indicators. In 2011, children's services in Durham County Council were judged to be performing well. This is an improvement from the 2010 score where Ofsted judged Durham County Council to be performing adequately.

Table 3 - Annual children's services assessment, December 2010 (Ofsted)

4	Performs excellently	An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
3	Performs well	An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements
2	Performs adequately	An organisation that meets only minimum requirements
1	Performs poorly	An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements
Durham County Council children's services assessment 2011		Performs well (3)

An action plan is in place to address areas for development.

The council was inspected by OfSTED and CQC under new arrangements for Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services in November 2011. The inspection assessed the effectiveness of the County Durham Children's Trust and local children's organisations to determine whether their policies and practices comply with statutory requirements and guidance. A key feature of this inspection was an assessment of how well agencies and professionals work together to identify, safeguard and promote the welfare of potentially vulnerable children and young people in the county. Overall OfSTED rated County Durham's Children's Services as 'outstanding'. They judged the overall effectiveness of our safeguarding services to be outstanding; our capacity to improve these services is also described as outstanding. The overall effectiveness of our services for looked after children is described as good; and our capacity to improve our looked after children's services is judged as outstanding. This means that Durham County Council is only the second local authority area in the country to be graded as outstanding overall for safeguarding and no other local authority area in the country has received an outstanding overall for children's services. Out of the 92 reports published to date only one other area has achieved grades as high as County Durham.

The Authority has also had a number of successes including:

- Overall satisfaction with the council is at 78% which is an increase of 37% from pre-local government reorganisation and 5% higher than the national benchmark group.
- There has been a 25% increase in residents who feel that the council provides good value and a 15% increase in residents who feel that they can influence decisions affecting their local area.
- It is the ninth year in succession that GCSE examination results have shown an improvement. Durham is also higher than the national average.
- The council's Waste Team won the Association of Public Service Excellence Best Service Team award
- Durham Heritage Coast Partnership won the UK Landscape Award 2010 and represented the UK in the European Landscape Awards in March 2011
- Killhope Lead Mining Museum won the North East Tourist Awards small attraction of the year
- Durham City Tourist Information Centre won the Gold North East Tourist Information Centre of the Year Award and Stanhope Tourist information centre won the Silver award.
- Adults, Wellbeing and Health won the Great British Care Award for Care Innovator/Support and Recovery
- The Youth Offending Service has won a Children and Young People Now award for their work with pre-reprimand disposals (prevents young people entering the criminal justice system) and has been shortlisted in the LGC Awards
- 10 Green Flag awards have been given to parks and open spaces around the county by the Keep Britain Tidy group
- The Corporate Communications Team's Open Doors initiative has won the best internal communications campaign from the Public Services Communications awards
- The Council was successfully reassessed as an Investor in People.

- The It's Up 2 U participatory budget project for Stanley Area Action Partnership has been highlighted by the National Participatory Budget Unit as 'the best in England'.
- National Home Improvement Council award for the use of photovoltaics on a retrofit scheme as part of the Craghead Regeneration Project
- Chartered Institute of Public Relations award finalist for a new approach to council newspapers.
- Durham County Council has been shortlisted for seven prestigious Local Government Chronicle awards including the overall 'Council of the Year' award.

The council will monitor progress towards the achievement of its priorities through quarterly reporting to Cabinet and its Scrutiny Committees of key measures contained within a corporate basket of performance indicators detailed in Appendix 1.

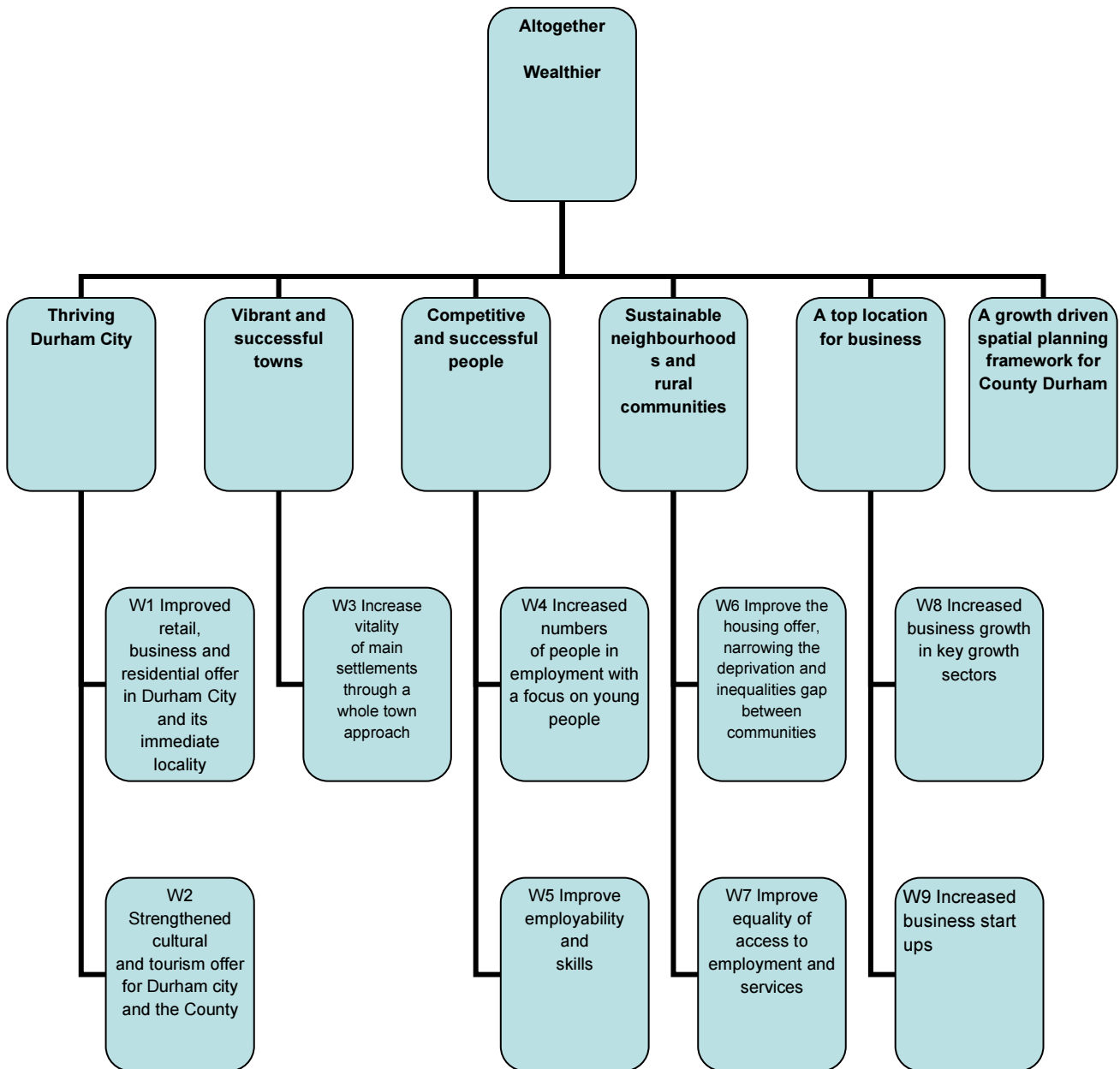
Equality and Diversity

Equality is at the heart of our planning processes. The council's main policy document on equalities is the Single Equality Scheme which was approved by Cabinet in 2010. This replaced separate equality schemes for race, disability and gender and was extended to cover religion and belief, sexual orientation and age in line with the Equality Act 2010.

All proposals for achieving savings within the Medium Term Financial Plan have undergone a rigorous equality impact assessment process and other changes to services and policy developments are subject to impact assessment too.

Equality actions are included in both Council and Service Plans which are performance managed and reported on as part of the overall corporate process.

Altogether Wealthier



Within the council’s Altogether Wealthier priority theme, we are focusing our efforts on creating a vibrant economy and putting regeneration and economic development at the heart of all our plans. In comparison with the region and nationally, County Durham’s economy is underperforming. To help address this issue, we have identified 6 objectives set out above and in our Regeneration Statement, which we aim to achieve. Over the next four years, we will strive to deliver a step change in the local economy within a time of financial constraints and significant policy shifts nationally.

The principal driver of an economic renaissance within the county is the employment rate; for improving this will increase levels of disposable income, increase the number of businesses, and should as a result begin to reduce the chronic levels of relative deprivation that the county has experienced now for several decades. As a

county we need to aim to achieve a net increase of 28,300 jobs over the next 20 years, through inward investment, company growth and business creation.

Improved educational attainment and skills for the population of County Durham will also contribute to economic prosperity and improve people's quality of life. Participation in cultural events and activities is also vital to promote vitality and attract tourism, although it is acknowledged that this is a challenge for the council in the current economic climate.

1. Thriving Durham City

At the heart of the North East, Durham City is a hub of economic and cultural activity and stands out as a key economic driver to the county and region. The city has enormous untapped potential and will deliver a significant share of a step change in the growth of the region and the largest contribution from the county as a whole. The city needs a critical mass of employment, population and visitors to build on the assets already inherent to become a city of regional, national and international significance.

We aim to make the most of Durham and what the city has to offer in terms of economic potential which must be fully exploited to support the growth of County Durham's economy. By maximising the development opportunities of the city we will help to stimulate retail, business and housing growth, which will lead to job generation and increased confidence. Durham city offers the potential to boost tourism performance across the entire county which will improve this key sector's performance when compared with other sub-regions in the North East and comparable areas elsewhere in England.

Going well

- Durham International Festival was held in July 2011.
- The National Railway Museum at Shildon was named the Best Free Venue in the UK in the 2010 Rough Guide to Accessible Britain Awards.
- Killhope Museum was awarded a Gold Award at the North East England Tourism Awards.
- Completion of the market place redevelopment scheme providing space for events.
- Durham Cathedral is one of the region's top ten attractions, receiving more than 600,000 visitors per annum.
- Approximately 150,000 people attended the Lumiere Festival over four days in November 2011.
- The three Park and Ride sites in Durham City continue to show year on year increases in use.
- The extension to the Belmont Park and Ride site has been completed.
- The World Heritage Centre visitor site was completed ahead of schedule.

Cause for concern

- The economic climate is making it difficult for the private sector to invest in schemes in the city.
- High Street retailers have been hit by the recession with some firms ceasing trading. This has affected the number of top 23 retailers nationally within Durham City Centre, currently 15 of the top 23.

Did you know?

- 56,138 people attended the BRASS festival events in 2011.
- For the 2011 Lumiere festival in Durham, special artwork was created locally and by artists in Torun (Poland) and Tallinn (Estonia) and will feature in Olympics.
- Durham has been voted the top city in England and the second best city to visit in the UK in a national poll of Guardian and Observer readers.
- The Durham Book Festival provided over 60 events in October 2011 including best-selling authors, poetry readings and writers in conversation about science, food, the military and politics.
- Durham County Council is responsible for maintaining 6,000 council homes in and around Durham city.
- There are in excess of 1000 houses in multiple occupation within the Durham City Area.

Look out for:

- The Olympic Torch will arrive in County Durham on 16th June 2012 and stay overnight in Durham city – there will be special events throughout the route to celebrate the historic occasion.
- The Durham Book Festival in 2012.
- Plans for Aykley Heads.
- Driver information project helping drivers to plan journeys across the city.
- Development on the Freeman's Reach site (former ice rink site).
- New lighting will be installed to illuminate Durham Castle and Durham Cathedral during 2012 and 2013 respectively.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Undertake transport modelling work for the Northern and Western Relief Roads and develop a delivery and funding plan	Head of Transport and Contract Services	December 2012
Prepare for and deliver key regeneration and housing projects in the city to stimulate investment and maximise job opportunities:	Head of Economic Development & Housing	March 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aykley Heads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning application for phase one (Police HQ) in Sept 2012 		Sept 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freemans Reach, former ice rink: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning submission July 2012 - Development of Hydro Energy Centre 		July 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Millennium Square, Gala Theatre city centre: Implement Investment Package 		June 2013

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Road, Durham City: Following development brief to test market EOIs; Report back to Cabinet • Determine a solution for flood mitigation measures that are required for various development sites in Durham City: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design of scheme - Planning permission granted 		<p>Sept 2012</p> <p>April 2014</p> <p>April 2015</p>
<p>Increase the number of tourists in Durham City by supporting existing attractions, accommodation providers and new tourism businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and delivery of new signature events such as the Lindesfarne Gospels • Facilitation and support to the delivery of a family based tourist attraction in the City of Durham 	<p>Head of Economic Development & Housing</p>	<p>March 2016</p> <p>June – Sept 2013</p>
<p>Contribute to the implementation of the Cultural Strategy and support the development of the County Durham Cultural Partnership by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using high profile projects such as BRASS: Durham International Festival and the Durham Book Festival to increase engagement in and satisfaction with cultural activities • Continuing to increase opportunities for volunteering within heritage and cultural settings to enable people to gain transferable skills to increase employability 	<p>Head of Adult Commissioning</p>	<p>March 2013</p> <p>March 2013 (Baseline to be set 2011/12)</p>
<p>Deliver key Durham City transport initiatives to improve accessibility within and through the City:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver Information project - Extension of the project including further web system development, additional traffic monitoring cameras and real time road side information signs implemented 	<p>Head of Transport and Contract Services</p>	<p>March 2016</p> <p>March 2014</p>

- Continue to implement the Transit 15 bus corridor improvement programme within Durham City

Up to 2013

2. Vibrant and successful towns

Vibrant towns are good for business: they create jobs, attract investment and generate income - they are engines for economic growth. At their best, they create a discernable local buzz and define the wider area, attracting people from near and far. County Durham has a dispersed settlement pattern with a large number of distinct towns, not all of which are meeting the needs of local communities. We need to increase the vitality and vibrancy of main settlements through the adoption of a 'whole town approach' for each main settlement and phased delivery of improvement. This 'whole town' approach will be specific to each settlement and will deliver tailored solutions for each place depending on its needs and service potential for its locality. We aim to create places that are attractive, well managed, well designed with a range of amenities and facilities for that given community.

A review of the library network will be undertaken to create a sustainable network of town and community libraries.

Going well

- The DurhamGate development is progressing well.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund has granted £1.9m funding for the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership.
- Regeneration Frameworks have been completed for Consett and Ferryhill/Chilton.
- There has been an increase in the proportion of properties in Council Tax Band D or above.

Cause for concern

- Planning applications continue to reduce due to the ongoing economic climate.
- Since 2008 and due to the recent recession, the number of vacant retail units in town centres has increased.

Did you know?

- Major work has been undertaken by the council and partners to support investment in Barnard Castle leading to the redevelopment of the Witham centre and a wider range of works across the town centre.

Look out for:

- Regeneration frameworks for each town centre which will show what the council and partners are planning to do to invest in the redevelopment of town centres and surrounding areas. These are being prepared and each will be published once complete.
- Further proposals for the railway station in East Durham.
- New customer access points in town centres such as the ones at Seaham.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Maintain the county's historic/listed highway bridges in line with the programme for 2012/13 <i>Note: Schemes to be confirmed when programme developed</i>	Head of Technical Services	March 2013
Complete a review of markets managed by or on behalf of the Durham County Council and develop a strategic approach to enhance and support the sustainability of markets across the county	Head of Environment, Health & Consumer Protection & Head of Economic Development	October 2012
Develop a harmonised Street Trading Policy to create a street trading environment which complements premises-based trading, is sensitive to the needs of residents, provides diversity and consumer choice and seeks to enhance the character, ambience and safety of local environments	Head of Environment, Health & Consumer Protection	December 2012
Deliver phased implementations of the key town Regeneration Frameworks including:	Head of Economic Development & Housing	March 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve the position with Festival walk, Spennymoor, Head of Economic Development and Housing, April 2012 		April 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Johns Square, Seaham; Completion of Public Realm works 		June 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical improvements enhancing links to Clifford Road and the Academy 		October 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the redevelopment of Witham Wall, Barnard Castle 		March 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support major retail development at Queen Street, Crook 		December 2013
		December 2014

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop front improvement scheme in Consett • Agree the design and plan for a railway station in East Durham on the Durham Coast Railway 	Head of Transport and Contract services	December 2012 for completion December 2015
Implement capital improvement schemes from the Local Transport Plan to improve accessibility between our main towns	Head of Transport and Contract Services	December 2015

3. Competitive and successful people

The skills, abilities and attitudes of the current and future County Durham workforce are critical to the future economic success of the county and will underpin a more competitive and productive economy. County Durham has below national average employment levels, above regional and national average economically inactive residents claiming benefits and below regional and national average higher skills attainment. We need to encourage people to improve their skills, increasing individual success and improving life chances. With limited resources we will work with partners, national employability support providers and employers to provide support for County Durham residents.

Going well

- 92% of people enrolled on adult learning courses leading to a qualification were successful in the academic year 2010/11.

Cause for concern

- 15% of working age adults have no qualifications, which is above both the regional and national averages.
- 30% of the working age population in County Durham is qualified below Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE) which is worse than the UK average of 26%.
- Youth unemployment is getting worse; there are currently more than 5,000 residents aged 18-24 claiming JSA.
- Overall numbers of JSA claimants are on the increase, possibly as a result of reduced funding.
- County Durham has a higher proportion of the population claiming out of work benefits such as Employment Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit than the regional average.
- Changes to the benefit system might have a significant impact on residents in the County.

Did you know?

- The County Durham Adult Learning and Skills Service covers a wide range of courses which can help people to gain a recognised qualification, help adults to learn new skills or simply encourage people to take part in local community learning activities.

- Last year, the council helped to prevent 836 individuals from becoming homeless.
- The 2011/12 Future Business Magnates competition was launched in November 2011 with 24 of the County's secondary schools participating.
- Derwentside Training has been commissioned within the Government's Work Programme to assist people gain the skills they need to find work.
- We are finding 150 apprenticeships in 2012/13.
- One in three of all job seekers allowance claimants in the County are aged 18-24

Look out for:

- Level 2 and 3 qualifications will be provided for 19-25 year olds who currently do not have this level of qualification, through a pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship programme.
- Training support for the unemployed will be delivered through a programme focused on employability skills, which will include referrals through JobCentre Plus.
- Literacy and numeracy training will be delivered through a dedicated skills for life programme which will also link into Apprenticeship programmes across the county.
- Future Business Magnates competition in 2012
- A future competition developed by local businesses and schools in County Durham

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Respond to the findings of Adult Learning's Ofsted inspection in 2012	Head of Social Inclusion	March 2013 (depending on inspection timetable)
Work with employers to maximise training, job placement, graduate schemes and apprenticeships	Heads of Economic Development & Housing	March 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Business, Enterprise and Skills Strategy for County Durham 		September 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through a European funded project support 1265 residents and programme 316 into work 		December 2014
Support young people aged 18-24 into employment, education or training	Heads of Economic Development & Housing	March 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Apprenticeship Strategy and Action Plan 		April 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver an apprenticeship scheme to assist 150 residents start an apprenticeship in local businesses 		March 2014

4. Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities

Deprivation and inequalities persist between communities in County Durham and between County Durham, the region and the nation. Industrial restructuring and job losses in manufacturing had disproportionately affected some communities and groups within the county. The county's dispersed settlement pattern, low car ownership, low job density and rurality can compound deprivation and inequalities. This can have damaging effects upon an individual's life chances in a number of ways:

- A shortage of local jobs can limit employment opportunities
- Poor transport connectivity can limit access to work and services
- Deprived areas often have fewer or poorer quality public and private services
- Poor housing quality can result in low demand which in turn leads to high turnover and/or vacant or derelict housing.

Going well

- Public transport connectivity improvements as part of the Transit 15 programme are progressing well
- The number of private sector properties improved as a consequence of local authority intervention has increased
- Housing Stock Options appraisal for Durham City Homes is progressing as per the project plan
- Decrease in the number of homeless presentations

Cause for concern

- Affordable house numbers continue to be low across all areas in the county.
- The numbers of housing units completed remains low across all areas in the county.
- The percentage of non-decent council homes has shown improvement in the last year, but there are still approximately 33% of properties classed as non-decent
- Bus operators are finding it increasingly difficult to run some bus services in the county.
- Proposals included in the Welfare Reform Bill will have major implications for County Durham.
- As a result of the Welfare Reform Bill it is anticipated that the level of homelessness will increase.

Did you know?

- The government's official measure of deprivation published in 2010 showed that the county had become slightly less deprived overall since it was last published in 2007.
- The council works with partners to support residents to get on the property ladder through affordable housing schemes for new homes and schemes to offer mortgage support. We also negotiate with developers to try and make sure there

is a provision of affordable homes wherever possible or required.

- The council runs a national scheme in the county to help residents become more energy efficient through better home insulation.
- 45% of the County's population live in the 30% most deprived areas in the County.
- The Housing Renewals team have helped 2183 owner occupied homes to be made energy efficient through better insulation.

Look out for:

- The development of neighbourhood plans to support the County Durham Plan.
- The Publication of the County Durham plan with housing allocations across the county.
- Acquisition and demolition schemes at Wheatley Hill and Thornley by Dec 2012.
- Group repair and Environmental Improvement Scheme at Craghead throughout 2012.
- Acquisition and demolition at West Chilton in 2013.
- An acquisition and demolition scheme at Esh Winning in 2014.
- A new library strategy for County Durham.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Through the Community Action Team (CAT) deliver a programme of targeted interventions around environment, health and consumer protection	Head of Environment, Health & Consumer Protection	September 2014
Complete planned public transport improvements on the 7 key corridors to improve punctuality, reliability and attractiveness of bus travel	Head of Transport and Contract Services	December 2012
Maximise the level of investment from the HCA and other agencies to enable the delivery of the four year (2011-2015) programme of funding for affordable housing in Durham	Heads of Economic Development & Housing	March 2014
Implement the preferred option for the future management and investment of the council's housing stock	Heads of Economic Development & Housing	April 2013

Implement the Private Sector Housing Strategy and deliver the associated capital programme for Private Sector Housing Renewal	Heads of Economic Development & Housing	March 2014
Implement the Homelessness Strategy to prevent residents becoming homeless and to support those who need assistance	Heads of Economic Development & Housing	March 2016
Implement the Library Strategy in line with agreed actions and priorities to ensure a sustainable service for the future	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2014

5. A top location for business

County Durham is home to a wide range of businesses from micro rural businesses to large multinationals, from small scale engineering to large scale manufacturing and from business services to internationally leading research companies. The county offers businesses a range of support and development opportunities and these must be sustained and developed to serve the diversity that exists. Durham residents are well placed to take advantage and contribute to the Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear City Regions but this also has to be balanced with local business and employment opportunities.

Going well

- Hitachi's announcement that they intend to open a factory at Heighington lane (Newton Aycliffe) is a major boost to the local economy.
- A 3 year refurbishment programme of council business sites is underway.
- The Consett Business Park development is underway.
- Broadband Delivery UK announced a grant of £7.79m for highspeed broadband for homes and businesses in the county.

Cause for concern

- Business start-ups through public support are falling significantly as funded programmes have come to an end and the recession is making it hard to start a business.
- Reduction in government grant making it difficult to support new businesses such as had been undertaken through the Be Enterprising Programme.

Did you know?

- The council owns 370 business units across the county which totals just over 700,000 square foot of lettable floor space.
- Our largest two business centres are Derwentside Business centre (61,000 square foot) and Tanfield Lea (almost 28,000 square foot).

Look out for:

- The Durham Net Fibre Installation Programme which will improve infrastructure for delivering broadband to local business and public amenities
- Preparation by Hitachi at the Heighington Lane site for new employment opportunities .

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Building on the Olympic legacy, work with partners to develop a Durham Institute of Sport to support world class performance, coaching and officiating	Head of Sport & Leisure Services	March 2013
Support delivery of a corporate events programme that raises the profile of County Durham as a destination	Head of Sport & Leisure Services	March 2016
Facilitate and expand broadband connections for our residents and businesses to encourage home working in rural communities	Head of ICT/Head of Economic Development and Housing	March 2013
Manage the Council's business and employment sites/property to stimulate investment and enable other sites to be appropriately developed and promoted	Head of Economic Development and Housing	March 2016
Promote NETPark as a flagship location for the university and private sector investment and collaboration	Head of Economic Development and Housing	March 2016
Actively promote the County as a destination to live, work and invest	Head of Economic Development and Housing	March 2016

6. A growth driven spatial planning framework for County Durham

Durham County Council is responsible for the production of a Local Plan for the Local Authority area. Work started on a new plan before Local Government Reorganisation (2009) and has involved the detailed consideration and analysis of extensive evidence bases and consultation with communities and groups with specific interests. The proposed plan (known as 'The County Durham Plan') is due to be considered at an Examination in Public in 2013 once all consultation has been completed and suitable amendments have been made.

Going well

- Successful consultation has continued during 2011/12 on different elements of the County Durham Plan including Green Belt land, Housing Allocations and a 'Policy Directions' summary of how the plan has changed and what the key themes are to date.

Cause for concern

- The government recently (Summer 2011) released a draft national Planning Policy Framework which sets out proposed changes to the Planning system in the UK, this may have an effect on the timescales for the completion and agreement of the County Durham Plan and may cause the plan to be delayed slightly if the format or scope of the plan need to be changed.

Did you know?

- The County Durham Plan is the most important strategic document the council produces after the Sustainable Community Strategy. The plan affects everyone from those who currently live in the county, those who travel here to work and even those who haven't even been born yet! It sets the direction for how the council can determine how many houses are required, what quality and standards we expect from new development or changes to the built and natural environment, and where businesses can expand or locate amongst many other aspects of life in County Durham

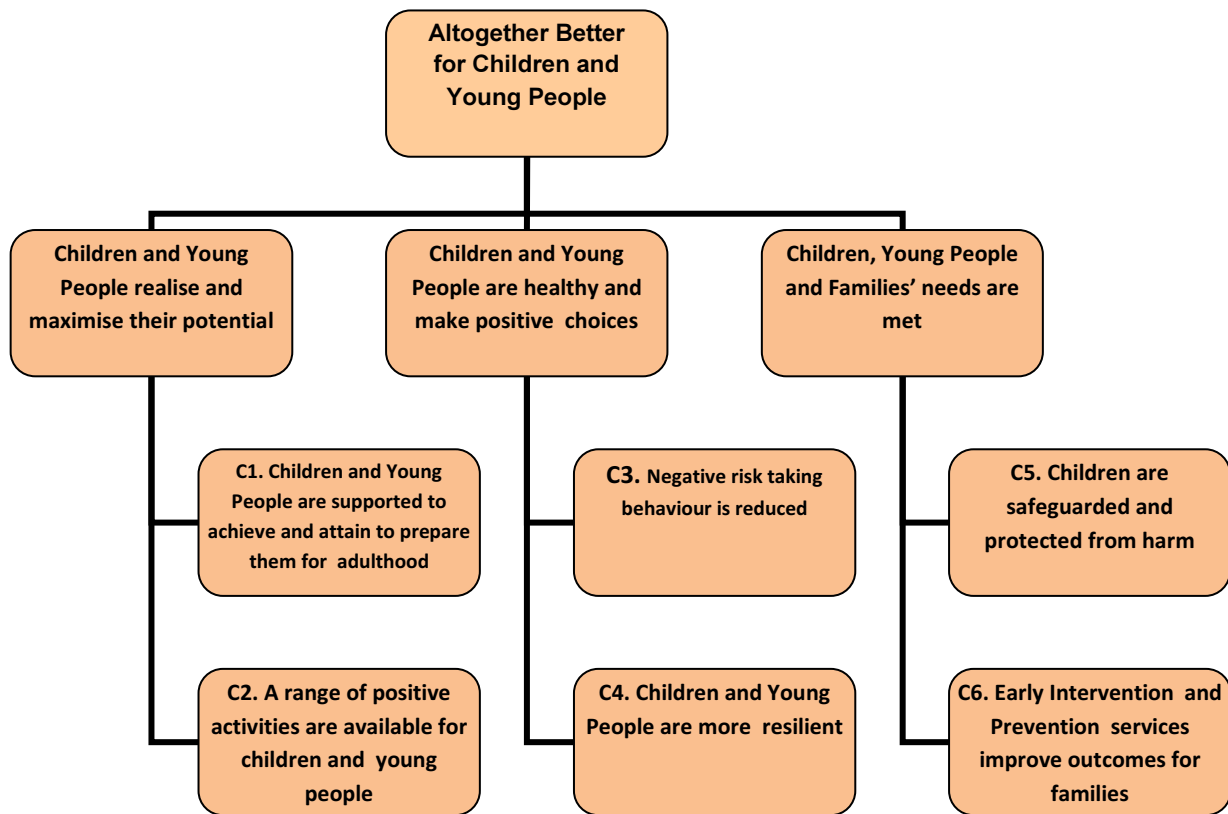
Look out for:

- Housing allocations across the county for the next twenty years
- Proposals for the green belt in Durham City
- The examination in public where a government inspector will decide whether we can adopt our County Durham Plan
- Developments with Neighbourhood plans where communities can have a further say in the implementation of the County Durham Plan.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Successful consultation and completion of the County Durham Plan	Head of Planning & Assets	July 2014

Altogether Better for Children and Young People



The Altogether Better for Children and Young People theme focuses on the Council's work in tackling a range of issues impacting on the lives of all children, young people and families in County Durham. Following a complete refresh of the Children, Young People and Families Plan (CYP&FP), which is the strategic multi-agency plan, the focus is now on the 'causes' (meaning the reason) rather than the 'effects' (meaning the result/outcome).

The CYP&FP now has 3 areas upon which we will focus: 'children and young people realise and maximise their potential'; 'children and young people are healthy and make positive choices'; and 'children and young people and families needs are met'. Beneath these are specific issues we will tackle over the coming years as we believe that achieving success across these areas will have the most impact on what we want to achieve for children and young people in County Durham.

We recognise that the things which impact upon the lives of children, young people and families are complex and demand a partnership approach and we have developed the One Point, integrated service with partners to take forward our strategy.

We will listen to and work with children young people and families to formulate our plans and we will ensure our ambitions for children, young people and their families are realised over the next 4 years.

1. Children and Young People realise and maximise their potential

We want to ensure that children and young people in County Durham are supported and encouraged to be the best that they can be no matter what their dreams are.

We want to ensure that children and young people are able to thrive in the environment in which they live and learn in order to achieve their very best. We will offer support if this environment is not helping them to reach their potential. We believe in supporting achievement, raising aspirations and instilling a belief that children and young people can achieve. This will lead to greater choices throughout childhood, teenage years and on into adulthood and future employment.

We need to ensure this commitment is sustained for all children and young people, including the most vulnerable to ensure they are appropriately supported in relation to their own needs.

We also want children and young people to enjoy their lives and have a greater quality of life by taking part in activities that they enjoy and that interest them. Having a range of activities available for young people and their families can positively impact on a number of priorities such as maintaining a healthy weight, improving educational attainment, improving emotional wellbeing, reducing anti social behaviour and improving self confidence.

Our key priorities for 2012-16:

- ✓ Children and young people are supported to achieve and attain to prepare them for adulthood.
- ✓ A range of positive activities are available for children and young people.

Going well

- GCSE attainment has improved for the 10th year in a row with 87.9% of pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C GCSEs and 59.9% achieving 5 A*-C's including English and Maths which is higher than our statistical neighbours (56.3%) and nationally (58.3%).
- In 2010/11 academic year, 13.6% of looked after children achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths against the target of 12%. This was an improvement on the previous year.
- The attainment gaps have narrowed in 2010/11 for: the lowest achieving 20%, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest; Gypsy, Roma & Traveller pupils at KS 2 and KS 4; Free School Meals at KS 2 and KS 4; and pupils with Special Education Needs at KS 2.
- The secondary school persistent absence rate continues to decrease year on year.
- 'The September Offer' seeks to ensure that all year 11 and 12 students have an appropriate offer of education or training. Targeted work has been progressing over the summer to secure an appropriate place in education or training for those without an offer.

Cause for concern

- The proportion of young mothers and care leavers in education, employment and training has decreased.
- The attainment gap widened at KS 4: for pupils with Special Educational Needs; between boys and girls; and for children in the 20% most deprived areas and the rest.
- The number of permanent exclusions increased from 107 in the 2009/10 Academic Year to 109 in 2010/11.
- The impact of the current economic climate on future opportunities for children, young people and their families such as lifestyle choices and employment opportunities.

Did you know?

- We provide education for up to 100,030 children and young people aged 0-17 living in County Durham in 287 schools: 228 Primary, 36 Secondary, 12 Nursery, 10 Special and 1 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).
- In addition to the Teenagers to Work programme we have an extended programme offering young people 1 day per week work placements alongside their college placement to gain employability schemes.
- The European Social Fund 'Youth Participation' project has supported 1150 young people to date. Learners have achieved Level 1 and 2 qualifications in literacy, numeracy and employability skills; successfully moved to, or been retained in further learning; found employment or apprenticeships.
- We have 205 public open spaces and play parks across the county, 120 community centres, 39 libraries and 8 swimming baths (plus 14 in schools), over 1,050 sports clubs registered with County Durham Sport and over 1,400 football teams registered with the Durham Football Association.

Look out for:

- A range of out of hours programmes to provide additional qualifications at KS4.
- Confident Schools, Confident Parents programme in schools, designed to improve relationships and provision for children with special educational needs.
- The get out there website (www.getoutthere.info) which is an activity directory for young people in the County Durham area.
- Development of two academies in County Durham (North Durham Academy and Consett Academy).
- The 'Places To Go, Things To Do' Commissioning Strategy which identifies the barriers to children, young people and families accessing activities but also identifies solutions to engagement.

High Level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Deliver effective support and provision for improving the educational attainment of looked after children by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• developing the effectiveness and use of the Personal Education Plan (PEP);• delivering a range of programmes to promote self-	Head of Countywide Services	July 2013

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> esteem and confidence; and Providing access to a range of out of hours programmes providing qualifications at KS4. Strengthening the use of data analysis to monitor progress of individual children as well as attainment 		
<p>Work in partnership with schools to implement the BSF process and ensure that schools are completed within planned timescales by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> undertaking regular meetings involving Local Education Partnership (LEP) representatives, BSF team members and EDS Specialist Inspectors; and Monitoring the progress of each project against planned and published timescales as a standing item at the BSF board. 	Head of Achievement Services	July 2013
Deliver the 14-19 strategy	Head of Achievement Services	September 2012 / 2013 / 2014 / 2015
Develop a Commissioning Strategy for 'Places To Go, Things To Do'	Head of Early Intervention and Partnership Services	June 2012
Develop a Fixed Play Policy and an inclusive Play Strategy for the county that optimises opportunity and access to play facilities.	Head of Sport & Leisure Services	September 2013

2. Children and Young People are healthy and make positive choices

Children and young people will look after themselves and others by making positive decisions about their behaviour.

Risk taking is a normal and healthy part of growing up, however, sometimes taking risks involves engaging in behaviour that leads to poorer or negative outcomes.

In County Durham, we know that negative risk taking behaviour can impact on higher teenage conceptions, higher alcohol and drugs use, youth crime and high obesity levels. This places young people at risk of physical or emotional harm and/or poorer outcomes.

We will continue to provide children and young people with relevant and appropriate information and advice to help them make more informed choices around alcohol, drugs, relationships and sex.

We will also provide support and promote healthy living from an early age, aiming to reduce childhood obesity and ensure that more children maintain a healthy weight. We will provide opportunities and choice for young people to participate in a range of sport, leisure and physical activities.

We also want children and young people to have resilience; children and young people who are able to cope more effectively with difficult situations and bounce back from tough times. Good emotional health and wellbeing is crucial in the development of healthy, resilient children and young people and being resilient often leads to more positive decision making in a person's life, no matter what their age.

Our key priorities for 2012-16:

- ✓ Negative risk taking behaviour is reduced.
- ✓ Children and young people are more resilient.

Going well

- The under 18 conception rate has displayed a sustained downward trend over the period 2006-2009. (Based on 2009 data).
- Obesity levels within the county at reception level have continued to decrease with performance exceeding the set target.
- Positive performance was achieved for the number of First Time Entrants (FTE's) to the Youth Justice System, with a provisional total of 150 recorded during April to September, which is well within the target of 360 FTE's during 2011/12.
- The Youth Offending Service was recently commended for their work in diverting young people from the criminal justice system.

Cause for concern

- Year 6 obesity rates are above the national average.
- Although teenage conception rates are falling they are still a cause for concern in County Durham.
- The ratio of final warnings and convictions of looked after children in comparison to the general population have increased.
- 13% of our 5-16 year old children and young people have a mental health, emotional wellbeing disorder; this is higher than the national average and impacts on educational attainment, absences from school, school exclusions, friendships, physical health and offending behaviours.

Did you know?

- All primary schools have achieved National Healthy Schools Status.
- The Confident Schools, Confident Parents Programme is designed to improve relationships and provision for children with special educational needs. It has been delivered in the majority of schools and is rated highly by both parents and schools. Dissemination of the programme will continue.
- The implementation of the homeless protocol has reduced the number of young people residing in bed and breakfast accommodation and improved access to a wider choice of post-16 provision.
- Stable families, consistent positive parenting, having friends, access to play, doing well in school, developing self control, emotional intelligence, self esteem and confidence are all key to ensuring children and young people experience good emotional well being and creates the basis for securing improved outcomes throughout their lives.
- The multi-agency Pre-Reprimand Disposal (PRD) has contributed towards successfully reducing the number of first time entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System. County Durham Youth Offending Service achieved a reduction of 72%.

Look out for:

- Social norms projects in schools over the next 2 years to affect behaviour change in the following areas: alcohol use, sexual health/teenage pregnancy and smoking.
- Better communication and publication of sexual health services to young people and their parents and/or carers.
- Emotional and Mental Health Workshops in Secondary schools will explore how emotions and mental health can impact on the lives of young people and will highlight the importance of remaining emotionally well.
- Breaks for young carers and their families to take time off from their caring responsibilities and receive recognition of their worth
- Increasing opportunities for victims to take part in work with young people who offend

High Level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Deliver the healthy child programme and child and family health improvement programmes which contribute to the delivery of the Foundation Trust preventative strategy.	Head of Early Intervention and Partnership Services	December 2012
Gather customer feedback to ensure that the One Point service is valued and accessible to service users and partners, improve service delivery and responsiveness.	Head of Early Intervention and Partnership Services	April 2013

Work in partnership to reduce re-offending by young people by:

Head of Countywide Services

April 2013

- sharing ASSET information to influence provision of universal and targeted services;
- improving the quality of exit strategies to reduce re-offending;
- implementing and improving CDYOS Offending Behaviour Programmes and evaluating effectiveness; and
- Increasing the use of restorative approaches.

3. Children and Young People and Families' needs are met

We want to ensure that children and young people are kept safe from harm and vulnerable families receive the support that they need at the earliest possible opportunity. Children will be protected from neglect and grow up in a safe environment.

Together with our partners, we will ensure that all children and young people are kept safe from harm and vulnerable families are supported appropriately. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is about protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; and ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. We will continue to improve the recognition of neglect and interventions to reduce impact and continue to develop 'hidden harm' networks to support families with parents who misuse alcohol and drugs.

We want to ensure that children, young people and their families are given the necessary social and emotional support at the earliest possible opportunity in order to reach their full potential. Preventing families from becoming vulnerable and enabling them to maximise their life chances is vitally important. The complex issues faced by families who are in need of help often can not be addressed by a single agency but demands a coordinated response, especially those families who have children with additional needs. We will deliver an integrated approach in order to support families to promote positive outcomes.

Our key priorities for 2012-16:

- ✓ Children and young people are safeguarded and protected from harm.
- ✓ Early intervention and prevention services improve outcomes for families.

Going well

- County Durham's Children's Services were rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted, January 2012.
- The percentage of Children In Need referrals occurring within 12 months of previous referral has decreased from 24.70% in 10/11 to 20.8% in 11/12.
- Despite increased demands for safeguarding services, the percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time has reduced.
- Our services have consistently been rated as 'good' for the quality of safeguarding arrangements.
- All children's homes have been judged as 'good' or 'outstanding' by OfSTED
- Findings from the evaluation of the 2 year Pathfinder Project shows that there has been an 80% reduction in family violence within those families engaged in the project.

Cause for concern

- Increasing number of complex cases requiring a coordinated intervention from a number of services and agencies.
- Young people who drink alcohol are more likely to be behind at school, play truant, become a victim or perpetrator of violence/anti-social behaviour and increase their sexual risk taking (Safe Durham Partnership Strategic Assessment, 2010).
- The Tellus survey (2009/10) shows that in County Durham 13.7% of those surveyed had used drugs or volatile substances and/or been drunk at least twice in the last four weeks.
- Domestic abuse features in half of all child protection conferences undertaken and continues to be the most common factor in all localities.

Did you know?

- Children's services have now been transformed through the creation of One Point integrated services which brings together social care and health services together under single line management.
- During April – September 2011, we delivered a total of 91,677 hours of short breaks and 1135 overnight stays for children who are disabled.
- Approximately 1% of children nationally and in County Durham require support or intervention from our Safeguarding and Specialist Services.
- The number of children on the Children's Network increased to 1028, with 43 new registrations between January 2011 and March 2011.

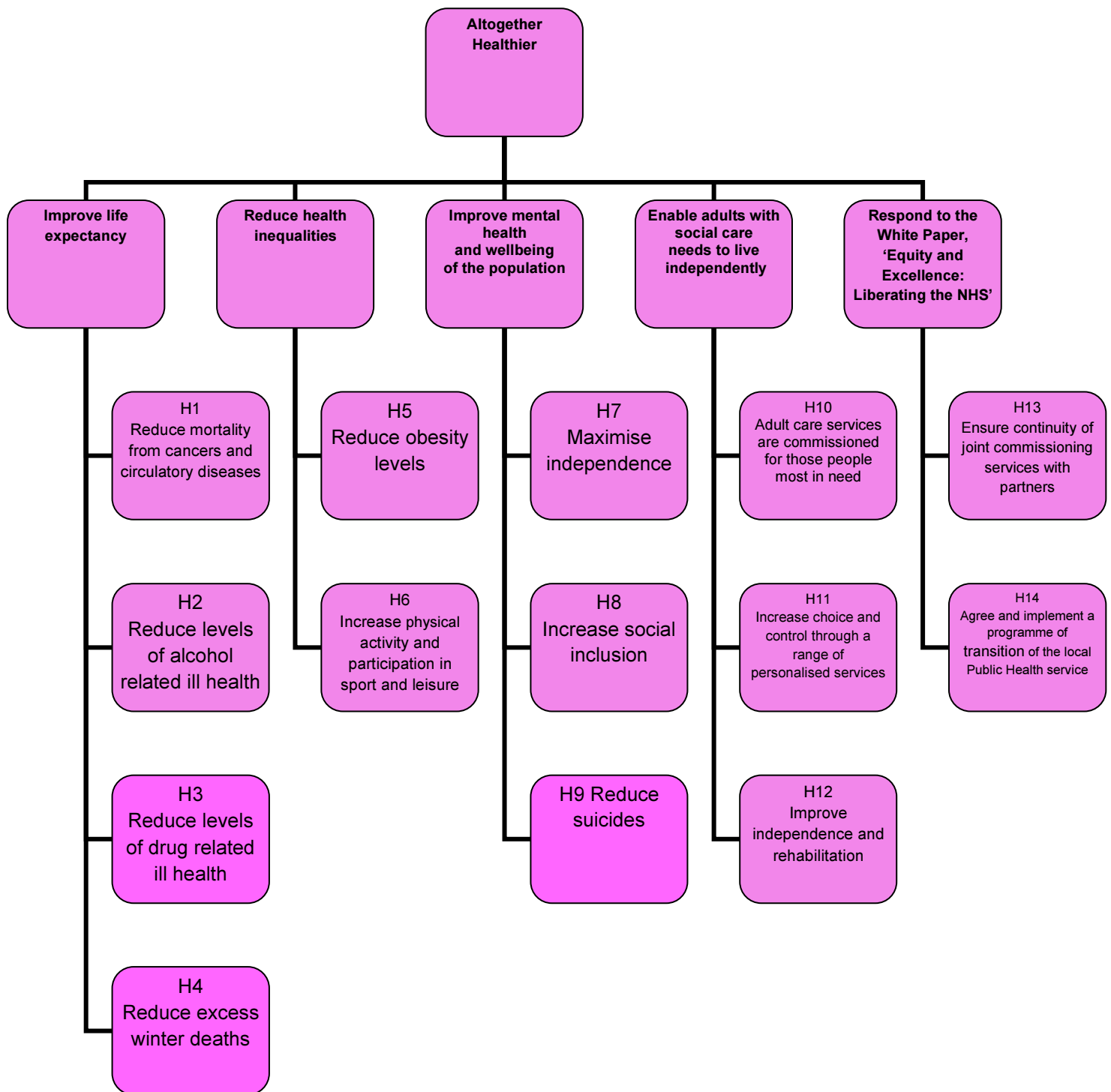
Look out for:

- One Point Hubs operating in your area, pop in and have a look round.
- Development of Area Plans for the One Point Service to communicate intentions and direction of the service.
- Engagement of children, young people and parents in the continued development of the One Point Service.
- Partnership working with the provider market to identify joint funding and commissioning opportunities to support service delivery in line with priorities.
- The Family Pathfinder service has been shortlisted for the Children's Services category in the Local Government Chronicle awards – watch out to see if they win!

High Level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Gather customer feedback to ensure that the One Point service is valued and accessible to service users and partners, improve service delivery and responsiveness.	Head of Early Intervention and Partnership Services	April 2013
Implement the care planning action plan to ensure that all legislative requirements are fully complied with.	Head of Early Intervention and Partnership Services	March 2013
Review and revise of 'front of house' services in line with revised assessment processes in line with the Munro recommendations.	Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services	December 2012
Work with partners to deliver a range of interventions to tackle the supply of age restricted products to children and young people, including a programme of enforcement to prevent underage sales of knives, fireworks, paints and solvents, gambling and gaming products	Head of Environmental Health and Consumer protection	March 2013
Complete a programme of intelligence led enforcement initiatives and other interventions to reduce the supply of illicit, counterfeit and age restricted products.	Head of Environmental Health and Consumer protection	March 2013

Altogether Healthier



The vision for health and social care services outlined in the 'Liberating the NHS' White Paper (2010) and the 'Health and Social Care Bill' (2011) signifies a shift in the way health and social care services are to be delivered. The government's health and social care reforms are centred on patients and the public being at the heart of everything we do and that we must focus on prevention, personalisation and partnership working to improve the health and wellbeing of the population.

In this Council Plan we consider the future of public health in County Durham and the council's new role in working together with Clinical Commissioning Groups (which include GPs, nurses and health professionals) and the third sector (voluntary and community organisations) to make services accountable in a different way to patients and communities.

A Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board have been established in County Durham and this includes representation from the council, NHS and Clinical Commissioning Groups. As the work of the Shadow Board continues, we will ensure that arrangements are in place for the fully established, statutory Health and Wellbeing Board to be included in Durham County Council's Constitution (dependent on the passing of the Health and Social Care Bill in 2012).

Shared priorities and effective partnership-working across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors, combined with efforts to engage with local people, are crucial to tackling health inequalities and we plan to assume our new responsibilities for public health in County Durham from 1st April 2013.

Working closely with Clinical Commissioning Groups, Durham County Council will continue to provide a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for County Durham, which includes robust information relating to the health and wellbeing of the local population. A Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy will also be developed, from which commissioning plans will be subsequently produced.

Health in County Durham has improved over recent years and people are now living longer. However, health inequalities continue to exist within the county as well as between Durham and the rest of England. Local priorities for tackling health inequalities include reducing smoking, tackling obesity, reducing alcohol misuse, and promoting positive mental health.

Durham County Council has a statutory duty to assess the needs of people (and their carers) that require a social care assessment. The assessment process uses eligibility criteria to determine the level of need of individuals and the level of service required. Durham County Council gives priority to people with the greatest care needs and provides services to those assessed as having critical or substantial needs.

The personalisation of social care services continues to be extended as more people are offered the choice and control to arrange their own care services through direct payments or personal budgets.

Joint Commissioning Strategies will continue to ensure integrated service responses, better use of resources, and monitoring of outcomes for service users and patients. Together with NHS partners, the council will commission services which provide care closer to home, ensuring that people are supported to maintain their independence in their own home for as long as possible.

In January 2012, a new Blue Badge Improvement Service (disabled persons parking) was introduced nationally to tackle badge fraud and misuse and make the

scheme fairer and more sustainable in the long term. As part of the new scheme, Durham County Council will continue to issue badges to those who are eligible for concessionary parking.

1. Improve life expectancy

Smoking is the biggest single contributor to the shorter life expectancy experienced in County Durham. Cancer and cardiovascular disease (CVD) account for 66% of early or premature deaths.

CVD is reducing in County Durham however it is still a major health problem across the county. Rates of CVD are higher for County Durham than the national average and deaths from CVD are significantly higher in County Durham than nationally for both men and women.

Alcohol is a significant contributor to ill-health across all age groups and all areas of the county. A multi-agency Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy has been developed, to reduce levels of alcohol-related ill-health in the county.

Going well

- We have increased use of powers across the county to tackle sales of alcohol and tobacco to people under the age of 18.
- The 80% target for cervical cancer screening rates for County Durham for 2011/12 was achieved by June 2011, when 81% was recorded.
- The Stop Smoking Service achieved 1,310 quitters between April – June 2011, which exceeded the target of 1,186.

Cause for concern

- Coronary heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, stroke and heart failure continue to be a cause for concern in County Durham.

Did you know?

- The County Durham Tobacco Control Alliance was highly commended in two categories at the 2010 'No Smoking Day' Organiser of the Year awards.
- More than 40 domestic premises were suspected of supplying illicit tobacco in 2011.
- There are 5 Health Networks in County Durham (Dales, Derwentside, Durham & Chester-le-Street, East Durham and Sedgefield) which tackle issues locally such as smoking, cardiovascular disease and physical activity.

Look out for:

- A revised multi-agency Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for County Durham in March 2013.
- A revised Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for County Durham by August 2012, which will include updated information on the health and wellbeing of the local population.
- A Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for County Durham by October 2012, which will inform future commissioning plans for services in the county.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Work with NHS County Durham and Darlington colleagues to implement all tobacco cessation actions contained in the Health and Wellbeing Partnership Delivery Plan	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013
Work with NHS County Durham and Darlington colleagues to complete all of the actions in the Health and Wellbeing Partnership Delivery Plan in respect of cancer-related issues, including awareness-raising and screening	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013
Develop a DCC Healthy Hearts programme in partnership with NHS County Durham to reduce cardiovascular disease prevalence and mortality rates	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013
Provide training and support to frontline staff and community champions, to enable them to offer help and advice to local people on health improvement and signpost them into services where appropriate, such as NHS health checks and stop smoking services	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013
Develop and agree a revised multi-agency Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for County Durham	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013
Reduce levels of drug-related ill health by working with services in the treatment centres to ensure that all service users receive a general health care assessment	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013
Work in partnership to develop a coordinated County Durham Excess Winter Deaths Plan	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013

2. Reduce health inequalities

Although health in County Durham has improved over recent years and people now live longer lives, the rate of progress has not been equal across the county and health inequalities are still evident.

These health inequalities exist as a result of complex interactions caused by a number of factors, which can be broadly described as:

- Inequalities in opportunity – poverty, family, education, employment and the environment (these are known as the wider determinants of health)
- Inequalities in lifestyle choices – smoking, physical activity, food, drugs, alcohol and sexual activity
- Inequalities in access to services - for those who are already ill or have known risk factors for disease (this is known as health inequity)

Obesity is a major risk factor in the development of a number of severe medical conditions. Being obese makes people more likely to suffer from Type II diabetes, diseases of the cardiovascular system (e.g. heart disease, stroke, angina, deep vein thrombosis, and high blood pressure), certain types of cancer, arthritis of the back and other health problems.

Childhood obesity is linked to diet and nutrition, physical activity, parenting and emotional health and wellbeing. The proportion of County Durham children in Year 6 classified as obese is above the national average.

As with a healthy diet, participation in physical activity is known to benefit overall health and is particularly linked to improved cardiovascular health, reduced levels of obesity and improved mental health. The council will be taking various steps to improve overall level of participation in physical activity, driven by the delivery of its Sport and Leisure Strategy.

Going well

- 'Healthy Hearts' events funded by the Health and Wellbeing Partnership are providing health checks in community venues for conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- The Warm Front fuel poverty scheme has resulted in over 3,000 households receiving free central heating and insulation.
- Partnership arrangements with 4 community organisations are being developed to operate leisure facilities.

Cause for concern

- The proportion of children in Year 6 classified as obese is around twice that of children in Reception and is above the national average.
- Overweight young people have a 50% chance of being overweight adults and, unless childhood obesity is addressed, this is likely to increase demand on the NHS and Adult Services due to the health problems associated with adult obesity.

Did you know?

- The promotion and introduction of HealthZones in County Durham libraries resulted in a 13% increase in the number of health-related books borrowed in 2010/11 and the trend is continuing, with a projected increase of 2% for 2011/12.
- Visits by the Wellness on Wheels (WOW) mobile fitness trailer has resulted in 9 permanent community facilities called 'legacy gyms' being provided across the county.

Look out for:

- A new 'Telehealth' service to provide equipment to people with diabetes to enable them to monitor their vital signs, including blood pressure, weight and blood sugar, and pass this information back to health professionals.
- In October 2012, an exciting new event - the 'Etape North Pennines' - will attract cyclists to County Durham to tackle a difficult course of 78 miles and raise funds for the Marie Curie Cancer Care charity.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Work with regional partners to deliver a range of health interventions aimed at promoting healthy eating and covering the key themes of diet and nutrition, including sampling, healthy eating awards and provision of food labelling advice	Head of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection	31 December 2012
Work with the governing bodies of 5 key sports to develop countywide shared investment and delivery plans	Head of Sport and Leisure Services	30 September 2012
Play a lead role in the review of, and further develop, the 5 community sport networks to ensure they are fit for purpose	Head of Sport and Leisure Services	30 April 2014
Work with the Regeneration and Economic Development (RED) service grouping to deliver improvements in housing conditions; through the implementation of the council's Private Sector Housing Strategy, using the joint operational protocol between the Environment Protection Team and the Housing Renewal and Improvement Team	Head of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection	31 March 2013
Implement a new Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the private rented sector, which will run concurrently with the mandatory licensing scheme.	Head of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection	31 December 2013
Deliver a publicity campaign to help tackle obesity levels within the county, which will be evaluated as part of a national programme	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013

3. Improve mental health and wellbeing of the population

In County Durham, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the population has been identified as a priority. Good mental health and resilience are very important to people's physical health, relationships, education, training, work and to individuals achieving their potential.

People at higher risk of suffering from poor mental health include those with poor educational attainment, the unemployed, older people, those with long term conditions (such as coronary heart disease, diabetes), people with learning disabilities and people living in more deprived communities.

It is recognised that maximising independence for people is an important contributor to positive mental health. It is also widely acknowledged that participation in work is one of the main routes to social inclusion and improving mental health and wellbeing. The financial and emotional burden of unemployment has a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing, and problems such as anxiety and depression impact on significant numbers of people out of work.

An ageing population in County Durham will also present several challenges for both health and social care and an increasingly older population will see a rise in mental health conditions, dementia, increased levels of disability and long term conditions (a condition that cannot at present be cured but can be controlled by medication and other therapies).

Going well

- The council's mental health support and recovery service was shortlisted in the 2012 Local Government Chronicle Awards for Health and Social Care

Cause for concern

- According to the County Durham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011-12, statistics available from the government's Projecting Older People Population Information system show that for older people in County Durham between 2011 - 2030:
 - Depression will rise from 7,986 to 11,869 (49%)
 - Limiting long term illness will rise from 52,734 to 79,188 (50%)
 - Severe depression will rise from 2,512 to 3,870 (54%)

Did you know?

- At least one in four people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their life
- One in ten children aged between 5 and 16 years has a mental health problem and many continue to have mental health problems into adulthood
- Half of those with lifetime mental health problems first experience symptoms by the age of 14, and three-quarters before their mid-20s
- According to the Alzheimer's Society, dementia affects 5% of people aged 65 and 20% of those over 80

Look out for:

- Promotion of sports activities through the Area Action Partnerships and the Youth Service
- Opportunities to get involved in the DLI Museum and Durham Art Gallery Community Panel - this not only helps people to share common interests but also develops individuals' feelings of confidence, self-esteem and personal achievement

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Complete implementation of the Mental Health Employment and Training Strategy 2010/13 to support recovery, promote social inclusion and increase the number of people progressing into education, training, volunteering and employment	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013
Work in partnership with NHS County Durham to develop a new Public Health Mental Health Strategy	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013
Support the implementation of the Public Health Suicide Action Plan	Head of Adult Commissioning	31 March 2013
Deliver a programme of arts and heritage activities which positively impact on community cohesion and wellbeing of people living / working in and visiting County Durham including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering opportunities across arts and heritage activities • Bringing different sections of the community together through cultural activities • Consulting with the DLI Museum and Durham Art Gallery Community Panel on the venue's current and future programme and work 	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013

4. Enable adults with social care needs to live independently

Durham County Council has a statutory duty to assess the needs of people (and their carers) that require a social care assessment. The assessment process uses eligibility criteria to determine the level of need of individuals and the level of service required. Durham County Council gives priority to people with the greatest care

needs and services are therefore provided to those assessed as having critical or substantial needs.

In response to the introduction of the Social Care Bill in 2011, recommendations were put forward by the Law Commission (which published a report related to social care reform) and the Dilnott Commission (which produced a report on the future funding of care and support). In 2012, the government will publish a Care and Support White Paper and this will have an impact on the way in which health and social care services are provided.

Durham County Council continues to lead on the personalisation of services, which has introduced greater levels of choice and control to users of services, their families and carers through the use of direct payments and personal budgets. By April 2013, councils are expected to provide personal budgets for everyone eligible for ongoing social care; Durham County Council has exceeded the government's current targets for personalisation.

In order to help service users lead a more independent life, the council operates in-house care and support services. These include a reablement service, which gives people over 18 years of age the opportunity, motivation and confidence to relearn / regain some of the skills they may have lost as a consequence of poor health, disability, impairment or accident and helps people to stay independent in their own homes for as long as possible.

The council also works with health partners in County Durham to provide 'intermediate care' services for people, which promote faster recovery from illness, prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and maximise independent living.

Going well

- At October 2011, 97% of adult social care service users said that the care and support they had received made their quality of life much or a little better – this is higher than the council's target of 90% for 2011/12.
- At October 2011, 86% of respondents to a survey of adult social care service users found it very or fairly easy to find information and advice about social care services – this is better than the national average of 55%.
- In November 2011, 48% of adult social care service users were in receipt of a personal budget to arrange their own social care services, against a target of 50% to be achieved by the end of March 2011.

Cause for concern

- The number of critical and substantial needs identified for adults with a learning disability show significant increases for needs related to 'education / vocation'

Did you know?

- At October 2011, 32% of carers in County Durham had received a social care service during the past year – this is above the England average of 26.5%
- As at October 2011, 96% of people (203 out of 212) reported that re-ablement services had made their life "much" or "a little" better

Look out for:

- An improved Durham Information Guide (DIG) which allows people to search online for information on social care services, health groups and other community information such as arts, leisure, sports and social groups and organisations on a countywide, regional and national basis

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure consistent and effective application of eligibility criteria so that adult social care services continue to be provided to those people most in need	Head of Adult Care	31 March 2013
Following the re-procurement of independent sector day services, review the provision of in-house day services	Head of Adult Commissioning	30 June 2013
Extend the personalisation agenda by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further developing the online Durham Information Guide to ensure that people are provided with the most up-to-date information to enable them to make their own choices regarding their social care needs and local services • Working with partners and service users to ensure that more people access personal budgets, to allow them greater choice and control over their social care needs 	Head of Adult Commissioning	31 March 2013 31 March 2013
Review the effectiveness of the reablement service, which provides domiciliary care to adults to enable them to develop and maintain their independence	Head of Adult Care	30 April 2012
Develop an action plan to implement the recommendations of the Care and Support White Paper, which will have an impact on the delivery of health and social care services in County Durham	Head of Policy Planning & Performance	30 June 2012 (subject to publication of the White Paper)

5. Respond to the White Paper, 'Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS'

The Health and Social Care Bill was introduced to Parliament on 19th January 2011. It takes forward proposals for reform set out in the NHS White Paper 'Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS', which require primary legislation.

These proposals include making clinicians, groups of GPs and health professionals (known as Clinical Commissioning Groups) responsible for commissioning services for their communities and giving patients a stronger voice through the establishment of national and local HealthWatch organisations.

The local HealthWatch will ensure that views and feedback from patients and carers in County Durham are an integral part of local commissioning across health and social care. Durham County Council will commission local HealthWatch to provide advocacy and support, helping people to access and make choices about services and supporting individuals who want to make a complaint.

Durham County Council will work with Clinical Commissioning Groups to develop a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for County Durham. The purpose of the JSNA is to provide a high level overview of the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the people of County Durham, which will help decision-makers in targeting resources to both services and geographic areas of the county. The JSNA will also inform the development of a new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the county, from which commissioning plans will be subsequently produced.

As part of the government's plans for public health, Durham County Council will assume a new role across three areas of public health:

- Health improvement (including people's lifestyles as well as the inequalities in health and the wider social influences of health)
- Health protection (including infectious diseases, environmental hazards and emergency preparedness)
- Health services (including service planning and evaluation)

The council's new responsibilities will include services related to tobacco control, alcohol and substance misuse, public mental health, obesity and community nutrition, and increasing levels of physical activity in the local population.

In 2012, transition plans will be developed and agreed for County Durham and funding will be provided to the council for its new responsibilities in 2013/14; in the meantime, 'shadow' allocations will be provided for 2012/13.

Durham County Council will employ the Director of Public Health for County Durham, who will be responsible for ensuring that the council delivers public health functions such as appropriate access to sexual health services, NHS Health Check assessment, elements of the Healthy Child Programme, the National Child Measurement Programme, ensuring that commissioners receive the public health advice they need, and making sure that plans are in place to protect the health of the local population.

Going well

- The County Durham Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board was established in 2011 and consists of senior decision-makers from Durham County Council and the NHS.

- The Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board is leading on the development of a refreshed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy to be produced in 2012.

Cause for concern

- The successful investments made in recent years to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population must be maintained and efforts made to continue the positive momentum.

Did you know?

- A National Commissioning Board will carry out annual assessments of local Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure that they are producing better health outcomes for local people.
- County Durham has two Clinical Commissioning Groups which include GPs, nurses and health professionals – one for North Durham and one for Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield.

Look out for:

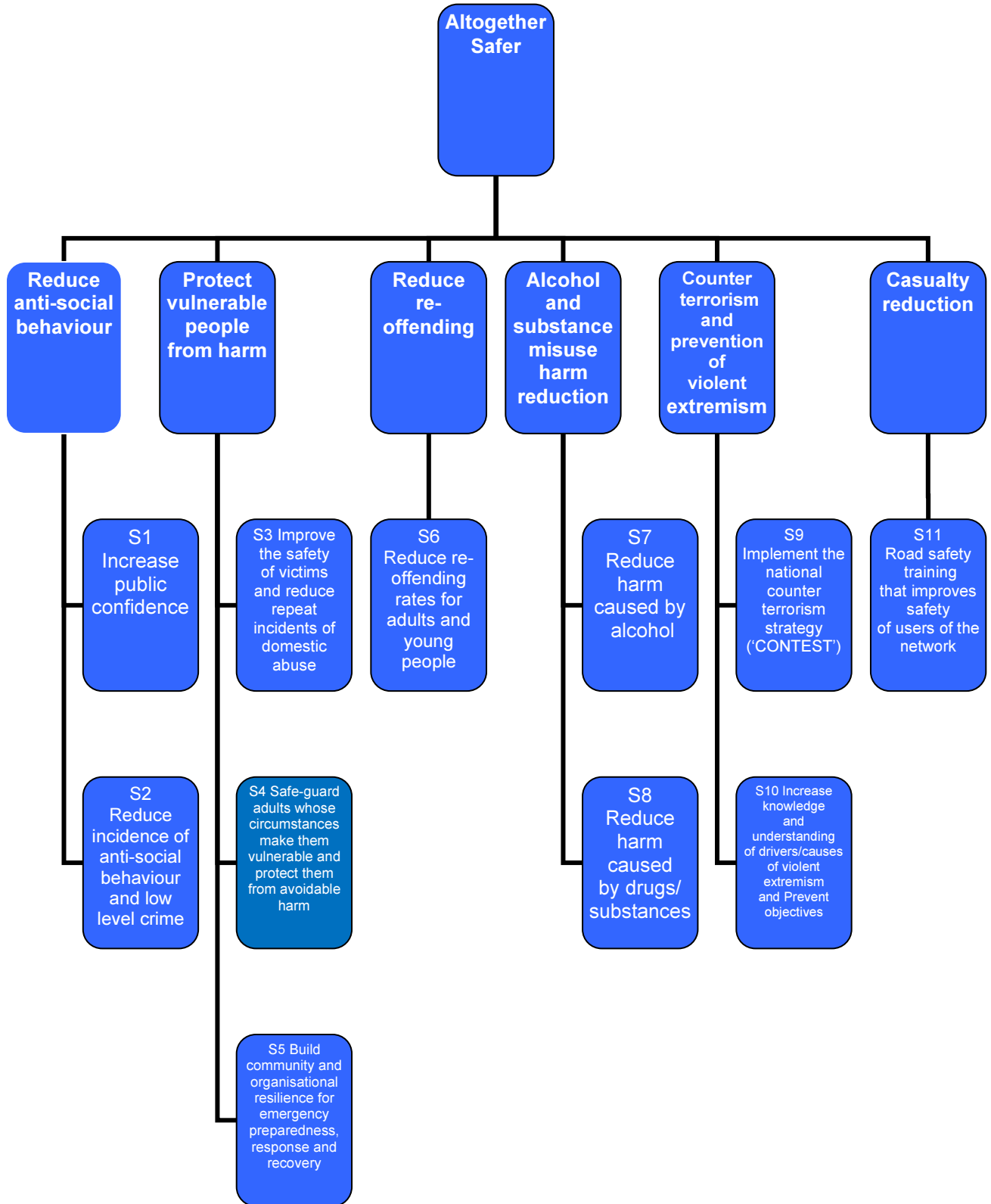
- An engagement event for stakeholders and partners of the County Durham Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board in June 2012.
- The establishment of local HealthWatch by October 2012, to ensure that views and feedback from patients and carers is fed back to commissioners of health and social care services in County Durham.
- Changes to the NHS and Durham County Council taking responsibility for some areas of public health from April 2013.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Work with partners and Clinical Commissioning Groups to review all Joint Commissioning Strategies for County Durham, to ensure they are fit for purpose and designed to achieve strategic health and wellbeing outcomes for local people:	Head of Adult Commissioning	31 March 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people with mental health needs 2009-13 • Adults with mental health needs 2009-13 • Learning disabilities 2009-13 • Carers 2009-13 • Older people 2010-13 • Intermediate Care 2010-13 • Long term conditions 2011-14 • Domestic abuse services 2011-14 	Head of Social Inclusion	

<p>Commission the establishment of local HealthWatch in County Durham to act as a local consumer champion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete tendering activity • Award contract • Establish local HealthWatch • Local HealthWatch assumes joint responsibility with DCC for commissioning NHS complaints advocacy 	<p>Head of Adult Commissioning</p>	<p>30 September 2012</p> <p>31 October 2012</p> <p>31 January 2013</p> <p>30 April 2013</p>
<p>Lead on the development of the County Durham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2012/13, working in partnership with Clinical Commissioning Groups</p>	<p>Head of Policy Planning & Performance (AWH)</p>	<p>31 August 2012</p>
<p>Develop with partners a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for County Durham</p>	<p>Head of Policy Planning & Performance (AWH)</p>	<p>31 October 2012</p>
<p>In partnership with the NHS, prepare for the transfer of public health resources to DCC by developing an action plan to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Director of Public Health has been appointed • All relevant staff are transferred • Appropriate management arrangements are in place 	<p>Head of Policy Planning & Performance (AWH)</p>	<p>Before April 2013</p> <p>By April 2013</p> <p>Before April 2013</p>
<p>Work with NHS partners to ensure that transitional arrangements are in place for the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board to meet formal constitutional requirements</p>	<p>Head of Policy Planning & Performance (AWH)</p>	<p>01 April 2013</p>

Altogether Safer



The council will continue to work with partner organisations, as part of the Safe Durham Partnership, to tackle crime and disorder in County Durham.

The council supports the Safe Durham Partnership in its strategic plan to deliver a day-to-day operational response to issues impacting on our neighbourhoods. The

council will work with partners to involve the community in tackling priorities, with the aim of creating a safer county and contributing to an Altogether Better Durham.

Key hotspots around the county are identified as particularly vulnerable in terms of crime and disorder. These areas generally face problems such as unemployment, low educational attainment and ill-health. Evidence shows that there are links between levels of deprivation and levels of domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, re-offending, alcohol and substance misuse, and road casualties.

The council will continue to work with partners throughout the county to tackle these issues, which have an impact on the personal safety of residents and service users. From 2012, the council will support the Safe Durham Partnership's work with the newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner.

The council will continue to support the Safe Durham partnership in delivering its strategic priorities:

1. Reduce anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is associated with everyday problems like nuisance neighbours, noise, graffiti, vehicle crime, abandoned cars, vandalism, litter, verbal abuse, intimidation, harassment and street drinking. Anti-social behaviour also affects people's happiness and pride in their community as a place to live and deters them from accessing local parks and other community spaces. Consultation across the county continues to identify concerns amongst local communities about crime and anti-social behaviour.

Going well

- Anti-social behaviour incidents reported to the police fell by 11% in 2010/11 compared with 2009/10 – this was 5,779 fewer incidents.
- Youth-related anti-social behaviour went down by nearly 20% when comparing April to September 2010 against the same period in 2011.

Cause for concern

- Alcohol misuse is strongly linked to anti-social behaviour.
- County Durham experiences some of the highest rates of alcohol-related hospital admissions in the UK.

Did you know?

- We have increased use of powers to tackle sales of alcohol and tobacco to people under the age of 18
- A new Police and Crime Commissioner will be elected in summer 2012, as part of the government's Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill.

Look out for:

- The Safe Durham Partnership's Strategic Assessment 2011/12 and a refreshed Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2012/13, to be published in April 2012.
- Promotion of Neighbourhood Watch and all 'Watch' schemes (farm, business, pub, shop and garage) in 2012.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Lead on the production of the Safe Durham Partnership's Strategic Assessment 2012/13 and Partnership Plan refresh 2012/13 and develop an integrated approach to coordinate activity with the new Police and Crime Commissioner	Head of Social Inclusion	01 April 2013
Complete implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Strategy 2011/14 and ensure an effective joint approach to developing action plans to tackle anti-social behaviour and low level crime	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2014
Review the priorities and patrol areas of Neighbourhood Wardens across the county to realign resources and harmonise working practices	Head of Direct Services	31 July 2012
Work with partners to provide an integrated team approach through implementing Safer Neighbourhood Units, improving delivery outcomes and providing service delivery changes to reflect the anticipated changes in anti-social behaviour legislation	Head of Direct Services	31 March 2013
Review all education and enforcement procedures and processes in relation to anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime (this will include case recording and case management procedures, allocation on investigation, risk assessment, reflecting development of working practices within Safer Neighbourhood Units and One Point, the potential for mobile working and forthcoming legislative changes)	Head of Direct Services	30 September 2013

2. Protect vulnerable people from harm

Protecting vulnerable people from harm includes the safety of victims and reducing repeat incidents of domestic abuse.

Safeguarding adults is a key priority for Durham County Council and partners and a zero tolerance approach has been adopted. This means that all agencies are fully committed to preventing the abuse of adults and responding promptly when abuse is suspected.

There are numerous factors which have contributed to the overall increase in safeguarding referrals for suspected abuse. These include the continuing adoption of a zero tolerance policy, improved awareness of safeguarding through the delivery of

comprehensive training and communication strategies, national drivers and media attention linked to the care services industry.

Going well

- The Local Resilience Forum draws together the emergency services, health organisations, the local authority and voluntary groups has been restructured to ensure we are better prepared to respond to a major emergency.
- Community resilience recognised in Local Resilience Forum Strategy.
- Approvals to severe weather plan.
- Statutory emergency plan in place for pipelines, reservoirs and Control of Major Accident Hazards sites.
- Flood warden schemes in place for all high risk communities.
- The number of adult safeguarding investigations completed within 28 days has increased from 79% in 2010/11 to 84% which exceeds the council's target of 75%.

Cause for concern

- In 2011, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children launched national research which highlighted that a quarter of girls and 18% of boys reported some form of parent / partner physical violence.
- A third of all domestic violence incidents are alcohol-related.

Did you know?

- The number of adult safeguarding referrals for suspected abuse increased by 134% when comparing 2007/08 figures with 2010/11 – this is partly due to national and local campaigns to raise awareness of safeguarding issues and provide local contact details for help and advice.
- There are over 10,000 reported incidents of domestic abuse a year in County Durham, which include not only physical violence but also isolation from family and friends, control over finances, sexual and verbal abuse, threats and intimidation.

Look out for:

- Initiatives set up by the police to protect elderly and vulnerable residents from bogus officials (people pretending to represent companies, to gain access to people's homes)
- The community emergency response team programme.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Complete the implementation of the Joint Commissioning Strategy for Domestic Abuse Services in County Durham to improve the safety of victims and children who witness and experience domestic abuse, reduce repeat incidents of domestic violence, and reduce serious violent crime across the county and in priority locations	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2014

In partnership with community safety colleagues, agree information-sharing mechanisms for vulnerable people and those with challenging needs (through the work of Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Groups and high impact locality work)	Head of Adult Care	30 June 2012
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Complete a programme of intelligence led enforcement initiatives and other interventions to reduce door step crime, rogue traders and the supply of illicit, counterfeit and age restricted products	Head of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection	31 March 2013
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3. Reduce re-offending

Reducing re-offending remains a strategic priority for the Safe Durham Partnership. This is in response to the national estimate that 10% of the active offender population is responsible for half of all crime.

A Reducing Re-offending Strategy 2011-14 has been developed, with the aim of reducing crime by reducing re-offending rates through the following two objectives: Prevent inter-generational offending (criminal behaviour within families and across generations) and prevent repeat offending.

Going well

- The overall crime rate between April and September 2011 shows a decrease of 5.5% on the same time period in 2010.
- Between April and September 2011, there was a 62% reduction in offences committed by offenders currently within the Integrated Offender Management team areas, when compared to the same time period in 2010.

Cause for concern

- A small proportion of persistent offenders commit a large proportion of crime.

Did you know?

- In 2010/11, the main types of crime were low level acquisitive crime such as shoplifting and the theft of metal, which accounted for 21% of all stealing.
- To manage the most prolific offenders in County Durham, the Safe Durham Partnership has put in place an Integrated Offender Management team across the county with three delivery centres for North Durham, Easington and South Durham.

Look out for:

- A continuing reduction in repeat offending rates for our most persistent offenders, which will have a significant impact on reducing overall crime in our local communities.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Review the Reducing Re-Offending Strategy and Action Plan 2011/14 to prevent inter-generational offending and repeat offending	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013

4. Alcohol and substance misuse harm reduction

Alcohol consumption is a significant contributory factor with respect to a range of offences, in particular violence, disorder and anti-social behaviour. The main issue is addressing the circumstances and situations where the consumption of alcohol contributes to unacceptable forms of behaviour.

Alcohol misuse can lead to people becoming more vulnerable to offences of assault; it is also a major factor in fire-related deaths.

The council is working with partner agencies to provide education in schools about the dangers of 'legal highs'. Young people who may be at greatest risk of alcohol dependency are those whose parents abuse alcohol. An alcohol referral scheme has also been introduced for over 18s.

The government published a new national Drugs Strategy in December 2010. Local activity has previously focused on increasing the number of people able to access and receive drug treatment, either in the community or in custody. The new strategy emphasises the importance of breaking the cycle of dependency on drugs within families and communities, focusing on international trade and supply routes, and getting people through recovery to continue a drug-free life.

In terms of the crime and disorder agenda for County Durham, there is a need to ensure that appropriate substance misuse education is delivered. Confidence by the courts in the treatment system needs to be maintained, so that drug rehabilitation is seen as an effective option to custody. In order to restrict the supply of drugs, work is taking place at a local level through integrated enforcement activity involving the Safe Durham Partnership, the public and service users.

Going well

- The number of individuals arrested for being drunk and disorderly has fallen slightly from 1,056 in 2009/10 to 909 in 2010/11.
- Under-age drinking is being tackled in the Stanley area by establishing a Community Alcohol Partnership.

Cause for concern

- 37% of all assaults are alcohol-related.
- Half of all violent crimes are alcohol-related.

Did you know?

- The Best Bar None initiative (where licensed premises and their management standards are reviewed against strict national criteria) is being promoted across the whole of County Durham to have a positive impact on the issues caused by the night-time economy.
- An Alcohol Health Needs Assessment was produced in 2011 to assess the local needs of alcohol misusers; this will enable evidence-based decisions to be made on how needs might be most effectively met within available resources.

Look out for:

- Alcohol Awareness Week in November 2012.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Develop and agree a revised multi-agency Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for County Durham to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevent and tackle crime and disorder problems associated with alcohol misuse• Reduce illegal sales of alcohol within the county	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013
Implement the Safe Durham Partnership's response to the Government's national Drug Strategy 2010 by ensuring that social work support in treatment centres: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assists people to seek help and overcome their dependency on drugs• Addresses other issues in addition to drug treatment such as offending, employment and housing	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013
Work with partners to deliver a programme of interventions involving licensing enforcement and health promotion initiatives aimed at reducing harm caused by alcohol	Head of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection	31 March 2013

5. Counter terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism

In 2011, the government released new 'Contest' and 'Prevent' strategies. The strands of the Contest strategy remain the same:

- Pursue – to stop terrorist attacks (remit of police & security services);
- Prepare – where we cannot stop an attack, to mitigate its impact;
- Protect – to strengthen our overall protection against terrorist attacks; and
- Prevent – to stop people becoming or supporting terrorists.

The Prevent strategy has a broader scope but a much tighter focus, with the following three objectives:

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it.
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; and,
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.

Research for the new Prevent strategy provided an understanding about the risks of people becoming susceptible to terrorist propaganda. Young people are more inclined to be 'sympathetic' to terrorism and most terrorist offences are committed by those under 30.

Within County Durham, partner agencies are working closely together to support the government's strategies and address these issues.

Going well

- The Safe Durham Partnership delivered a training programme to raise awareness of preventing violent extremism (such as Act-Now and WRAP) – the training targeted various audiences from chief executives and senior management teams to frontline practitioners and members of the community

Cause for concern

- The current threat level for the UK is 'substantial', which means that a terrorist attack is a strong possibility

Did you know?

- 10% of all terrorist convictions nationally fall within the age range 15-19

Look out for:

- A 'Staying Safe on the Internet' initiative delivered to pupils through the Safer Schools Partnership

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Provide the council's lead contribution to the Contest Strategy delivery action plan and complete the self assessment for the Home Office	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013
Develop an action plan to respond to the government's refocused Prevent Strategy to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat faced from those who promote it Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which need to be addressed 	Head of Social Inclusion	31 March 2013

6. Casualty reduction

The Government have not as yet extended the casualty reduction targets beyond the 2010 timeframe sent within the national casualty reduction strategy. As part of the work to develop the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3), the County Council has chosen to project the target line beyond the 2010 timeframe for the life of LTP3 i.e. 2015. Road accident numbers in 2010 showed a positive year for the numbers of people killed or seriously injured particularly children. 2011 to date (January – September) has been more challenging with the numbers of children involved in serious accidents increasing beyond the targeted profile.

Going well

- We have further developed partnership arrangements with town and parish councils and volunteer groups to help the winter maintenance service.

Cause for concern

- Motorcyclists were involved in 28% of killed or seriously injured road accident casualties (January – September 2011).
- 51% of killed or seriously injured road accident casualties occurred on 60mph/70mph roads (January – September 2011).
- During the January to September 2011 period, the majority of child killed or seriously injured road traffic accidents occurred Monday – Friday, during daylight hours and involved children aged 13 or over.
- Funding for highway maintenance has reduced, whilst responsibilities have increased related to street lighting, street furniture, and un-adopted footways.

Did you know?

- The County Council along with its partners in the County Durham Road Casualty Partnership monitor and analyse all accidents for trends i.e. location, road condition, speed, demographic, drink or drug use and transport type and between them develop educational campaigns, enforcement and engineering solutions to try to reduce accidents in the future.
- The County Council organised a regional road safety event last year with 60 delegates from around the region who came together to share best practice in reducing road traffic accidents.
- The Mid Durham AAP set up a Priority Task Group in 2011 to focus on road safety and highways after the AAP voted it to be their second highest priority for 2011/12.

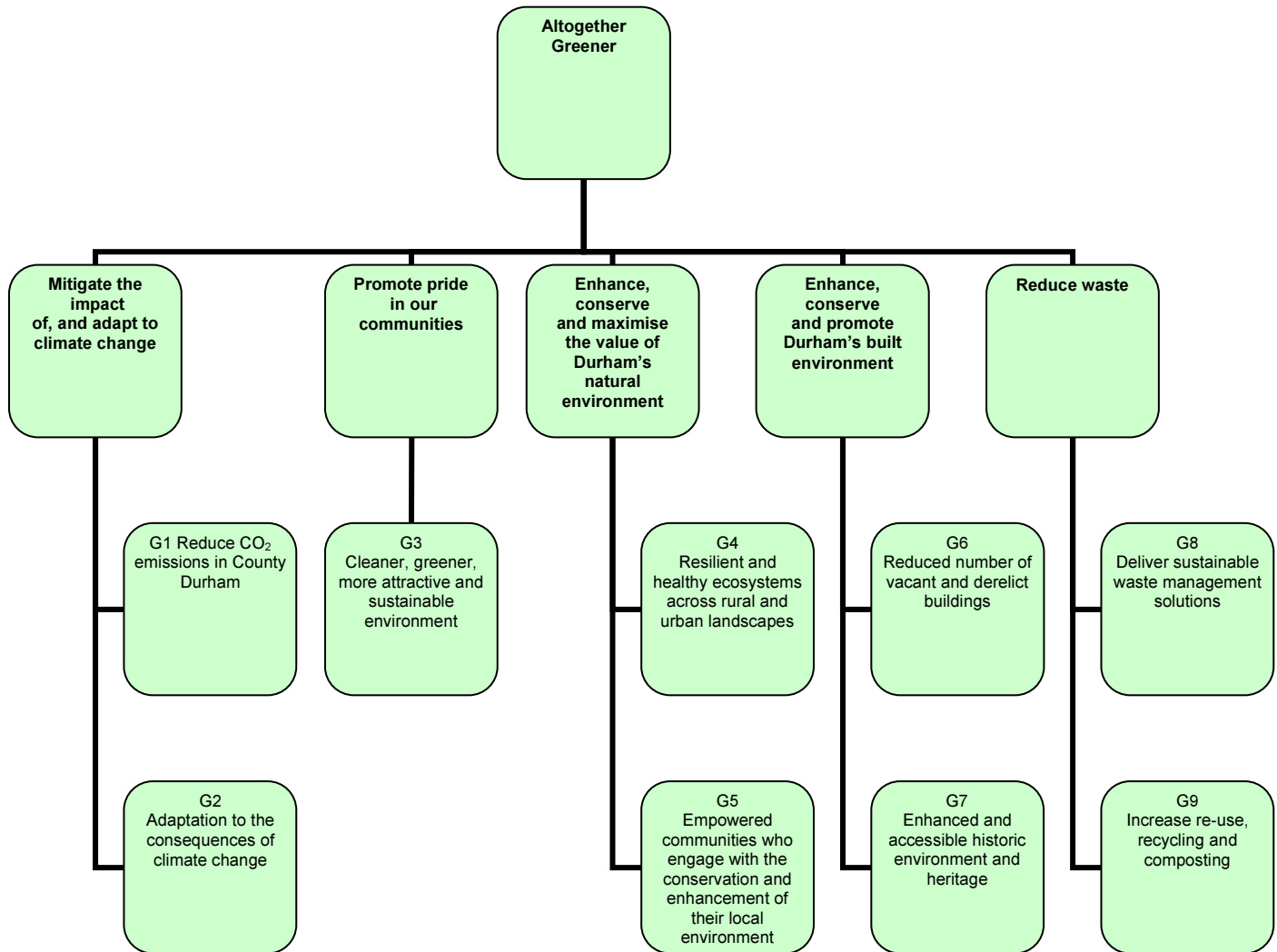
Look out for:

- 'Walking buses' as a safe and sustainable way for children to get to school.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Identify trends and install appropriate solutions to reduce road casualties and implement a programme of engineering improvements	Head of Transport and Contract Services	2016
Develop a Junior Road Safety Officer website	Head of Transport and Contract Services	April 2012

Altogether Greener



There is mounting evidence that the UK is beginning to experience changing climatic conditions and more extreme weather patterns attributable to the effects of global climate change. These changes are accelerating and will bring significant challenges to every aspect of our lives, our communities and the natural environment. The council has set challenging targets to reduce carbon emissions caused by the council's operations and also to tackle emissions across the wider county. We aim to do this through programmed activity with residents and also through working with large scale businesses and employers such as the NHS and Fire and Rescue Service. The council also has a key role in ensuring that resilience to extreme weather events is increased through adapting to the changes caused by climate change.

Reducing waste is another important contributor to sustaining our natural resources. Last year we land-filled 143,946 tonnes of municipal household waste representing a reduction of 14% on the previous year. We need to further reduce waste generated, increase levels of re-use and recycling, and where possible recover energy from waste if we are to achieve our goal of diverting waste from landfill.

Through engaging with our communities, we know that local environmental cleanliness is an important factor in making County Durham a good place to live, work and bring up a family. Both the natural and built environment, require careful

management to ensure that we can maintain a good quality of place and access to our natural assets. In addition, communities regularly emphasise the importance of access to parks and green spaces for socialising, exercise and enjoying nature. Through education, involvement and enforcement, where necessary, we will work with communities to improve the overall cleanliness and attractiveness of our local environment.

1. Mitigate the impact of, and adapt to climate change

The council has targets to reduce its own carbon emissions by 40% by 2015 and emissions across the whole of County Durham by 40% by 2020. Alongside other key partners, the council is working to ensure the county is well prepared to adapt to the consequences of climate change. In particular we need to ensure that County Durham is well prepared to cope with any future major flooding events. By working with the Environment Agency, we have identified those areas which may be vulnerable to flooding. Over the next three years we will be implementing actions to mitigate the potential impact and protect our communities.

Going well

- We have invested in new street lighting to save energy and reduce carbon emissions, improved the energy efficiency of 3000 Durham homes as a result of £5.5million investment through Carbon Efficiency Reduction Target (CERT) and reduced carbon emissions from fleet vehicles by 11%.
- We have now completed a total of 478 Solar installations including:
 - Photovoltaic panels on 40 Council buildings saving 1000 tonnes of carbon and generating an income of £600,000 a year;
 - Photovoltaic panels on social housing to maximise benefit from the Government's 'Feed in Tariff' which subsidised the installation costs.
- School carbon reduction officers have overseen implementation of carbon saving measures that have saved 1,200 tonnes and £150,000 a year
- The Surface Water Management Plan, highlighting areas where flood risk needs to be managed through protection or alleviation measures, has been approved and is now an active plan with flood risk areas being monitored and schemes programmed as and when required.

Cause for concern

The North East Adaptation Study (2008) <http://www.adaptne.org/> highlights the following trends in the County Durham climate over the next few decades to 2050:

- There will be an increased frequency of summer heatwaves and this will create significant implications for public health.
- Increased temperatures are also likely to increase the risk of disease for both humans and livestock.
- With the projected increases in extreme rainfall events, flood events may become more frequent.
- Government have made major reductions to subsidies that previously encouraged fitting of photovoltaic panels (the Feed-in Tariff), which will impact on the number of installations, and this may destabilise the wider renewables industry.

- Progress against the Countywide CO₂ target has been slow but considerable progress has been made in reducing emissions from County Council activity during 2010/11.

Did you know

- We maintain more than 80,000 street lights and by 31 March 2012 approximately 15% of the lighting stock will be controlled by CMS (Central Management System) equipment allowing remote monitoring, switching and dimming to reduce energy and CO₂ emissions.
- We achieved an “Outstanding” BREEAM rating on the new Brandon and Esh Winning Primary Schools: the most sustainable buildings in the property portfolio, a ‘first’ nationally.
- Carbon emissions from Council homes across County Durham have been reduced by 26,320 tonnes, saving households a total of £1.5 million from their energy bills.
- We now have 12 buildings heated by wood pellets which are a carbon neutral fuel source.
- In partnership with others, we won the National Home Improvement Council Award for the best use of photo-voltaics (solar panels) in a retro-fit scheme at Craghead in 2011.

Look out for:

- The new Low Carbon Master Plan which will inform our future Climate Change Strategy.
- An EU supported project called IMCORE which is studying the Durham Coastline and looking at changes to marine ecology.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Quantify the carbon impacts of the council's waste services; including those associated with new waste treatment and look to set future targets and actions for reducing them.	Head of Projects & Business Services/ Carbon Management Unit	August 2012

<p>Deliver sustainable design schemes for the new primary school buildings at Kirk Merrington and Greenland (South Moor) in order to improve environmental performance through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biomass boilers to reduce CO2; • A Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS); • Maximising the use of natural daylight and ventilation; • Grey water recycling capability; • Surfaces painted with a low level of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) & • Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) A-rated flooring <p>Achieving an overall BREEAM standard of 'excellence'</p>	<p>Head of Technical Services</p>	<p>April 2013 for both Greenland and Kirk Merrington</p>
<p>Review possibilities for moving to alternative powered vehicles and provide recommendations for consideration</p>	<p>Head of Direct Services</p>	<p>August 2013</p>
<p>Review existing network of Customer Access Points as part of the overall authority Accommodation Strategy and the Customer Contact Strategy in order to reduce the need to travel</p>	<p>Head of Sport and Leisure Services</p>	<p>March 2014</p>
<p>Mitigate the effect of flooding throughout the county by establishing a Flood Risk Management Strategy :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing and supporting climate change adaptation through land allocations and the design and enhancement of environments (County Durham Plan). • Managing the coastal environment in accordance with the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) 	<p>Head of Technical Services</p>	<p>April 2013</p>
<p>Install 120 electric vehicle charging points</p>	<p>Head of Transport and Contract Services</p>	<p>March 2014</p>

Implement the County Durham Low Carbon Masterplan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan published 	Head of Planning and Assets	March 2016
Develop and implement a climate change adaptation strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications and community engagement plan 	Head of Planning and Assets	Plan agreed December 2012

2. Promote pride in our communities

Consultation with our residents consistently identifies clean streets as one of the most important priorities. However, addressing this issue is not solely about the council improving its operations. To be truly effective and sustainable our approach should harness the contribution that everyone can make, as we all have a role to play in helping make our communities cleaner, safer and greener. We intend to encourage local people to look at ways to improve their local area and to get involved in implementing their ideas.

Going well

- Over 7,200 people participated in activities at the 2011 Altogether Greener event in Durham City
- We have established a Junior Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Currently a pilot, it aims to encourage young people to take an interest in their personal safety, their community and crime and disorder issues.
- We are promoting waste awareness messages countywide
- We are supporting the national Love Where You Live campaign and have delivered a number of events and initiatives during the last year to engender pride in our communities including :
 - Leadgate Week in Action
 - Sustrans Week in Action
 - Green Dog Walkers
 - The Word
 - Stanley Heart (loving where you live) community project for Stanley Bus Station
 - Golden Ticket – Riverside Park
 - Fix You – Chester le Street
 - Chester le street Market Activity week
 - Respect Event, Chester le Street
 - Northumbria in Bloom
 - Bulb Planting Challenge

Cause for concern

- It is anticipated that the reduction in CO₂ emissions from local authority operations will not achieve target.
- Operations is anticipated to The Residents Survey 2010 demonstrates that levels of deprivation are interlinked with feelings of safety.

- In those areas defined as being within the top 10% most deprived, 16% feel unsafe in their local area at night. This reduces significantly to 7% in areas defined as not deprived.

Did you know?

- Neighbourhood Watch has been expanded to include Street Champions, enabling environmental concerns to be reported.
- In total there were 20.29 tonnes of waste, collected from gardens and yards, from the 8 'Weeks of Action' in Derwent Valley.
- 24 sessions have been delivered in local schools, including 'Open your Eyes' DVD, Tidy Ted assemblies and Story Sack, educating 2,471 children and young people.

Look out for:

- Roll out of the Junior Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.
- The 2012 Environment Awards.
- The 'Golden Ticket' campaign in your area.
- Community conservation days in your area.
- Stanley Heart (loving where you live) community project for Stanley Bus Station 2012.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Deliver a £2.3m improvement scheme to Durham Crematorium which includes extending the existing building, installing new cremators which comply with European mercury abatement legislation, improving access and car parking facilities	Head of Technical Services	December 2012
Develop an Open Space Strategy to incorporate countryside, play events, playing pitches, parks, allotments	PPC Manager / Streetscene Area Manager (S)/Sport and Leisure	December 2012
Incorporate the 'Love where you live' campaign in a wide range of communication mechanisms in conjunction with 'Pride' theme	Head of Direct Services	September 2012
Implement the Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Part 2A by inspecting the top ten highest priority sites of potential concern, in County Durham	Head of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection	March 2013

3. Enhance, conserve and maximise the value of Durham's natural environment

Our natural environment underpins our economic prosperity, as well as our health and wellbeing and as a result, protecting the environment and enhancing biodiversity is a priority to us.

There have been a number of improvements to Durham's natural environment; the air we breathe is cleaner, the quality of water in our rivers has improved and our wildlife sites are in better condition. These successes show that properly focused environmental policies can deliver real change. Our natural environment is under constant pressure and if it is to be protected as a resource for future generations, we need to take action now.

There are natural challenges specific to the North East of England that need to be considered, including the need to provide large scale biodiverse landscapes to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Going well

15 parks and open spaces have been awarded green flags: an increase on the previous year and the highest of all North East authorities. The Authority also has the highest number of cemeteries with green flags of any burial authority in the country.

The Council is a key delivery partner in various 'Landscape Scale' partnerships. These include:

- The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership, helping to look after England's second largest AONB.
- The Limestone Landscapes and the 'Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area'.
- The emerging Local Nature Partnership covering the Derwent Valley, Durham Coalfield and the Tees Plain.
- The Heart of Durham partnership, which in particular has enabled recovery of small pearl bordered fritillary butterfly populations

Cause for concern

- Changing weather patterns associated with Climate Change are expected to negatively affect habitats in Durham and the species they support
- Despite the excellent progress made by the North Pennines AONB Partnership and others, more investment is needed in our peatlands to ensure that they can keep providing their many benefits for society, including being our best natural store of carbon.

Did you know?

- We undertake biodiversity management and enhancement works on the Countryside Estate comprising 1200 hectares and 70 sites
- The Council is responsible for management of more than 700 Ha of Woodland.

- 30% of the North Pennines AONB is in County Durham and, through its support for the North Pennines AONB Partnership; the Council is backing the conservation of some of the country's most threatened habitats, including extensive peatlands and rare species-rich upland hay meadows.
- The County Council supports a hedgerow partnership to provide grants for the maintenance and promotion of this valuable environmental asset in the County
- The Heritage Coast Partnership comprises those with an interest in the coast between Hendon and Hartlepool, protecting and enhancing this fantastic coastline and promoting its use for quiet recreation. Our work was recognised through a Council of Europe Landscape Awards Special Mention during 2011. (www.durhamheritagecoast.org)

Look out for:

- The forthcoming Countryside Strategy, Green Infrastructure Strategy, Open Spaces Strategy and Heritage Coast Management Plan
- Opportunities to get involved in countryside volunteering across County Durham, and particularly in new programmes from the North Pennines AONB Partnership such as community archaeology project 'Altogether Archaeology' and community biodiversity recording / conservation project 'WildWatch'
- The Design and Conservation supplementary planning document which will set out the approach for design and conservation to be delivered through forthcoming County Durham Plan
- The 'Jubilee Woods' tree planting project, in celebration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's historic 2012 Diamond Jubilee - where the County Council, in partnership with the Woodland Trust, CDENT and the Forestry Commission are planting 140 hectares of trees in the County

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Support the development of Local Nature Partnerships and subsequent partnership action planning	Head of Planning and Assets	2012-14
Contribute to the development of emerging Local Area Delivery Groups and their associated action plans for groups including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Limestone Landscape Partnership • The Heart of Durham Landscape Partnership • Heart of Teesdale • The Derwent Valley and Pennine Fringe Partnership 	Head of Planning and Assets	2012-2014
Deliver a Tree Planting programme which will see 250,000 trees planted across the County by March 2014	Head of Planning and Assets	March 2014

4. Enhance, conserve and promote Durham's built environment

Our built environment is the place where most people both live and work. The appearance of our built environment is important but good design is about much more than how things look. It is about uplifting communities and transforming how people feel and behave. It is also about using resources effectively and imaginatively.

There is a need to plan for the future of our built environment. As our population ages, we need to make places more welcoming and inclusive, and ensure that they are designed for the convenience and the enjoyment of all age groups. In addition, the challenges of climate change demand that we fundamentally re-think the way we plan and design our built environment – both to mitigate climate change, by using local and sustainable materials in the actual build, whilst ensuring that energy use from the building is minimised through energy efficiency and renewable energy and to adapt, by ensuring that development is fully prepared for more extreme weather.

Going well

- Public realm works in Seaham were completed in 2011.
- A £2m programme of works to improve our industrial estates has been agreed to ensure they are better placed to support existing and new businesses in the future.
- Bishop Auckland town centre improvements are on schedule.
- In 2011, all of Durham City Homes' properties were made decent under the national decent homes standard, raising the standard of living across the 6,000 homes in the City area.

Cause for concern

- The number of new houses being built is much lower than in previous years which is impacting on the amount of investment in the built environment.

Did you know?

- The Council produces Conservation Area Character Appraisals for the County to ensure planning decision making promotes the conservation of these areas. These can be found on the Council's website after they have been agreed by Cabinet.
- The Council asks for contributions from developers of large sites to support the local built environment, in many cases this is spent on local community facilities such as play parks, the road network or on other local infrastructure.
- The Council has recently agreed a policy to restrict the way in which 'to let' signs can be displayed in Durham city to try to improve the quality of place in the City.

Look out for:

- Government proposals to change the way that developers are charged for new development (called the 'Community Infrastructure Levy'). This also affects how affordable homes are to be provided on new developments.

- The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) from the Government which revises the current National Planning Policy. As Local Planning Authority we will implement the NPPF across the County.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Support the reduction of Buildings at Risk in County Durham through identifying works, possible grants and providing advice. Identify 12 sites over the next two years and work with owners to try and remove heritage sites from the risk list.	Head of Planning and Assets	March 2014
Manage promote and deliver an annual partnership programme of Heritage Open Days and enhance access to a quality environment for tourism provider and customer.	Head of Planning and Assets	September each year 2012-16
Develop proposals for Binchester roman fort including the submission of an HLF bid	Head of Planning and Assets	Dec 2013

5. Reduce waste

During the past few decades and to this day, County Durham has provided a significant proportion of the Magnesian Limestone needed for major construction work around the country and this created numerous opencast quarry sites. Much of the waste generated by people and organisations within the county has been deposited in these sites as landfill. However, this relatively cheap and convenient means of waste disposal will soon become unavailable as quarries are filling up, and the Landfill Tax Escalator is annually increasing costs. What's more, the decomposing organic component of our land filled waste emits methane which is some 4 times more damaging to the atmosphere than carbon dioxide.

There are various options for the treatment of waste, for example anaerobic digestion which turns organic waste into compost, or incineration which enables generation of electricity from heat, but all treatment options have associated environmental impacts. The only real answer to reducing environmental impacts associated with waste treatment is to reduce the overall quantity waste we need to treat in the first place. European Directives, our National Waste Strategy and the most recent Governmental Waste Policy Review identify the urgent need to decouple the generation of waste from industrial production and economic prosperity, and this requires dramatic increase in the use of recycled and recovered raw resources rather than reliance on newly extracted resources. Recycled materials can replace the use of virgin materials and provides environmental benefits including less air pollution, less energy use, reduced impacts of extracting materials and more efficient use of finite resources. Recycling also provides employment opportunities, encourages producers to take more responsibility for their wastes and improves

economic competitiveness. But there are also local challenges that can be addressed by the council working in partnership with people, traders, manufacturers and organisations of Durham.

Going well

- Recycling rates have improved by 15% since 2009/10.
- The tonnage of Garden Waste collected has increased by 15% since 2009/10.
- The Furniture Re-use Forum has diverted 831 tonnes of furniture from landfill.
- The school battery recycling campaign.
- Countywide waste awareness messages are resulting in improved recycling rates and diversion of waste from landfill.

Cause for concern

- Across the County and the Country households are producing less waste, but this is probably connected to the economic downturn. When the economy recovers this may cause an increase in household waste.
- To avoid additional costs associated with the Landfill Tax Escalator, we need to reduce waste and recycle more waste each year.

Did you know?

Assisted Waste collections are available for residents who may experience genuine difficulties in placing their bin out for collection and do not have anyone to assist them.

We recycle our street sweepings, diverting nearly 4,500 tonnes from landfill and saving more than £350,000 over a 6 month period.

- We empty refuse/recycling containers over 18 million times a year
- We handled 239,189 tonnes of household waste and 268,000 of municipal waste during 2011-12.
- We re-used, recycled and composted 93,909 tonnes (39.3% of household waste) during 2011-12.
- We have distributed over 40,000 home compost bins across the County since 2002.

Look out for:

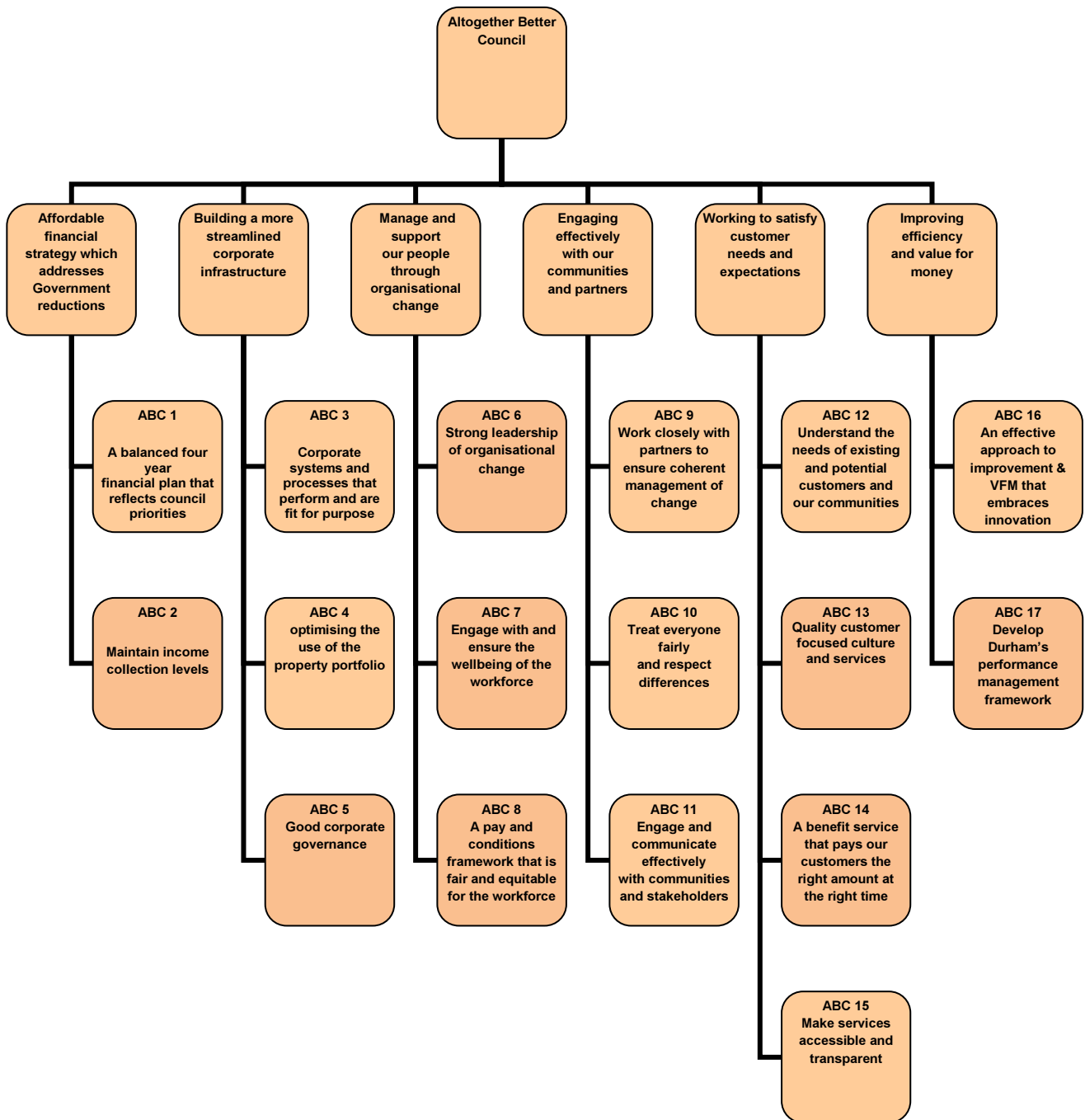
- Details of waste collections, changes to collections and seasonal promotions which can be found on our web site – www.durham.gov.uk on the 'waste news and events' page.
- Waste Campaigns in 2012 including:
 - North East Recycling Rewards - launched 1st December and runs to end of July 2012
 - Real Nappy Week - 16th to 22nd April 2012
 - Compost Awareness Week - 7th to 12th May 2012
 - World Environment Day - 5th June 2012
 - Recycle Week - 18th to 24th June 2012.

- Changes to the household waste and recycling collection service with the implementation of a county wide alternate weekly collection service
- Changes to the Trade Waste Service
- A rationalised and harmonised Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Service

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Design, communicate and implement harmonised alternative weekly collection across the county	Head of Direct Services	July 2012
Procurement of a Waste Treatment Solution	Head of Projects & Business Services	January 2013
Complete a procurement exercise to determine future options for council disposal of residual, recycling and composting waste	Head of Direct Services/Head of Projects & Business Services	May 2012
Carry out an options appraisal for separate collections of food waste	Head of Direct Services	March 2014

Altogether Better Council



This section of the Council Plan has undergone further change since last year. This is to ensure that our plans fully reflect the changes in the national picture. Past inspection and assessment formed a healthy independent framework for improvement activity and was often a catalyst for change. The Council is now developing its own approach to improvement. The overriding driver for this is the need to demonstrate value for money in the delivery of all of our services and to generate internal efficiencies to help mitigate some of the effects of the reductions in grant funding. Increased openness and transparency in public services is an underlying theme of the Government's programme along with the need for councils

to develop their own approach to self regulation via the Local Government Group Seven Point Offer that underpins self regulation and improvement. This new approach is already beginning to shape up into a portfolio of additional requirements being placed on local authorities. The emphasis on localism via the new Localism Act 2011 is also a key driver of the Government's policies and is going to lead to an increasing emphasis on community engagement and communication.

1. Affordable financial strategy which addresses government reductions

The council continues to face unprecedented levels of reduction in Government support over the medium-term with a second year of a very demanding Medium Term Financial Plan. Although the savings that the Council needs to achieve are substantial, we have worked to develop plans that underpin this requirement. The Council has agreed a strategy for making the savings where more than half of the required savings will be made through reductions in management costs, support services, efficiencies and increases to fees and charges so that the impact of reductions to frontline services are minimised.

Going well

- Quarterly performance monitoring of the Medium Term Financial Plan
- Timetable and plan for development work of revised Medium Term Financial Plan
- 100% of finance target achieved

Cause for concern

- Next steps following the delivery of the Year 2 financial settlement

Did you know?

- Durham achieved £66.4 million savings in 2011-12

Look out for:

- Year 3 public consultation

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure programme management of the delivery of the MTFP:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all year 2/3/4 (2012/13 – 20/14/15) proposals are captured in reporting database and full details provided of key activities and dates 	Head of Policy and Communications	By April 2012/13/14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure monthly updates provided to Corporate Management Team on progress and assurance issues 	Head of Policy and Communications	Monthly

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review reporting and assurance processes. 	Head of Policy and Communications	September 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a consultation exercise with all 14 AAPs on proposed budget reductions 	Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement	November each year 2012 to 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality assure Equality Impact Assessments for all MTFP key projects 	Head of Planning and Performance	December each year 2012-2015
Refresh and update the MTFP model to produce a balanced 2013/14 to 2016/17 position	Head of Finance – Corporate Finance	Feb 2013
Assess the impact of the Local Government Resource review upon the government funding received by the council	Head of Finance – Corporate Finance	December 2012
Review the operation of Single Person Discount for Council Tax	Head of Finance – Financial Services	November 2012
Review recovery procedures to encompass the potential impact of the new Local Council Tax support scheme	Head of Finance – Financial Services	March 2013

2. Building a more streamlined corporate infrastructure

The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan sets out the planned savings for the next 4 years, around a third of which will be achieved through reductions to management and support service costs. A number of planned savings reflect the further benefits to the Council of becoming a unitary authority and still having significant efficiency savings and modernisation opportunities. For example, consolidation of some of our computer systems onto a single platform following local government reorganisation will allow us to achieve some significant efficiency savings. The implementation of the Council's Accommodation Strategy also aims to achieve reductions in premises costs which will deliver a net saving.

Going well

- An unqualified Value for Money conclusion from Audit Commission.

Cause for concern

- Due to the current state of the economy the Council may not realise all of its planned capital receipts from the sale of its surplus assets.

Did you know?

- The Council has introduced a 'Buy Local Buy Durham' procurement initiative to support the local economy.

Look out for:

- Regular performance reports on big council projects.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Connecting the organisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide equipment and telecommunications in line with the agreed telephony strategy and agreed milestones • Deliver the telephony strategy implementation plan in line with the project plan 	Head of ICT	Throughout 2012/13 March 2013
Improve performance of processing Invoice payments via the Procure to Pay Review within the 30 day target set	Head of Finance – Financial Services	March 2013
Identify and develop solutions in line with requirements identified in the ICT Prioritisation process	Head of ICT	April 2013
Ensure the electoral team is fully prepared and able to execute compliant elections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police and Crime Commissioner • County Council and Parish Councils • European elections • Parliamentary elections 	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	November 2012 May 2013 June 2014 May 2015
Complete the Single Asset Register to include all the County Council assets not included as part of Phase 1 of the project. These are Housing, Vehicles, Plant and Equipment and Infrastructure assets.	Head of Finance – Corporate Finance	December 2012
Support the Council's accommodation strategy through the deployment of mobile home working in line with service requirements	Head of ICT	Throughout 2012/13

Provide ICT solutions to support customer sites through the development of connectivity and service delivery tools to support the Council's accommodation strategy.		Throughout 2012/13
Increase availability of technology across the county by developing the Digital Durham programme for next generation broadband delivery to all areas of the county		March 2015
Support education and learning through the development of a new Learning Gateway that will be established in partnership with ItWorx for the BSF schools		December 2012
Effective management of the County Council's assets	Head of Planning and Assists	March 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Service Management Plans • Manage the Disposal Strategy to ensure delivery of £12m over 3 years 		September 2012 March 2014
Deliver of the County Council accommodation strategy to meet the needs of the Council and the residents/businesses	Head of Economic Development and Housing	March 2016

3. Manage and support our people through organisational change

The Authority is undergoing dramatic change over the medium term, mainly due to the challenge we face in having to find savings as a result of reductions in government grant support. The Council estimated that it needed to lose 1,600 full-time equivalent posts from its establishment during the period 2011/2012 to 2014/2015 to help us meet our savings targets. Expressions of interest in early retirement, voluntary redundancy and flexible working were invited from all employees from across the Council in order to minimise the impact of the significant savings that were required. We will continue to engage with the workforce in helping us to manage and implement the necessary changes and that we develop an organisational development plan which reflects these changes. The council is also working towards implementing job evaluation which will introduce a new equitable pay and reward structure.

Going well

- The Council has retained its Investors in People status.
- The introduction of an employee and managers support programme.
- Improved performance in relation to redeployment and retention of the workforce.
- Flexible working arrangements.

Cause for concern

- Wider industrial relations.

Did you know?

- There has been an increase in the number of people who have moved to term time working or flexible retirement.
- The council employs almost 22,000 members of staff.
- Numbers of staff attending employee support programme have increased.

Look out for:

- A new pay and grading structure following job evaluation.

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Introduce a 360° appraisal process for managers aligned to the generic managerial and leadership competency framework	Head of HR and Organisational Development	April 2012
Measure the effectiveness of the workforce health interventions through surveys	Head of HR and Organisational Development	March 2013
Review and baseline all health and safety policies and methods of delivery to evaluate against statutory compliance	Head of HR and Organisational Development	March 2013
Implement a new pay and grading structure appropriate to the council's requirements	Head of HR and Organisational Development	July 2012

Under take an internal communications review:	Head of Policy and Communications	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing channels through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - focus groups - survey of staff 		April 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Internal communications strategy incorporating new intranet site and options for social media 		August 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement revised strategy 		April 2013

4. Engaging effectively with our communities and partners

Effective engagement with local residents has been a key focus for Durham County Council since local government reorganisation, and our 14 Area Action Partnerships across the county are key to achieving this. The Government is also placing a great emphasis on connecting with communities through the Localism Act 2011. This will give councils a general power of competence and residents will also be given the power to instigate referendums on any local issue. They will also be able to veto excessive council tax increases. The Act will also provide new power to residents to help save local facilities and services threatened with closure and give voluntary and community groups the right to challenge the council over service provision.

It is also critical that we maintain a focus on effective partnership working within the changing national context, in particular working through the County Durham Partnership to ensure integrated delivery of public services across the county.

The council also continues to respond to the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010. A new single equality duty, applied from 2011, extended equalities legislation to the areas of age, faith, sexual orientation, transgender, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnerships, in addition to the already protected areas of gender, race and disability. The Council has undertaken all required Equality Impact Assessments to adhere to its Public Sector Quality Duty also included within the Act.

Going well

- The role of Area Action Partnerships in consultation and communications.
- Consultation on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Over 91 per cent of stories in the press monitored by the media team are either balanced or positive about DCC.
- The media team deal with well over 200 press enquiries every month.
- Achieved a 3 star SOCITM rating for the Council's website.
- All 14 AAP statistical profiles produced.

Did you know?

- Gypsies and Travellers represent the largest ethnic minority group living in County Durham, accounting for about 0.5% of the local population
- Our Record Office at County Hall holds archives which reflect the life and work of County Durham over the past 900 years
- Our approach to informing local communities about civil contingencies has won national plaudits and acclaim in relation to flood defences.

Cause for concern

- Changes in health delivery arrangements.

Look out for:

- Looking Local (Digital TV) and BDUK (Broadband Delivery UK).

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Review the County Durham Partnership and implementation of CDP board action plan	Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement	July 2012
Implement the results of the AAP Scrutiny Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produce Action Plan based on 14 recommendations• Report back to O&S on action and progress of sub-groups• Commence 2nd O&S review for AAPs	Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement	April 2012 April 2012 September 2013
Develop a new Sustainable Community Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Commences• Report to Cabinet	Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement	April 2012 March 2013
Develop an Access Strategy for local buildings and open spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy finalised• Complete a minimum of 10 Access	Head of Planning and Performance	March 2013 March 2013 and

Plans per year		annually thereafter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide specific advice and guidance 		A minimum of 2 Briefing Session per year commencing 2012/13
Develop a Social Media Strategy	Head of Policy and Communications	August 2012
Implement strategy		April 2013
Implement a Community Buildings Strategy	Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute expressions of interest applications to community buildings 		May 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital work commences on first round of asset transfers 		January 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress review of community buildings strategy 		March 2013
Undertake a series of internet improvements including:	Head of Policy and Communications	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree Improvement plan for 2012/13 		April 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revamp of DCC website homepage and information pages 		October 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements and development of new web systems 		December 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and rollout of online payment system for major council transactions 		August 2013
Develop data services in line with a changing agenda for Education and Health by reviewing data requirements and developing a marketing strategy for provision of data services.	Head of Early Intervention and Partnership Services	August 2013
Expand the community engagement approach developed in Chester West and Sherburn Road to other areas of County Durham.	Head of Early Intervention and Partnership Services	March 2013

5. Working to satisfy customer needs and expectations

The Council has agreed a Customer First Strategy and implementation plan. The strategy aims to understand our customers better and to further embed a customer focussed culture throughout the organisation. The Council will explore ways to improve access and information through the use of its website, new communications media like telly talk, digital TV and mobile phones. We have also sought to improve service delivery through the agreement of customer service standards, improvements to our complaints system and assessment of our service performance.

Going well

- Harmonisation of contact centres and ability to manage peaks and troughs in demand
- Concluded complaints review and revised approach as a result

Cause for concern

- Customer needs changing due to economic climate
- We did not meet our targets for processing benefit claims during 2011-12 as a result of implementing our new benefits ICT system

Did you know?

- The Council has opened three new access points this year in Seaham, Consett and Stanhope and will open a further three next year
- We have improved accessibility to 6 more contact points
- Paypoint card for cash requests have been introduced into Post Offices
- We have undertaken the largest implementation of a new Revenues and Benefits System in the country

Look out for:

- Looking Local and Durham Talk newsletter
- Improved processing speeds for applications for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit from our single benefits ICT system

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Develop and implement a consistent service delivery model, for customer facing services across the authority, to ensure that customers can access consistent levels of service at all access points and contact centres	Customer Services Manager in conjunction with Heads of Service	March 2012
Develop the necessary policy and operational/system changes to deliver the:	Head of Finance – Financial Services	31 March 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amended Housing Benefit Rates 		March 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localisation of Council Tax Benefit 		March 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal Credit 		
Carry out a scoping exercise to develop a future approach for Council in relation to improvement and change of the anti poverty and welfare reform agenda.	Overview and Scrutiny Manager	March 2012
Lead the development, implementation and analysis of the first Regional Residents Perception Survey. Survey complete	Head of Planning and Performance	July 2012
Results available and disseminated to all stakeholders		October 2012

6. Improving efficiency and value for money

We aim to gain a better understanding of our costs and how they relate to performance in comparison with other service providers. This will require us to develop our own arrangements for obtaining quality comparative data following the abolition of the National Indicator Set. We have developed a new performance management framework now that we do not have to report to government on National Indicators. This gives us the opportunity to design something that satisfies local needs. One of the key issues for the council will be the necessity for us to achieve efficiency savings in order to meet the commitments in our Medium Term Financial Plan.

Going well

- The annual performance assessment for adult's social care is 'excellent.'
- The annual performance assessment for children's services has been upgraded to 'good.'

Cause for concern

- Due to the abolition of the National Indicator set there are no readily comparative performance data available.

Did you know?

- Each service now has its own Value for Money Programme
- The council is now reporting on its own Performance Management Framework following the abolition of the National Indicator Set.

Look out for:

- Peer Challenge in the next three years

High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Unitisation of HR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees appointed to the unitised structure • Measure the effectiveness and value for money of the new HR Service Delivery Model 	Head of HR and Organisational Development	April 2012 March 2013
Improve programme management by corporate assurance of projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all projects are scoped and reporting requirements established • As new projects are identified for inclusion ensure scoping documents produced and agreed with CMT and project sponsor and lead • Ensure monthly updates provided to CMT on projects and assurance issues 	Head of Policy and Communications	By April 2012 Ongoing (date/timescale required) Monthly
Implement the LGA national LG Inform performance management tool to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance performance reporting • Develop a thematic dashboard to assist in the decision making process 	Head of Planning and Performance	April 2012 December 2012

Develop a single set of 'recognised geographies' for consistent reporting of performance	Head of Planning and Performance	June 2012
Prepare for a possible Peer Challenge exercise	Head of Planning and Performance	April 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree scope of peer review 		April 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a preparation plan for the Peer Review 		October 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Peer Challenge Self Assessment 		April 2012