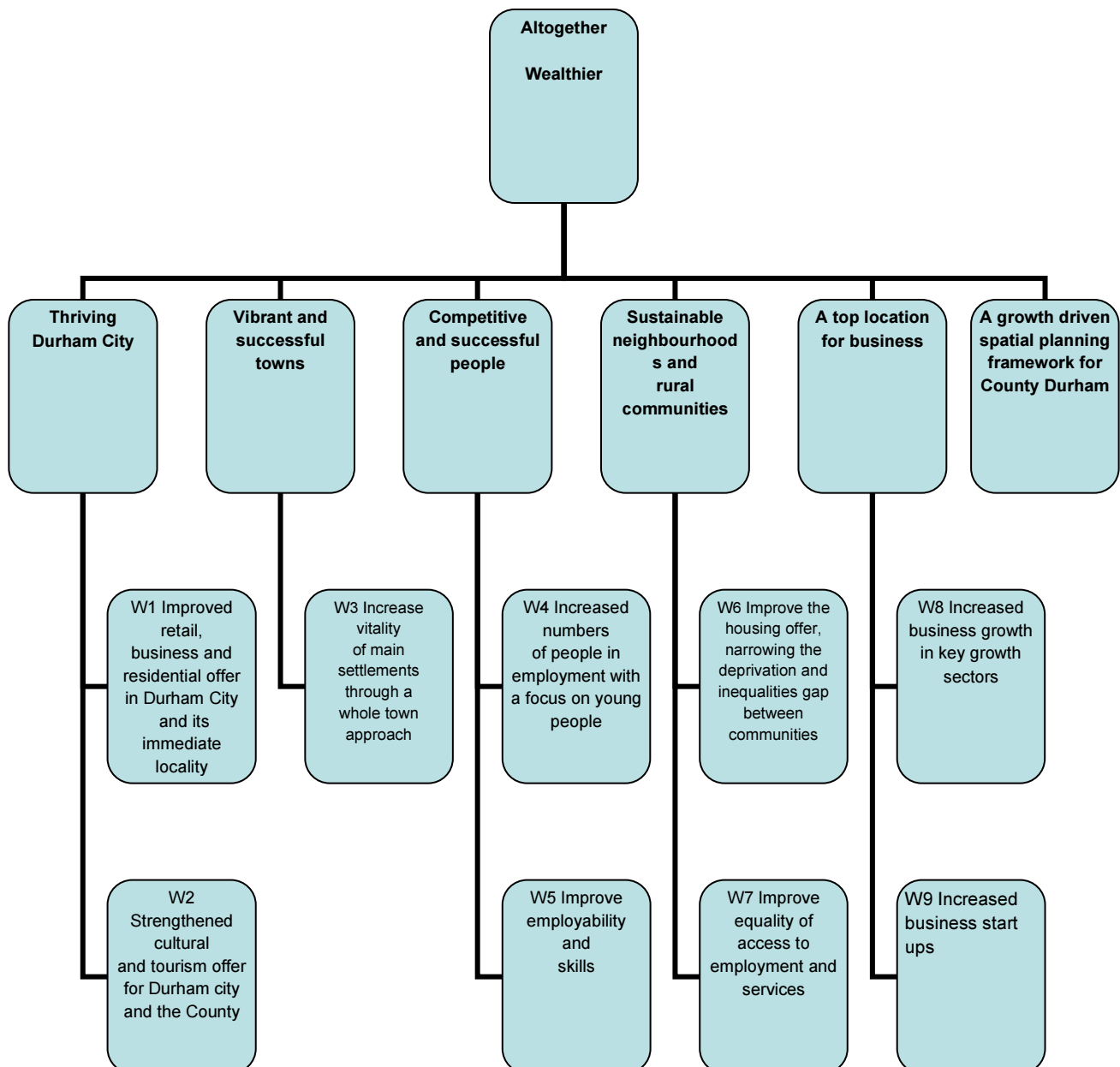


Altogether Wealthier



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