

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

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Cabinet

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County Durham Partnership Update



Report of Corporate Management Team

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council

Councillor Brian Stephens, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Durham County Council's Cabinet on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP) including summaries from the Board, the five Thematic Partnerships and all Area Action Partnerships (AAPs). The report also includes updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.

Summary

2. Supporting local people to improve their skills and find employment continues to be the focus of much of the partnership's work. Much of this report focuses on this area and evidences the outcomes that are being achieved through identifying need and developing bespoke solutions to meet that need.
3. Sharing good practice between different parts of the partnership and different organisations allows everyone involved to be able to learn from each other whilst continuously improving their work. As resources reduce this will become more important and it will help save time and also avoid duplication.
4. One way of sharing information is through events and the second Welfare Reform event has been organised for Thursday 13 February. This has been designed so that partners share practical solutions to the variety of different issues facing the public as they deal with increasing cuts to their income and support payments.

2013 A Year of Culture

5. **Lumiere** returned to the county for the third time in November 2013. Early estimations indicate that over 175,000 people attended the spectacular event over four nights with the highlights including Elephantastic, a larger-than-life 3D elephant marching through a specially-constructed arch on Elvet Bridge. Also popular was Solar Equation, an animated replica of the sun, which featured the world's largest

custom-made spherical helium balloon. In total, 27 light sculptures and installations were spread throughout the city.

6. Lumiere was the final chapter in an extraordinary year of culture for the county. All aspects of the partnership came together to support a wide range of events that saw 500,000 visitors and over £30M generated for the local economy. The Ashes Test Match in Chester le Street and the return of the Lindisfarne Gospels, in addition to the usual Brass and Streets Festivals and the Bishop Auckland Food Festival, all contributed to the year of culture. Culture plays a key role in raising the profile of the county nationally and internationally by attracting new visitors and therefore growing the local economy. Visit County Durham's vision is to attract visitors to the county, some of whom will return and may then choose to live and work here.
7. This programme of events would not have been possible if it were not for the support of all partners and local communities. A number of AAPs added value to the events by offering local additions to the programme whilst others provided transport to enable residents from across the County to be able to access events.

Consultation

8. The council is building a strong track record in consultation and in involving the public in setting its budget. The recent budget consultation has helped the council to develop a better understanding of residents' views about the financial pressures faced over the coming years and how reductions can be made. A group activity was devised that set out the range of services the council provides, showing the associated budget. People were asked to highlight which services should receive a standard 25% reduction and which should have a higher or lower reduction.
9. Recognising that Participatory Budgeting (PB) events attract a wide range of people including families, children and young people as well as older people, the council decided to use PB events to consult on the next phase of savings needed. These events were facilitated via the AAP autumn forums and saw support from partners and a range of services from within the council as well as AAP board members. In addition, 10,693 people cast their votes for local projects that will shape the work of the AAPs in 2014/15. Almost 1,300 people took part in one of the 270 budget consultation sessions that took place there. Specific protected characteristics groups who required additional support to participate in the consultation were also involved.
10. The consultation exercise shows that the council and partners continue to value the views of local people in decision making and in setting priorities both countywide and in each locality. The findings will be used as part of the decision making for Elected Members on how the remaining £100M savings are made, and will continue to be used in future years. This information will be presented to all AAPs at their board meetings in the coming weeks.

Welfare Reform

11. The council and its partners will hold a second welfare reform conference on 13 February 2014, following the successful event held in July 2013. This will offer a further opportunity for practitioners from across a range of agencies to come together and share information on their experiences and concerns as well as possible solutions and opportunities for collaboration. The event will hear from

practitioners regarding the practical solutions they have implemented in direct response to issues facing their communities.

12. Continued prioritisation of support to those individuals and families most in need, by all partners, has mitigated some of the expected impacts from the implementation of changes to the welfare system, although it is still too early to see the full impact of the reforms.

Sharing good practice

13. As the different parts of the County Durham Partnership evolve, there are more opportunities to share good practice. The AAPs have opportunities to learn from each other and how they can deliver initiatives within their localities. The CDP Forum offers an opportunity for all aspects of the Partnership to share information about activity taking place across the county and at each Forum two AAPs have the opportunity to showcase their work and share learning experiences with others. This has proved to be a useful tool in the ongoing development of the partnerships. Representatives of the AAPs and County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) are also encouraged to disseminate any information they take from the Forum to their wider networks in order to ensure that learning is shared and opportunities are maximised.
14. This sharing of knowledge and lessons learnt also takes place through other networks such as the AAP Co-ordinators meetings as well as the Member Officer Working Groups with representatives from the VCS and Local Councils. Again the external representatives on these meetings have the responsibility to share the information discussed at those meetings with their wider networks. Through these mechanisms, information about the key issues facing all partners can be communicated and any queries or comments fed back using the same routes.
15. CDALC established local forums in line with AAP areas in order to be able to feed any issues into the local AAP and also to have a mechanism for two way communication in these areas. These vary in their frequency and activity with Mid Durham, East Durham, East Durham Rural Corridor, Chester le Street, Teesdale, Great Aycliffe and Middridge particularly active.
16. The approach taken to Participatory Budgeting (PB) is an example of how learning has been shared across the AAPs. PB is not only a positive way for local people to be able to make decisions in their area but has also increased AAP Forum membership significantly, therefore raising awareness of the work of the AAPs across the County.
17. Initially Derwent Valley, Stanley and Three Towns AAPs developed their own approach to delivering PB in their own areas which were all successful in their own right. Overall £153,000 was allocated to 38 projects in 2011/12 whilst £848,000 was allocated to 75 projects in the original three AAP areas plus East Durham Rural Corridor. As each event has been evaluated, the AAPs have developed and refined the process and shared it with others as they have undertaken events themselves. As all 14 AAPs recently undertook a PB exercise as part of their November Forum meetings, a standardised approach was developed, learning from good practice across the early adopters. This saw a minimum age set and one voting method applied which ensures consistency. Over

10,000 people attended the AAP events, which means that collectively, this was the largest PB exercise in the Country with over £500K allocated to 199 projects.

18. **East Durham AAP's** Welfare Champions project is also something that is being looked at by other AAPs. Presentations have been given to a number of AAPs who wish to replicate this project with GAMP AAP expected to be the first to introduce it in the near future. Expressions of interest have also come from outside the county, with numerous requests for information being received by East Durham Trust, who are delivering this project on behalf of East Durham AAP.

Joint Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector

19. Working with our partners to support the most vulnerable in our communities is more important than ever in times of reduced resources. The Voluntary and Community Sector Working Group has recently reviewed its terms of reference and membership in order to focus on delivering against key themes which have been jointly agreed across the partners involved and which form the basis of the VCS Strategy. Additional members have been identified who will represent their own area of work as well as being recognised as being knowledgeable in a specific aspect of work set out in the strategy.
20. Procurement and sourcing external funding are some of the solid foundations to be built on, with DCC's procurement team regularly running workshops for the VCS to offer support and advice on how to take part in procurement processes and these are always highly praised.
21. A series of milestones have already been met by VCS partners including leading on aspects of the Welfare Reform programme and providing regular updates on the types of need emerging from the communities that they work with. This information sharing also covers wider networks and the dissemination of information from all partners via regular newsletters and bulletins. Many of the vast network of VCS organisations are linked into Durham Community Action, the lead infrastructure organisation of the CDP, which can also offer a key channel of communication.
22. The VCS Working Group is concentrating on volunteering in line with the priority given to this topic by the CDP board. There is already a full training programme and surveys of volunteers and VCS organisations are undertaken regularly. These offer valuable information on the types of volunteers and volunteering opportunities which are becoming more important as the nature of volunteering changes. An event is planned for spring this year to specifically look at this issue.
23. Social Enterprise is also increasing in focus. The County Durham Economic Partnership's Business, Enterprise and Skills Group, chaired by Sue Parkinson who is also a member of the VCS Working Group, has been doing a lot of work in this area. The role of the wider VCS in this work can be widened out as it develops.
24. In the present climate helping voluntary organisations raise funding to be financially viable is important. In order to support smaller voluntary and community sector organisations, the **Durham and Mid Durham AAPs** collaborated to host a 'Meet the Funders' event. Organisations including the Big Lottery, Coalfields Regeneration Trust and the Esh Group gave presentations whilst Durham Community Action and East Durham Trust outlined support that they can offer. A

specific outcome from this event is to support a local VCS network in order to ensure support is available following the closure of the CVS in Durham.

25. **Mid Durham AAP** is working closely with Durham Community Action to support several community groups within the AAP area to consider the future of their venue. Several churches and village halls, as well as the redevelopment of a local Miners Institute and the development of a primary school community sporting hub are benefitting from one to one support which will see the use of a newly developed community venues toolkit put into use. The sustainability and further use of our community venues are key to supporting the delivery of a number of other projects/services which have been identified to address several of the community concerns raised earlier this year in the respective village action plans.
26. **Spennymoor AAP** has supported the establishment of a Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award scheme within their area. DurhamGate DofE started in November 2011 with a vision to raise aspirations and skills of young people in South West Durham. The programme provides work placement opportunities that aim to engage young people in the world of work, providing direct links to further education, apprenticeships and employment. With support from a range of partners the initiative has made great progress and built the foundations for a successful project for young people in County Durham.
27. The programme will support up to 60 young people between the ages of 14 and 24 and link opportunities for volunteering and hands on experience within the DurhamGate Development and targets are split into four key areas: engagement, business development, volunteering and funding. Each young person completes a list of goals when they sign up for the scheme which looks at their aims, challenges and achievements.
28. Engagement targets are as follows:
 - a. 70 young people registered
 - b. 50 new or partnership entrants
 - c. 70% actively engaged working towards an award
 - d. 10 young people to have achieved their bronze award
 - e. 6 Young people to have achieved their silver award
 - f. 20% of young people identified as NEET or at risk of becoming NEET to be registered on the programme
 - g. Further develop the Bishop Auckland College direct licence group and support three Durham County Council partnership groups
29. Key developments to help achieve these targets in the Spennymoor area include establishing a targeted DofE programme in Whitworth Park School and Sixth Form College with a particular focus on young people at risk of becoming NEET, supporting Spennymoor Youth Centre group and engaging Spennymoor Youth Council members in the programme. This group of young people are particularly challenging and staff are working creatively to provide an appropriate programme. A Box-in Chill Out programme, disability sports and a business engagement course are being developed. Each young person will receive a one to one mentoring session before registering as DofE candidates.
30. Business development targets include ten businesses actively engaged in the programme and 30 young people engaged in work placement or business

opportunities. A business breakfast took place in September to re-establish links with businesses already signed up to the programme and promote the five ways in which businesses can be involved in the programme e.g. work placements, providing opportunities for young people to achieve volunteering hours etc.

31. Volunteering targets are as follows:

- a. Five new leaders trained and five partner volunteers engaged with 80% fully engaged with a DofE group
- b. 10% of young people continue to volunteer after completing the volunteering section of the DofE award
- c. 1000 hours of volunteering from partner organisations

32. Funding targets are as follows:

- d. 10% funds to be raised through grant/additional funding sources
- e. 20% of required funds to be raised through fundraising by the young person or the group

Supporting Local People into Employment

33. The County Durham Partnership's decision to make altogether wealthier its top priority continues to be evidenced and addressed across the county. As strategies and delivery plans are developed or refreshed, the impact that actions have on employment are being monitored. The **County Durham Economic Partnership** at its November Board meeting took the opportunity to reflect on the state of the economy and performance to date. Job creation continues to be a priority and despite the recent positive national news there remains an enormous challenge to create 30,000 jobs just to bring the County back to pre-recession figures.
34. Many partners are involved directly in up-skilling local people and developing employment opportunities. In addition, all 14 AAPs are focused on supporting local communities to become stronger and better prepared. Much of this activity has been focused on helping people into employment, either through mentoring and developing skills to make people job ready or through involvement in initiatives such as the County Durham Apprenticeship Scheme. This report contains some examples of the work being done across the County to achieve the vision of 'altogether wealthier'. The approaches taken by different partnerships vary due to their locality and specific characteristics whilst some AAPs are delivering initiatives jointly.
35. One example of an AAP addressing the needs of local people is the 'Reach' Project. The **4Together AAP**, as a direct response to welfare reform and to address the current economic hardship faced by local people, developed this in 2012/13. This project had a suite of measures aimed at raising people's confidence and skills to better engage in their community and the job market.
36. The project was delivered by Cornforth Partnership and offered one to one mentoring support, helping people with various issues including: homelessness, Employment Support Allowance appeals, online job seekers claims, housing and council tax benefits and personal independent payments. They also set up a staffed

job club twice per week to help people access IT facilities and help as well as other support.

37. The project also offered a range of training including: food safety, Construction Skills Certificate Scheme site safety, Lifewise Project (independent living), first aid, freedom domestic violence, anger management, Security Industry Authority door supervision, conflict resolution, employability skills, drug and alcohol awareness, fire awareness, personal licence holder (alcohol), functional skills, and health and wellbeing etc.
38. The project has had a huge impact on the local community and they are seeing people from other communities coming to Cornforth Partnership for one to one support, benefit advice, training etc. Having been successful they have managed to secure further funding from the former Lloyds TSB, the Council's Adult Services and are also awaiting confirmation from other funders. Local communities have benefited from the Reach project as they have been offered support packages tailored to their needs. Mentoring support has taken place wherever the individual has felt safe and comfortable either in Cornforth House itself or a community venue in their locality.
39. As transport can be an additional barrier for some people with local colleges a minimum of two buses away, the availability of support in localities has been beneficial. Whilst this barrier will not be removed once people have a job, transport is more accessible if people are employed as they have more chance of affording it.
40. This project has far exceeded the expectations. It has offered:
 - a. 200 mentoring sessions
 - b. 38 people have achieved a level 2 qualification
 - c. 34 people have achieved a level 1 qualification
 - d. 74 people have participated in skills development
 - e. 5 people have taken up work placement/volunteering opportunities
 - f. 7 people have secured employment in posts including a General Labourer, Catering Assistant, School Lunchtime Assistant and Security Guard.
41. Lack of confidence remains a key issue and finding suitable jobs can be difficult. The project has recognised the need to spend more time in developing the skills of local people; improving their confidence and qualification levels to enhance their prospects of finding employment.
42. One example is from a woman from Chilton who was referred to the project by Job Centre Plus. She was really low in confidence and self esteem and needed help with her CV. The mentor arranged to meet with her at a venue close to her home so she felt safe and comfortable. When the mentor met up with her she broke down; she was distressed by a wide range of personal issues that were impacting on her life and her prospects for employment. The mentor worked with her over the course of a year and provided support and encouragement and helped her to navigate the benefits process. She took part in a wide range of training including confidence building and support for domestic violence before moving on to further accredited training. She started to volunteer with the partnership and gradually her confidence grew and she has recently started a new job as a catering assistant.
43. Those accessing the project have said:

“Being part of the training offered by Cornforth House has given me so much confidence, the support has been fantastic and has given me opportunities I didn’t think were possible...”

“I have gained so much confidence I now feel on top of the world”

“It’s changed my life”

44. The 4 Together Partnership Board was extremely pleased to hear the results of this project and the direct impact it had had on improving local people’s lives and prospects. The project ran between August 2012 and July 2013 and was able to be delivered due to a contribution from Neighbourhood Budget which supplemented funding already secured by the group. This project highlights the need to spend more time in developing the skills of local people, improving their confidence and qualification levels in order to enhance their prospects of finding employment. Projects such as these contribute to building bigger, better and stronger communities and the AAP is keen to support projects of this nature to see their area grow in times of economic hardship.
45. **BASH AAP’s** approach is similar and has funded two Business Advisors in the area with the focus on self-employment. The project is in partnership with South Durham Enterprise Agency, Durham County Council and 2D. Their aim is to provide flexible and targeted business advice to businesses and business start-ups in the Bishop Auckland and Shildon area, this included business planning, financial forecasting, and marketing. More recently the project has expanded to include the Secure Business Grant Scheme which funds security and alarm systems for new businesses.
46. The scheme offers clients intensive one to one support with targeted training available. It is worth noting that all support is on-going and is offered to existing businesses as well as potential new business start-ups. The project has proved to be extremely successful and recently supported its 100th Business Start Up, a former supermarket worker who has started a nail salon.
47. Other businesses include gardening/landscaping, electricians, plumbers and carpenters. Some of the companies have now grown to the stage where they are taking on up to five workers. The support continues after start up and monitoring shows that 60 % were still trading at 6 months and 56% were still trading a year on.
48. One case study is a young woman, who met with the business advisor following her graduation in sport therapy. She found that finding a job in her chosen profession in the North East was extremely difficult and so she decided to look into self-employment. She then secured some work with Shildon Football Club and, with support from her advisor, she has found premises within a Bishop Auckland gym. She also secured funding from a start-up loan and is now feeling much more confident about the future. She will continue to be supported by her Adviser on an ongoing basis.
49. The BASH AAP Board has agreed to continue its support for the project into 2014/15.
50. Another significant AAP led project is **GAMP’s** Employability Skills Fund. This has been running since 2011 and has achieved a number of successful outcomes. It

was developed to respond to the increasing need for support for people trying to find employment. The two funds that support the project are an 'Employability Skills Fund' aimed at responding to specific training needs and a 'Discretionary Fund' aimed at removing barriers that prevent clients from accessing training.

51. The project has been funded via a range of sources including GAMP Area Budget allocation and funding from Neighbourhood Budget allocations as well as from a range of partners: Bishop Auckland College, Sedgefield Borough Homes (Living), South Durham Enterprise Agency and MEARS (a social housing repairs and maintenance provider).
52. A total of 208 applications have been submitted since the project officially commenced.
 - a. 165 Employability Skills Applications (*training*)
 - b. 43 Discretionary Applications (*removal of barriers e.g. travel*)
 - c. 55 clients have secured employment.
 - d. 11 clients has accessed further training
 - e. 8 clients has entered into volunteering
53. Based on the success of the project and as current levels of worklessness remain an issue in the GAMP area; the GAMP Board and partners have agreed to continue to support the project.
54. **East Durham Rural Corridor's** approach has been to focus on apprenticeships. Their Apprenticeship Initiative, which builds on the success of previous years, will create a further 15 apprenticeship opportunities in the AAP area. By working in partnership with Job Centre Plus and colleagues in Regeneration and Development within Durham County Council, as well as the National Apprenticeship Scheme (NAS), the number of apprenticeships in the area will be increased by incentivising private businesses to create additional opportunities that otherwise would not have existed.
55. The project works with private sector Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) who have never recruited an apprentice before, or have not recruited an apprentice in the last year, thereby increasing the business base of those companies who recruit apprentices (only 24% in 2011/12) and providing more opportunities for young people. A grant of up to £2,500 is available to the businesses involved. The apprenticeship opportunities created will last a minimum of 12 months with an incentive being paid at the end of the first 13 weeks of employment. In relation to the apprentices funded last year, at the current time, monitoring shows that all of the apprentices will gain full time employment.
56. Altec Engineering was one company that were able to secure the funding to enable them to create two new Engineering Apprenticeships. The Company, based in Bowburn, was established 35 year ago and employs over 50 local people and felt that with the Apprentice Wage Subsidy Grant they would have the capacity to employ two new apprentices to help grow the business and provide much needed employment for local young people. 17 year old Jamie Brown from Quarrington Hill and 18 year old Jonathan Prout of Ferryhill were the two successful applicants to secure the four year Level 3 Engineering Apprenticeships. Both Jamie and Jonathan are enjoying their apprenticeships with Altec and the company are

delighted at how well they have taken on their roles within the company and the level of commitment they are both showing.

57. Altec director Paul Lackenby commented: 'As it becomes increasingly difficult to find the skills to match our specific requirements in the outside world, we will continue to recruit apprentices which we can train in the skill sets which we require. This means that Altec will never suffer from the skills gap that blights many engineering companies today. Apprentices make a significant contribution to our business, not only from the work they do whilst they are training, but also in the stability they provide for the company as we look to the future. Bringing our own engineers up through the ranks allows us to be completely confident that we will continue to have the necessary skills and resource to maintain growth within both our current and new market segments.'
58. **Three Towns AAP's** approach to supporting people in their area to gain employment has been to fund an Employability Mentor whose remit is to help remove barriers to employment. Only eight months into the project all targets have been exceeded and the project is growing from strength to strength. 132 unemployed residents are receiving support from the project with 74 people so far having a successful outcome; of these 42 have gained employment, 34 fulltime and 8 part time positions; 30 into self-employment and 2 apprentices. A further 45 people have taken up training, volunteering or work placement opportunities.
59. The types of employment and self-employment include Forklift Truck Driver, Groundsman and Industrial Painter/Sprayer as well as administrators, care assistants and shop workers. One example is from a 55 year old man who was referred into the project by Job Centre Plus and had struggled to gain any successful interviews for driving jobs. He was particularly low and despondent whilst feeling his age was against him but had always harboured the idea of self-employment. He and his wife had used all of their savings and were having to sell their items of value to receive an income. He had identified a self-employed courier position and after referral to South Durham Enterprise Agency who assisted him with his business plan, he purchased a small van and was supported with vehicle signage costs and clothing with company logos through the Employability Project personal progression fund. Subsequent e-mail correspondence has shown how well he is doing and has thanked the project staff for all of their help and support.

Altogether wealthier

60. In addition to job creation, the Investment Planning and European Structural Fund continues to be the focus of the **County Durham Economic Partnership's (CDEP)** work. Investment planning processes are underway within the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) and the CDEP is leading on this locally through identifying areas of intervention and the apportionment of resources. The CDEP is leading a number of workstreams to examine demand set against the evidence base of need for the county. These broadly match against the core themes of the European programme but allow for a broad range of partner participation. They include: Digital Demand, Education/Business Links, Energy/Sustainability, Youth Employment, Pre & Start Up Enterprise; Apprenticeships/Traineeships, Business Support, Higher level Skills, Innovation, Volunteering, and Social Inclusion.

Altogether better for children and young people

61. All AAPs have supported initiatives that will help children and young people in their areas and between 2009 and 2013 £7.4M has been invested with match funding of £9M. Also, 1038 children and young people's projects have been developed. These vary according to the specific needs and in every instance, whether directly or indirectly, include the wider family and support networks around the young person. They are aligned to the priorities set out in the Children, Young People and Families Plan and include engagement projects such as working in schools and local communities as well as establishing youth forums in some areas. Summer trips for those families that could not afford to take their children to places such as Lightwater Valley proved popular in the Spennymoor area. These trips also helped parents who may have been socially isolated to interact with their peers in an informal way. Projects have also supported parents into work as well as looking at the difficult issues of violence and abuse within the home.
62. **GAMP** AAP's approach has been with vulnerable females who care for children and have been identified by DCC One Point Family Workers. Their 'Moving on Up' project is in partnership with One Point Service and Bishop Auckland College. The project will deliver 12 x 3.5 hour sessions to 30 women. The project beneficiaries will have been faced with a number of negative issues which has resulted, in turn, in issues for their children e.g. low educational attainment/attendance at school. They will have personal development sessions with a counsellor and also do activities such as: basic maths and English to support their children in school, healthy eating linked to a food hygiene course and employability skills training. The aim of the project is to re-engage the women into training and education, move them closer to the labour market, raise self-esteem and have direct benefits to their children.
63. AAPs also regularly consult with children and young people with the aim of the Have Your Say Young Peoples Annual Forum Event being to engage the young people in the AAP area on issues affecting them and what they feel are their priorities in the areas in which they live. **Chester-le-Street and District AAP** held their fifth annual event which was designed to mirror the forum events with the adult population, ensuring the views of young people are heard. The outcomes from this event (the priorities) help guide the work of the Children and Young People's task group, ensuring the projects developed meet the priorities of the young people locally.
64. The main element of this event in 2013 was a mass gathering of school children aged between 8 and 11. 213 children attended from 13 different primary schools. Having undertaken a child friendly workshop they concluded that Crime and Community Safety (150 votes) was of most importance to them, secondly they were keen that there was more support for the older people (91 votes). Thirdly Environmental issues featured highly. The priorities the young people identified in the secondary age band was 'more activities and things to do' also crime and community safety featured highly as well as improvement in the shopping offer on the front street
65. An added element of the day was to engage the young people in the council's budget consultation exercise. The secondary school children all participated in this exercise, which means that a snapshot of young people's views has been captured as part of the overall work county-wide in engaging people in the councils budget consultation exercise.

Altogether healthier

66. The Area Action Partnerships (**Chester le Street, Stanley, Derwent Valley, Durham and Mid Durham**) that are aligned with the geography of the North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group are working closely with partners involved in the Derwentside and Durham/Chester le Street Health Networks to develop the North Durham Healthier Communities Group. This group will be primarily made up of representatives from the five AAPs, Public Health Commissioners with Durham County Council, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust and the North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group with a variety of other providers both statutory and voluntary linking in as and when required. The group will consider a range of health issues that cut across partners key as identified in County Durham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Northern CCG Clear and Credible Plan 2012/13 – 2016/17 as well as combining 'soft' local intelligence provided through the AAPs and the third sector. The group will link closely to the AAPs various health related task and finish groups as well as seek guidance from its partners as to the best way to link with the County Durham Partnerships Health and Wellbeing Board. It is envisaged that this group will commence in the spring of 2014.
67. The Health and Wellbeing Board endorsed the Public Health Mental Health strategy, which aims to promote mental wellbeing and prevent the development of mental health issues by increasing the resilience of the population in County Durham and reducing risk factors associated with poor mental health. There is a need to promote mental health and emotional well-being at individual and community level, improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, and to reach out to the groups at greatest risk of poor mental health.
68. The vision of the strategy is that 'Individuals, families and communities within County Durham are supported to achieve their optimum mental wellbeing'. The Strategy was developed by the Public Mental Health Strategy Development Group consisting of key partners, service users and carers. It is based on comprehensive identification of needs and identifying evidence based practice to promote good mental health. This work will form the basis of a wider mental health framework for County Durham. The strategy adopts core beliefs to ensure effective delivery including joined-up working between community and voluntary, statutory and business sectors; commitment to engagement and consultation with local community, service users and carers; commitment to achieving and sharing evidence based practice; population and targeted approach to delivering strategy. This work will form the basis of an overall mental health strategy in County Durham.

Altogether safer

69. The Safe Durham Partnership Board has received regular updates on 'Transforming Rehabilitation' which is a Government initiative that aims to transform the way offenders are managed in the community in order to achieve a reduction in the rate of re-offending whilst continuing to protect the public. The Ministry of Justice are now in the implementation phase of reform laid out in 'Transforming Rehabilitation'. Key milestones include:
 - a. Local probation exit strategies in place and draft 'split' of resources submitted to Ministry of Justice.
 - b. Replace Probation Trusts with a new National Probation Service and create 21 public sector Community Rehabilitation Companies on 1 April 2014.

- c. Completion of the competition process in October 2014.
- d. Contract Package Areas awarded and ownership of the Community Rehabilitation Companies transferred in to private ownership. (Nov 2014 – Jan 2015)

70. Offenders managed by the new National Probation Service will include all those who pose the highest risk of serious harm to the public; including those subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. The new Service will continue to assess the level that high risk offenders pose and advise the courts and Parole Board accordingly. All other offenders will be managed and supervised by Community Rehabilitation Companies.
71. Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust has completed its 2013-2015 Exit-Plan and submitted its proposals for the allocation of existing resources for the new National Probation Services and what remains as part of the local Community Rehabilitation Company. The Trust's contract with the Ministry of Justice ends in March 2014. A Public Sector Community Rehabilitation Company will provide probation services until March 2015 when they will be transferred into private hands of the winning bidder.
72. The Trust has raised concerns, shared by community safety partners, on the lack of detailed information available regarding the changes as well as the proposed differentiation between high-risk and low risk offenders as well as where responsibilities will lie in the future. The present Probation Service has been pivotal in helping to reduce crime and improve performance and the Safe Durham Partnership has expressed concerns about the potential impact of changes, including the complexity of the processes that will need to be developed to ensure effective connections between the two new bodies.

Altogether greener

73. The **Environment Partnership's** has implemented its restructure and all of the new groups have met and agreed their new terms of reference. They will now begin developing their new delivery plans which will build on successes that have seen countywide carbon reduction targets met and positive community action taken by groups lead by a number of AAPs.
74. The Environment Partnership Awards are in their 25th year and therefore early planning is underway to ensure that they build on the success of previous years. A range of ideas were discussed at the recent Board meeting which include encouraging local councils to become involved as well as seeking further sponsorship opportunities.

Area Action Partnerships Update

75. The Area Action Partnerships also continue to deliver a wide range of initiatives in their local areas that support their locally determined priorities. These projects differ in size, financial contribution and longevity but all meet an identified need in a specific area. This section addresses the work carried out by those AAPs not featured in the earlier parts of the report.
76. The **Derwent Valley AAP** is working with the Pre-School Learning Alliance to deliver a Healthy Starts project. The project looks at addressing key issues in preventing childhood obesity and the role early intervention plays in establishing

healthy lifestyle choices. The project is being delivered in 14 local community toddler groups throughout the Derwent Valley area and each toddler group will receive 3 visits from a development worker who will provide information and advice on a variety of healthy eating and exercise issues. During each session, families will be encouraged to take part in hands on activities and these will include healthy cookery sessions and a 'movement and music' session to demonstrate the ease and necessity of getting children active. Advice and resources will also be given to toddler leaders so that they are able to continue demonstrating good practice once the project has finished.

77. The AAP is also working in partnership with Off The Page Drama CIC to deliver a creative writing and literacy project called One Big Story aimed at children aged 9 - 11. The project has three phases which include a series of one-day workshops run in each of the 8 participating primary schools, facilitated by a drama teacher, a writer and an illustrator. Children are encouraged to generate their own ideas for character and plot. They engage with their ideas as individuals, in small groups and as a class through a range of activities and develop one chapter for the story. The children's ideas are then turned into a book and published. The content is realised by the writer and illustrator in such a way that every child will be able to identify their contribution to the final work. Their own words and drawings are used as much as possible to create a high-quality piece of children's literature. Finally, the work of the children is championed in a series of library events and displays where the children are introduced to their local library, presented with a free copy of the final work and hear their chapter read out loud. The project aims to improve academic attainment and build confidence in children while encouraging them to take creative risks and grow collaborative, teamwork skills.
78. An existing project that is supported by **Stanley AAP** has been successful in a bid to the Children in Need charity. The Stanley Youth Centre Kids United project provides clubs for young people and will be able to expand the support available following the award of the £78,500 grant.
79. The project has been running for three years and the addition of a youth worker, sessional staff and a play worker will enable expansion to Stanley Young People's Club and Quaking Houses Village Hall. The aim of the project is to provide a safe environment, both within term time and during holiday periods, to provide opportunities to play and develop social skills. The new groups will also develop the skills of young adult volunteers who will support the sessions.
80. Stanley Youth Centre manage and deliver the project and have been told by the young people involved that they thought the current Kids United scheme was excellent and that they enjoyed all of the activities on offer and spending time with their friends.
81. With the one hundred year commemoration of World War One starting this year, it is timely that **Weardale AAP** has supported the replacing of parts of the Westgate Clock which hangs as a memorial to those who gave their lives in the two world wars. When the clock came to be serviced, the cast iron case had succumbed to adverse weather conditions and it was recommended that the clock face and cast pointers along with the case be taken down for safety reasons.
82. In addition to the AAP support, the community of Westgate came together and combined their efforts to raise over £15K through a variety of ways including bake

sales, tombola, raffles and a weekly draw. Also, with the support of the AAP team funding applications were submitted to Sir John Knott, Sir John Priestman and private donations were also received.

83. A number of 'green' projects continue to be supported in the **Teesdale AAP** area. 'Veg out in Barney' is a project that will see vegetables grown sites across the town and in poly tunnels at The Hub. Veg boxes can then be accessed at three local schools. The project works with young offenders from Deerbolt and is also looking at how some of the produce could be distributed via local foodbanks.
84. Another project which has recently been supported is the development of a community orchard in Woodland. This is being led by 'Joined Up Holidays' a charity which provides holidays for families with disabled children. The orchard will enhance the local area and will also be open to the local community.

Forthcoming Events

85. A list of forthcoming events is attached at appendix two. These have been gathered from partners and may be of interest to people involved in the partnership and thematic partnerships. The list will be updated on a regular basis.

Recommendation

86. Members of OSMB are recommended to note the content of the report.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - Area and Neighbourhood budgets are utilised and delivered through the 14 AAPs and ensure the Council (and AAPs) receive improved information on the outputs achieved through use of locality budgets.

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - The actions set out in this report aim to ensure equality and diversity issues are embedded within the working practice of AAPs.

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - Altogether safer is the responsibility of the Safe Durham Partnership.

Human Rights - None

Consultation - The County Durham Partnership framework is a key community engagement and consultation function of the Council and its partners. The recommendations in the report are based on extensive consultation with AAP partners and the establishment of a Sound Board to progress the recommendations and will continue this consultative approach.

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications - None

Appendix two

Partnership Events 2014

Date	Event Title	Lead Partner	Contact Information
January 16	Grieving for Lost Homes: Territorial Stigmatisation, the Rent Gap and Displacement	Durham University	Stephen Crossley s.j.crossley@durham.ac.uk
February 6	What Price? Public Health and Welfare Reform	Institute for Local Governance	www.fuse.ac.uk
February 13	Welfare Reform Conference	Durham County Council	Roger Goodes for further information 03000 268050 or to book ring Cathy Tennick 03000 263590
February 28	From Thriving to Surviving: How to grow the social economy in the North East	Durham University	llg.visitor@durham.ac.uk 0191 3349290