

CROOK

DELIVERY PLAN

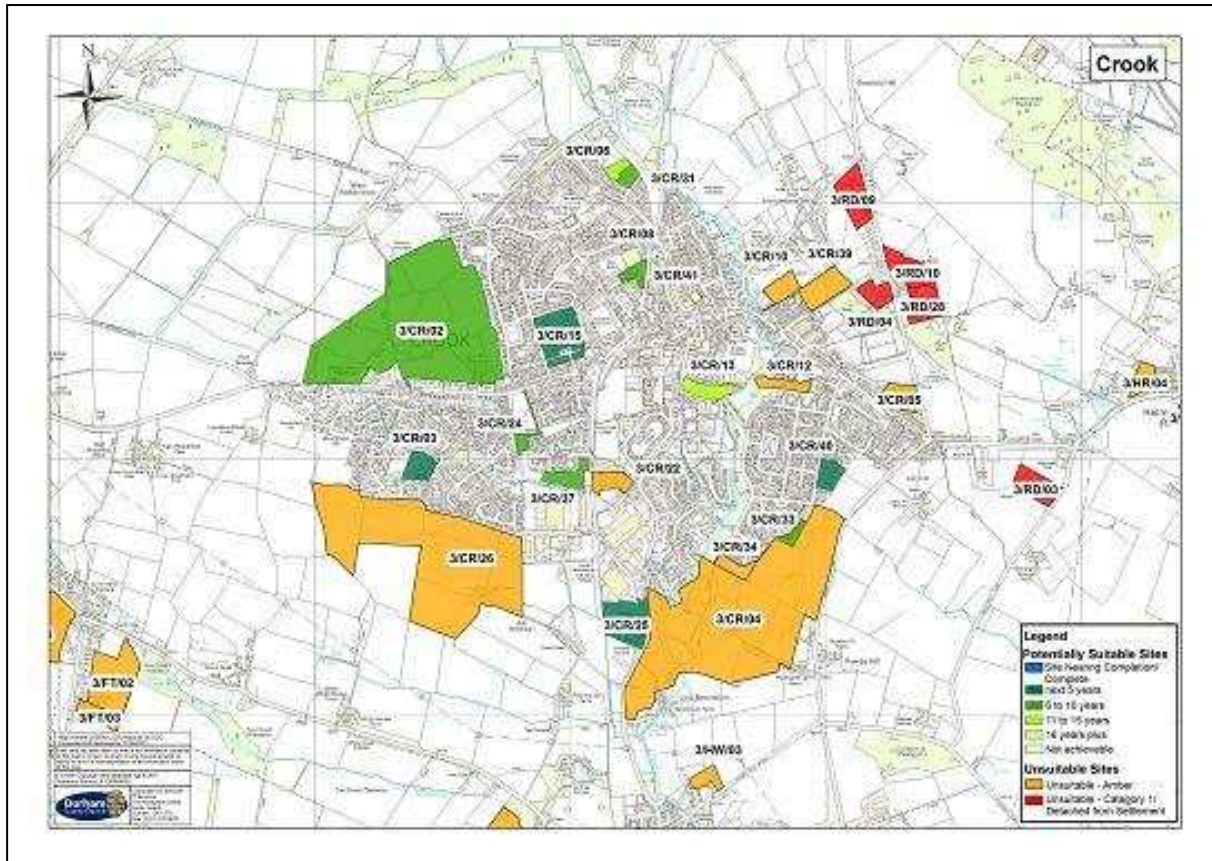
March 2012

1.0 Background to and Purpose of the Delivery and Implementation Plan

- 1.1 Crook is a designated market town in the South West of the County. Although one of the smallest towns in County Durham serving a population of circa 9,000, it is also a service centre for the rural hinterland communities. The strategic importance of Crook is recognised in the County Durham Regeneration Statement which aims to embed a “Whole Town” approach to regeneration activity and unlock the town’s full potential.
- 1.2 The origin of Crook dates back to 1795 where it developed as an agricultural village. Later when coal was discovered the town expanded quickly and the economy and population increased. However when mining began to decline this had a negative impact upon manufacturing industry. In the mid 20th century the town’s economy was based on textiles. This resulted in a rich and varied built heritage and in 1975 led to the designation of Crook Conservation Area covering an area of 51 hectares in the centre of the town. The health and vitality of many market towns has declined in recent years due to changing lifestyles and economic patterns. Those towns which have adapted to these changing circumstances, have continued to provide a quality offer and are based on a clear economic rationale have fared better. The challenge for Crook is to continue to meet the needs of its residents.
- 1.3 Crook has previously benefited from a programme of capital investment through Government and European funding which improved some areas of the town centre. This included a phased physical improvement plan upgrading the Market Place and North Terrace. Improvements to some buildings with heritage significance were undertaken. The area to the front of the Civic Centre was improved and now offers an attractive open space enhanced by seating and landscaping.
- 1.4 Crook is located 10 miles from Durham City and 5 miles from Bishop Auckland and a couple of miles north of the River Wear. The main arterial routes are the A68, which is one of the main routes to the borders and Scotland and the A1 (M), the A690 which links to Durham and Sunderland and the A691 which links to the North Pennines (designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and Cumbria.
- 1.5 An assessment by property consultants GVA (undertaken in November 2009) as part of a Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (which is also providing advice for the Local Development Framework) shows that the town centre retail offer focuses on the southern end of Hope Street and Church Street which is located off the Market Place. Commercial Street also falls within the designated town centre boundary, but the offer here is limited. The Market Place is also the centre’s main car park and hub for public transport.

- 1.6 The centre comprises of a mix of traditional terraced properties along with more modern commercial units, including a large CO-OP food store on New Road. Crook has a high percentage of small independent retailers with only a few national or regional retailers or franchises. These include: Boots the Chemist, Greggs plc, Peters Bakery, The Original Factory Shop, Booze Buster and NISA Stores. Convenience retail uses include one large retail food offer, the CO-OP together with smaller supermarkets, including a smaller CO-OP convenience store and a number of independent butchers, newsagents and greengrocers.
- 1.7 The town centre is dominated by service uses, which account for around half of the 91 units. These include a number of takeaways, cafes and restaurants, hair and beauty salons, travel agents, estate agents, solicitors and banks. Comparison goods retailing comprises a further 25% of units consisting of small scale independents selling clothing, pet supplies, fishing tackle, hardware goods and gifts. Other significant occupiers include Durham County Council, PCT Health Facilities, the Library and Police Station.
- 1.8 Crook has a limited comparison retail offer which results in the retention of only 4.9% of the total comparison shopping arising within its catchment area (totalling £34.2 m). It is believed that the majority of local residents in the Crook catchment area look towards Bishop Auckland which has a greater comparison offer, including several national fashion and department stores. This outflow from Crook gives Bishop Auckland a 45.4% share (£14.8m) of the total comparison spend within the Crook catchment area. Other comparison outflows see Durham City and the Metro Centre securing a 22.2% (£7.2m) and 13.6% (£4.4m) share respectively.
- 1.9 Crook has no bus station but most of the bus stands are located at the Market Place, with regular bus services providing links for outlying settlements of Tow Law, Wolsingham, Stanhope, Billy Row, Stanley Crook, Roddymoor, Howden le Wear and Willington. Regular services also provide direct access to Bishop Auckland and Durham City which provide a greater comparison offer. Crook is accessible by a range of means of transport. There are a series of footpaths and pedestrian crossings, which make movement into and around the centre convenient, but future retail developments and the co-location of public services, will impact on car park usage and footfall patterns into the main shopping areas.
- 1.10 New dwellings are required in Crook to meet the projected requirements of the town to 2030 as identified in the County Durham Plan Strategic Options Document. The "Policy Direction Paper" (May 2011) earmarks an additional 500 housing units for Crook. The preferred housing distribution will be confirmed when the "Preferred Options Paper" is released in

September 2012. It is possible that the 500 units could be revised upwards.



- 1.11 Glenholme Leisure Centre was identified for closure following the Council's Leisure Services Review. Consultation will be carried out as to the future leisure requirements in Crook and the Council's plans for the site.
- 1.12 Elite Hall is a Durham County Council asset that has stood vacant for a long period, with no identified function. The Community Buildings – Consultation Feedback and Proposed Strategy, was approved at Cabinet on the 29th February 2012, which proposed disposal of the site. Local members will be consulted and there will be on-going dialogue with the Area Action Partnership.

- 1.13 Proposals around a Participatory Budget event and a Small Grants Fund are also proposed to support community facilities within Crook.
- 1.14 Crook has some significant employment sites, including Castle Close Industrial Estate and Thistleflat Extensions 1 & 2 and Beechburn Park. The latter is a long established estate located to the south of Crook off the A689 towards Bishop Auckland.
- 1.15 The Retail and Town Centre Uses Study highlights Crook as having one of the smallest office markets in County Durham which serves a highly localised market. With the exception of the Civic Centre, the main office provision is located at Crook Business Centre. Current facilities available include: 14 offices and a meeting room, which can accommodate 20 people for training, the Business Centre usually runs at 100% occupancy.
- 1.16 Despite being in a rural area, Crook has seen some substantial businesses locate to the settlement in recent years, below is a table of main employers:

Employer	Location	Business	
Durham County Council	North Terrace (Maintains presence and providing additional services from building)	Local Government	DCC maintain an increased presence in the town. Co-location of services into DCC offices supports the Whole Town Approach.
Metallink Fluid Power Systems	Prospect Road Beechburn Park Industrial Est.	Hydraulic Engineers	Gained planning permission in 2004 to extend factory site, allowing for 40 new jobs previously site had been running at capacity.
CMCA Ltd	Prospect Road Beechburn Park Industrial Est.	Air Conditioning Consultants	Provides integrated solutions for the global defence market. Vision to be the superior choice for the global defence market.
On Net Communications	Hope Street (Relocated to Crook)	Call Centre	Received £60k funding in 2009 from the Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) scheme, which has acted to boost turnover by a third to over £1m
Inov8 Ltd	Beechburn Industrial Park	Specialist Sport Shoe Manufacture	Sponsor World Mountain Running Association since 2004. Support grass roots running competitions across the globe

Employer	Location	Business	
Bonds Foundry	Beechburn Park Industrial Est. (Purchased the Kenmore site)	Produces finished valves, pumps and general castings for a wide range of industries	Sites also at Tow Law and Alston. Awarded a 4 year £4 million MOD contract in September 2011.
Weardale Motor Services	Beechburn Park Industrial Est. (New depot)	Coach Travel	Nationally recognised organisation within the passenger transport industry operating throughout UK and Europe
Dale Care Ltd	Hope Street	Provides a wide range of care packages which can be delivered in clients own homes	Largest care provider in County Durham.

- 1.17 There are three primary schools which serve Crook. Crook Primary has 318 pupils, Hartside Primary with 188 pupils and St Cuthbert's RC School. Nursery provision is provided by Local Authority Nursery School which provides places for up to 78 pupils on a part time basis. Private provision is catered for by Kidzone and Emerald nurseries. Crook has no secondary school in the town. The majority of pupils from the area attend Parkside Sports College at Willington, though some attend Wolsingham School and Community College and St John's School and Sixth Form College, a Catholic Academy in Bishop Auckland. There are currently no schools in Crook or surrounding areas identified to receive capital monies for building improvement works.
- 1.18 Crook has high levels of recorded incidents of anti social behaviour. From December 2010 – November 2011 there were 721 separate recorded incidents in Crook Town from a total of 1270 crime related incidents. This equates to 56.7% of recorded crime in this area. Crook High Impact Location (HILs) is targeting specific areas in the town which have been identified through partners as particular hot spot areas for incidents of anti social behaviour.
- 1.19 The unemployment figures for the Three Towns Area Action Partnership which includes Crook, Willington and Tow Law, record 894 unemployed working age persons, equating to 5.9% of the population within this area (24,000), against 4.5% for County Durham. This is being addressed by the implementation of the Work Programme, intervention by the Rural Employability Team and is identified as a priority for the Area Action Partnership.
- 1.20 Adults Wellbeing and Health are implementing the Mental Health Strategy to promote social inclusion and increase the number of adults with mental health needs into employment. The Cultural Strategy is supporting this priority though promoting volunteering and training opportunities within the heritage and culture sector.

2.0 **Key Strategic Themes**

There are development opportunities within Crook with potential to attract inward investment to improve and increase the centres retail, leisure and housing offer. Given current investor interest within the town centre, there are a number of key strategic issues that need effective intervention to allow the town centre to redefine its offer and establish a strong and distinctive range of complimentary uses and activities.

2.1 Support the retail offer in the town to increase the catchment area

- Support the development of the food retail site on Queen Street
- Promote an evening economy to capitalise on the growth of restaurants and cafes in the town
- Encourage and promote specialist retail and franchise opportunities to improve the retail offer
- Develop the offer of the market

2.2 Improve movement patterns in an around the town centre

- Improve access to services, facilities and retail offer in the town centre by promoting and improving existing car parks and footpath links on the periphery of the retail centre (surfacing, signage and lighting) to link them aesthetically to the current footpath network in the retail centre which has already undergone improvement
- Improve and promote access to all existing car parks and provide secure and safe cycle racks to encourage sustainable travel
- Draw people through the town by creating areas of activity and developing arrival points to increase access to the whole retail centre
- Seek to use development opportunities and the co-location of services to reconfigure and redesign areas to maximise development potential.

2.3 Develop the role of the centre as an employment and enterprise hub

- In the longer term, look at creating new and developing existing business space for SMEs.

- Support and secure employment through retail development opportunities

2.4 Develop a high quality, distinctive and attractive town centre environment

- Implement a Targeted Business Improvement project – a conservation area character appraisal will assist in informing priorities
- Improve and update signage in a co-ordinated and appropriate manner
- Ensure improved route ways to the town centre from neighbouring areas

2.5 Short term intervention for public realm improvements will be focused on linking and improving pedestrian access routes to the proposed new retail area at Queen Street. Targeted Business Improvement grant support will be operating within the town centre with a focus on Commercial Street.



3.0 Aims of the Delivery and Implementation Plan

3.1 This Plan is not primarily about policy but about a series of deliverable projects and programmes including:

- Commercial Street improvements
- Redevelopment of Queen Street Depot and links onto the Market Place
- Marketing and Promotion of the town as a service
- Promoting sustainable travel, access to services and improved signage
- Support and promote the Whole Town approach

3.2 Each of the projects will aim to incorporate cross cutting and general principles:

- Improve the quality of life where people live providing an attractive, diverse and vibrant town
- To promote inclusion and engage with the community, stakeholders and partners throughout

3.3 The above aim to meet the key themes which are:

- Develop the local economy
- Maximise and link opportunities to increase employment
- Improve access to services
- Increase public confidence in the public sector including Durham County Council
- Co-ordinate and maximise public service delivery

4. Table of Projects

- 4.1 This section sets out information on the projects that Durham County Council and the private sector are delivering. Where possible, and for information, contact details of the lead partner is included with budgetary information.
- 4.2 The Projects have been themed to consider the economy, specific town centre intervention, community, housing and environment. Each theme is linked to a Durham County Council Priority Strategy. Most of the projects could be deemed as cross cutting more than one theme.

THEME & STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE	OUTPUT	PROJECT LEAD & PARTNERS	BUDGET DETAILS
Economy : Economic Strategy	Relocation of Environmental Services	September 2012	New build site to increase services delivered from Crook for the surrounding area Increase in employees on site to 70 Support local economy by releasing land for retail development	Norman Ramsey County Fleet Manager Direct Services Wendy Benson Community and Economic Development Manager Gerard Derby Planning and investment Manager Assets (Planning)	DCC £1.3 million
	Redevelopment of Queen Street Depot On site Development Complete	Sept 2012 Summer 2013	Major investment for retail development Employment Opportunities	Private Sector	£14 million
Economy:	Targeted Business	March 2013	Business Support &	Wendy Benson,	£50,000

THEME & STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE	OUTPUT	PROJECT LEAD & PARTNERS	BUDGET DETAILS
Economic Strategy	Improvements		training opportunities Improve physical infrastructure, including conservation area Promote night time economy	Community Economic Development Manager Conservation/ Planning Local Businesses	
Town Centre: Office Accommodation Strategy Customer First Library Strategy	Provision of Service Hub (relocation of Services to DCC Offices) Current library provision to be relocated with reconfigured CAP in DCC Office Coroners' Office to be relocated in DCC Office Provision of Customer Access Point	 June 2012 Short Term Short Term	Support local economy by releasing land for retail development and safeguarding library provision for community of Crook Providing a service hub in DCC Office (Customer Access Point, Coroners Office, Registrar, Library) Efficiency savings for authority by co-locating services	Anne Davison Strategic Manager Adults Wellbeing and Health/Mary Readman, Customer Services Manger Collette Longbottom Jon Scholes Accommodation Team	DCC £600,000 DCC £100,000 None
Town Centre: Regeneration	Market Review Evaluate the viability and	 May 2012	 Determine delivery of DCC Markets, including	 Neighbourhoods & RED	 N/A

THEME & STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE	OUTPUT	PROJECT LEAD & PARTNERS	BUDGET DETAILS
Statement	activity of the Markets in County Durham		Crook		
Community Buildings:	Future of Glenholme Leisure Centre following its closure	To be determined	To be determined:	Leisure Services	DCC further work required to confirm
Community Buildings:	Disposal of Elite Hall	Short Term	To dispose of DCC Asset currently with no function	Assets Assistant Chief Executive	DCC further work required to confirm
	Support for community facilities through Participatory Budget event and Small Grants Fund	Summer 2012	Community proposals outlining DCC support for community facilities and relevant small grants	Assistant Chief Executive Leisure Services RED	DCC £500,000 & £68,000
Housing and New Build	Greenside Place Housing Development Affordable units	December 2011	17, two bedroom houses	Richard Roddam FHM Dale and Valley Homes	Prudential borrowing HCA funding

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Housing and New Build	Park Avenue Close Housing Development Sheltered Accommodation	June 2012	48, two bedroom apartments 4 bungalows	Richard Roddam FHM Dale and Valley Homes	Prudential borrowing HCA funding
Housing and New Build	Relocation of Fire Station Outline planning application submitted 30.07.2009 approved at committee 19.11.2009 subject to signing S106 S106 monies attached Full application yet to be received	Medium to Long Term	Purpose built fire station in Crook Additional Community facility	Adrian Caines Senior Planning Officer Nichola Harper Andrew Mackay Fire Service Representatives	£7,000 Section 106 to be agreed
Environment	Public Realm Improvements	March 2014	Improved links to proposed development and town centre from neighbouring areas.	Community Economic Development Service Direct Conservation/ Planning	DCC further work required to confirm

THEME & STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE	OUTPUT	PROJECT LEAD & PARTNERS	BUDGET DETAILS
				Highways	Possible 106
Environment: Community Safety	Crook High Impact Location (HILs) Galleys Arch: Improve lighting at Galleys Arch Crook Beck: restricting access improvement works	March 2012 December 2012	Reduction in anti social behaviour To reduce access to waterway to prevent/reduce anti social behaviour.	Diane Maughan Safer Neighbourhoods Co-ordinator Adults Wellbeing and Health Community Economic Development Crook High Impact Locality Steering Group	DCC further work required to confirm £5,000 AAP
Environment	Conservation Area Character Appraisal	Short-Medium Term	Appraisal Report that will influence/determine intervention projects	Steve Bhowmick Environment and Design Manager Planning Services Sandra Robertson Heritage, Landscape and Design Team Leader	DCC further work required to confirm

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Environment	DCC Solar Panel Programme Install solar panels on DCC Office Detail application approved – 09.02.2012	March 2012	Install solar panels on DCC Office Efficiency measures & reduce revenue costs Reduce DCC Carbon Footprint	Ian Bloomfield Senior Low Carbon Officer	DCC £6 million County wide project
Environment Anti Social Behaviour Strategy	Implementation of Anti Social Behaviour Strategy Joint agency approach to development of action plans to tackle anti social behaviour and low level crime	March 2014	Number of Action plans implemented	Melanie Campbell Strategic Manger Healthier Communities Adults Wellbeing and Health	DCC further work required to confirm
Transport and Infrastructure: LTP3	Transit 15 Scheme	March 2012	Upgraded bus shelters and stops along the Crook - Durham Corridor	Andy Leadbeater Business Manager Strategic Transport Planning	DCC £95,000 County wide project

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Transport and Infrastructure: LTP3	Civil Parking Enforcement	December 2012	Improved transport movement to encourage turn over of available parking spaces Improve logistics of deliveries to businesses	Dave Lewin Project Manger Strategic Transport Planning	DCC £100,000 Northern area project
Transport and Infrastructure: LTP3	Improve parking in and around the centre. Promote sustainable transport options.	March 2013	Increase opportunities for sustainable travel use Encourage alternative pedestrian flow around the town centre and retail areas Promote footpath links to new, existing and relocated services	Community Economic Development Highways James Turnbull Strategic Transport Planning Rights of Way Team	DCC further work required to confirm Poss. S106
Health and Wellbeing: Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy	Develop Multi Agency Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for County Durham	March 2013	Number of awareness raising initiatives Number of community based services available	Melanie Campbell Strategic Manger Healthier Communities Adults Wellbeing and Health	N/A
Health and	Healthy Hearts	March 2013	Number of health check	Melanie Campbell	DCC

THEME & STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE	OUTPUT	PROJECT LEAD & PARTNERS	BUDGET DETAILS
Wellbeing	Reduce the prevalence of cardiovascular disease and mortality rates		undertaken Number of people taking part in activities	Strategic Manger Healthier Communities Adults Wellbeing and Health NHS County Durham Dales Health Network	further work required to confirm
Health and Wellbeing: Mental Health Employment Strategy	Implementation of Mental Health Employment Strategy Promote social inclusion and increase number of people progressing into education, training, volunteering and employment	March 2013	Number of adults with mental health needs in paid employment	Jeanette Stephenson Strategic manger Inclusion Adults Wellbeing and Health	DCC further work required to confirm
Health and Wellbeing: National Drug Strategy	Implementation of National Drug Strategy 2010 Address issues such as offending, employment and housing	March 2013	Number of people accessing drug treatment and support	Melanie Campbell Strategic Manger Healthier Communities Adults Wellbeing and Health Safe Durham Partnership	DCC further work required to confirm

THEME & STRATEGY	PROJECT ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE	OUTPUT	PROJECT LEAD & PARTNERS	BUDGET DETAILS
Education: Cultural Strategy	Implementation of the Cultural Strategy through education Delivery of outdoor arts events, and educational programme within communities	March 2013	Increase engagement with cultural activities and opportunities for volunteering within heritage and culture Gain skills to increase employability Increased usage of community facilities	Neill Hillier Strategic Manager Heritage and Culture Adults Wellbeing and Health	DCC further work required to confirm

5.0 Summary of Actions

5.1 In terms of investment the Council has invested substantial sums in Crook via various initiatives and funding streams throughout the last decade and is continuing to invest via:

- Co-location of Services
- Neighbourhoods site development
- Targeted business improvements
- Ongoing and short term improvements to neighbourhoods and highways
- Supporting Crook High Impact Location projects

- Supporting Durham County Council Community Facilities project

5.2 The Council is engaging with the private sector in Crook to promote and encourage private investment including:

- Working with developers to support the redevelopment of Queen Street
- Supporting local businesses with opportunities to improve their business premises
- Supporting local businesses access training and support opportunities

6.0 Way Forward

- 6.1 The County Council's 'Whole Town Approach' will ensure that the joining up of services, investment and the potential to implement any physical improvements or deliver of services will be maximised.
- 6.2 Regeneration and Economic Development will continue to work with other Council services and the private sector to ensure continued delivery against the programme of regeneration interventions. Local members will be consulted. There will be ongoing dialogue with Area Action Partnerships.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Despite the current economic climate, there is investment potential for Crook in the short to medium term as identified within this Plan.
- 7.2 The Plan sets out a whole town approach for the regeneration of Crook, and will be a 'live' document that is periodically updated to reflect progress.
- 7.3 Crook will continue to be considered a major centre for the County, with an importance of serving its local community and those in the outlying hinterlands.