

Altogether Better Durham The Sustainable Community Strategy for County Durham

This document is produced for Cabinet on 19 March 2014.

The Overarching Plan for County Durham

This Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is the overarching plan for County Durham. It sets out our shared long-term vision for the county, our ambitions for the area and the priorities that partners and communities believe are important. It provides the blueprint to deliver long lasting improvements and sets the scene for the County Durham Plan, the local plan for the county which identifies where new housing, employment and retail development should take place and which areas need to be protected and enhanced, in order to ensure that Durham develops a thriving economy and remains a beautiful place to live and visit. Improving the economy continues to be our top priority as a partnership as it is recognised that employment opportunities and supporting people into employment, has a massive impact on their lives and the lives of those around them.

County Durham is a beautiful and diverse county with a strong sense of community identity. It has some of the most outstanding landscapes from the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the West to the Heritage Coastline in the East and is the home to a range of treasures including Durham Cathedral and Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We have much to be proud of in County Durham, but we also recognise we need to improve and this vision sets out a path to an **altogether better Durham** by 2030. It sets the direction and provides the context for all partners working to improve quality of life in the county.

Fundamentally, it is about realising two aims for County Durham:

- An altogether better place
- Altogether better for people

Altogether better place

An **altogether better place** is one where people of all ages and circumstances can meet their needs, whether material, social or spiritual. It is concerned with the physical structure of our towns and villages, the location of housing, jobs, shopping and leisure facilities, the design of buildings and the transport links between them.

Our ambition is to create sustainable places where people want to live, work, visit and invest.

Altogether better for people

Making the county **altogether better for people** involves many strands, including tackling deprivation, narrowing the gap in life chances across the county and reducing inequalities for the most deprived and disadvantaged. This aim is about ensuring that individual and community well-being results from the programmes and actions we develop.

We want to reduce inequalities between different sections of the community as well as between the county and the rest of the region and the country. We will promote 'equality of opportunity' for all, ensuring that our residents and communities have the skills and support they need to achieve their goals and improve their life chances.

Since our first SCS was written in 2010, we have worked hard to make this vision a reality and through strong partnership working, have seized opportunities and faced a range of challenges together. This collective approach to supporting local communities is now a way of life in County Durham and, through partners' continued commitment, our performance has increased year on year:

- ❖ We delivered a very successful Year of Culture in 2013 which saw over 500,000 visitors to the county and generated in the region of £30M for the economy.
- ❖ We have been instrumental in attracting Hitachi Rail UK into our area which will mean thousands of jobs for local people.
- ❖ Our young people continue to achieve GCSE results higher than the national average with eleven consecutive years of improvement.
- ❖ We have won awards for our approach to working with young offenders.
- ❖ The teenage conception rate is now better than our neighbouring authority areas and continues to improve.
- ❖ Police recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour have fallen by almost 20,000.
- ❖ We have already exceeded our ambitious carbon reduction target of 40% by 2020.
- ❖ We outperform national averages in recycling.
- ❖ The Area Action Partnerships, the most local element of the County Durham Partnership framework, have secured over £34M of match funding in communities.
- ❖ We have won national and international recognition for our participatory budgeting work which has awarded £1M to over 100 local groups.
- ❖ We have undertaken one of the biggest and most ambitious asset transfer programmes with our community buildings that will see a network of sustainable buildings managed by local communities.

Through strong leadership, a clear strategic direction, our ability to innovate and our commitment to working together, we plan to address local needs, reduce inequalities, improve life chances for all and shape a better future for the county.

There have been substantial national policy changes since 2010 which have had significant impacts on local people and partners working together to meet local needs. There have also been considerable reductions in both mainstream and targeted funding, which have particularly affected our county given its levels of deprivation. County Durham has responded rapidly to financial austerity, by managing the necessary changes well, making difficult but timely decisions, protecting front line services wherever possible and working with local people to find alternative solutions to the problems we all face.

By sharing ideas and developing local solutions, we hope to maintain our path towards an altogether better Durham. We have set in place the foundations for robust and sustainable growth and continue to search for and identify new opportunities. Moving forward, we will need to do more to enable communities to take control of local assets and services, so that public sector resources are used effectively and where they are needed most. We are, therefore, willing to try new things and to work differently in order to achieve better outcomes for local people.

We will continue to work together to maximise our resources and, with careful planning and good management, we will continue to deliver value and achieve our shared priorities for the county.

Together we can be optimistic about the future and will continue to work towards our vision of an Altogether Better Durham, by realising our five priority themes and high level objectives:

- Altogether wealthier

- Thriving Durham City
- Vibrant and successful towns
- Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities
- Competitive and successful people
- A top location for business

- Altogether better for children and young people

- Children and young people realise and maximise their potential
- Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life
- A think family approach is embedded in our support for families

- Altogether healthier

- Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life
- Reduce health inequalities and early deaths
- Improve the quality of life, independence and care and support for people with long term conditions
- Improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the population
- Protect vulnerable people from harm
- Support people to die in the place of their choice with the care and support they need

- Altogether safer

- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Protecting vulnerable people from harm
- Reducing re-offending
- Alcohol and substance misuse harm reduction
- Embed the Think Family approach
- Counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism
- Reduce road casualties

o Altogether greener

- o Deliver a cleaner, more attractive and sustainable environment
- o Maximise the value and benefits of Durham's natural environment
- o Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change
- o Promote sustainable design and protect Durham's heritage

Changing Landscape

The world in which many public, private and voluntary sector services are delivered has changed significantly in recent years, and continues to do so. All partners have proactively faced these challenges and taken the opportunities where they have been available whilst still delivering services for our local people.

Funding

Councils, police, fire service and health services have seen the biggest changes in generations to their structures and funding. This has resulted in significant reductions in resources, with the county council alone facing reductions of more than £224M by 2017. However by working in partnership and with an emphasis on accurate forecasting, strong decision making, robust planning and a commitment to listen to and action the views of local people, we are in as strong a position as possible. This also enables us to take the opportunity to look at the resources we have and explore new ways of working as well as different ways of achieving the efficiencies needed.

Whilst many jobs in County Durham are reliant on public sector funding and there are planned reductions in this sector, we recognise that there has been growth in other areas including the University and the private sector.

Cross-thematic focus

Partners are keen to target resources where they are needed most and in addition to the thematic priorities highlighted above, they have identified key areas for focus by the whole partnership. These are issues that will benefit from additional joined up working and cut across more than one theme of our work:

- Job creation;
- Mental wellbeing;
- Stronger families;
- Volunteering;
- Inequalities;
- Alcohol.

Welfare Reforms

County Durham has many deprived areas and government changes to the welfare system have had a significant impact on people living in the county. The total financial loss to the county's economy per year, as at December 2013, is estimated to amount to £188 million. Partners have responded together to anticipate benefit changes, mitigate impacts and support benefit claimants to become more independent. Specific packages of support have been developed to help residents and service users adapt and welfare reform conferences have been held to promote innovative solutions that meet the needs of local people. However these changes are undeniably impacting on local people and the economy.

North East Local Enterprise Partnership

Changes to national economic policy have created some new structures, most notably for the county, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) - a business-led organisation responsible for promoting and developing economic growth in Northumberland, Durham and Tyne and Wear. The NELEP commissioned an independent economic review of the economy which identified what needed to be done strategically over the next five years to stimulate productivity and increased employment opportunities. The review made a number of recommendations that will be taken forward by the NELEP and the County Durham Economic Partnership.

European Structural and Investment Funds

European funding of €157M from 2014 to 2020 offers significant opportunity for investment in the county to boost economic recovery and contribute to the ambitions of the NELEP and also the Europe 2020 strategy.

There are a number of themes that this funding will be used for in County Durham: volunteering; youth employment; digital demand (ICT); education and business links; energy awareness and sustainability; pre and start up enterprise and business support; access to finance; higher level skills; innovation; social inclusion and a capital programme. All parts of the partnership are involved in this work, therefore ensuring that work plans developed will complement existing pieces of work.

The Combined Authority

The council has played a leading role in establishing a combined authority to formalise joint working between seven of the North East Local authorities (Durham, South Tyneside, North Tyneside, Sunderland, Gateshead, Newcastle, Northumberland) on transport and skills, along with improving the opportunity to attract external funding. This will offer County Durham opportunities that would not otherwise be available and which will have significant impact in the future.

Changes to health structures

We have established a Health and Wellbeing Board which sets the health priorities for the local area and is a key part of the County Durham Partnership. The Board is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of the people of County Durham and reducing health inequalities.

The reforms to the National Health Service have been the most significant we have seen since the NHS was introduced in 1948. We have two General Practitioner (GP) led Clinical Commissioning Groups which implement and commission locally led responses to health problems. These are groups of GPs, nurses and clinicians who commission local health services.

The Council, through its Public Health team which transferred in to the local authority in 2013, has responsibility for improving and protecting the health of the county's residents and helping them to stay well. The team works with partners to commission and develop new health improvement initiatives with communities. The annual Report of the Director of Public Health looks at the health inequalities in the area and sets out proposals to address them.

Academies and Free Schools

The county now has an extended Academies Programme and includes free schools, which are set up and managed by parents, teachers, charities and businesses. This follows significant changes in national education policy.

Changes to community safety structures

Our directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner is responsible for agreeing policing priorities in consultation with local people and delivering against these through the development of a Police and Crime Plan (PCP).

We are changing the way we work with and manage offenders within the community as part of the 'Transforming Rehabilitation' Government initiative. A new National Probation Service and a local Community Rehabilitation Company are being established. These new arrangements will be in place by March 2015 following a period of transition.

The County Durham Plan

The County Durham Plan, the local plan for the county is the spatial expression of the SCS and outlines where development will take place up to 2030. It is our strategy for the future physical development of the county and identifies where new housing, employment and jobs and retail development should take place and which areas need to be protected and enhanced,

We have identified a completely new direction for the county, moving away from a public sector funding led strategy to one which is more market driven.

We will focus growth around the county's principal towns by stimulating the development of good quality housing, employment opportunities and town centre renewal and investment. This will help the county realise its potential as the ideal location for a range of industries and businesses and to provide 30,000 new jobs for current and future residents.

We recognise that the social impacts of increased housing and employment opportunities are a key aspect of the plan and all partners have been involved in its development. Schools will be developing across the county and existing schools improved to accommodate the children of the families living in new housing developments. We will also increase health care provision in some areas to cope with population changes.

We will invest in transport infrastructure, environmental improvements and additional services due to the increase in physical developments, both in business and residential areas.

Durham City is one of the North East's prime economic assets and a key location for sustainable growth, with 5,000 new houses and 7,000 new jobs proposed. Other elements of the plan include:

- increasing the percentage of the workforce that is in work to 73%;

- focusing new development on the county's 12 main towns (Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Crook, Durham City, Peterlee, Seaham, Shildon, Spennymoor, Stanley and Newton Aycliffe);
- making sure the transport system is easily accessible;
- protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment; and
- increasing the number of visitors to the county and the amount of time and money they spend.

The SCS is the overarching strategy for the county and is underpinned by a series of plans. These meet the priorities of all partners whilst helping us tackle any pressures as well as take opportunities as they are presented.

Individual delivery plans set out our ambitions in full and can be accessed via www.countydurhampartnership.co.uk – **paper version**
(Individual delivery plans set out our ambitions in full and can be accessed through the links above – **web version**)

Commitment to working together

Our Ambition for County Durham

Our plans for the county remain focused and ambitious and we are committed to working together with communities to try new things and to build stronger communities ready to take advantage of every opportunity. We have high aspirations and a proven ability to deliver, and along with the tenacity of local people, we expect to succeed.

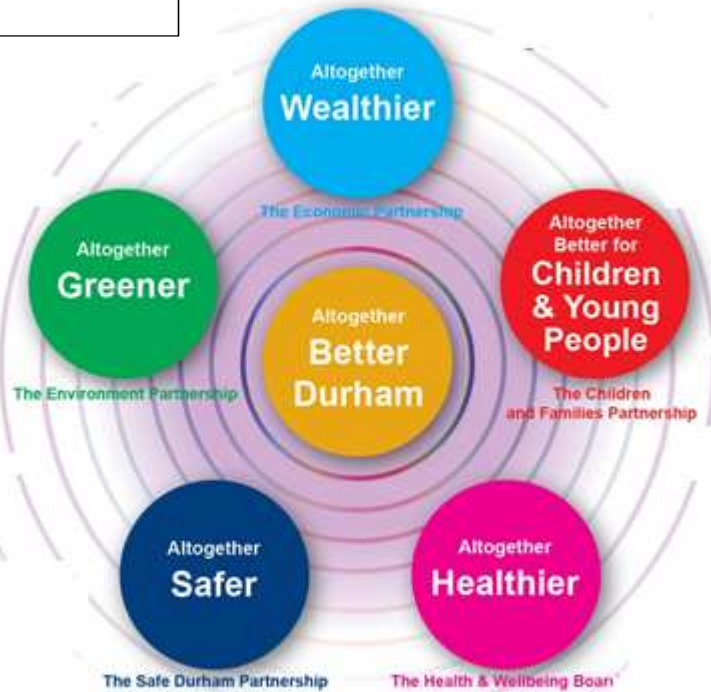
Partnership Framework

The County Durham Partnership (CDP) brings together key organisations from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors and is made up of the CDP Forum, CDP Board, five thematic partnerships and 14 Area Action Partnerships. It exists to ensure local needs and priorities are met and to drive a common purpose and ambition for the county, influence the use of all partners' resources and ensure a strong focus on the achievement of the county's priorities, as set out in this SCS.

The Economic Partnership aims to make County Durham a place where people want to live, work, invest and visit whilst enabling our residents and businesses to achieve their potential.

The Environment Partnership aims to transform and sustain the environment within County Durham, maximising partnership arrangements to support the economy and the wellbeing of local communities.

The Safe Durham Partnership tackles crime, disorder, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the environment and to reduce re-offending.



The Children and Families Partnership works to ensure effective services are delivered in the most efficient way to improve the lives of children, young people and families in County Durham.

The Health and Wellbeing Board promotes integrated working between commissioners of health services, public health and social care services, for the purposes of advancing the health and wellbeing of the people in the area.



Area Action Partnerships

At a local level Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) have had a significant impact across the county by developing and successfully implementing a wide variety of initiatives locally. Of over 2,000 projects delivered since 2009, a selection includes:

- The regeneration of Durham's Wharton Park which was initiated by Durham AAP and has now resulted in a £2m award from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 13 apprenticeships have been created and 76 residents/ businesses have been engaged with through support from Spennymoor AAP, with 17 residents moving into employment or further training.
- 208 unemployed Aycliffe residents have received training, resulting in 55 people getting a job due to Great Aycliffe AAP working with Bishop Auckland College and Livin Housing Association.
- 100 local new businesses have been created through Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP working with South Durham Enterprise Agency on an innovative Business Advisor Programme.
- Mid Durham AAP has supported Derwentside Homes develop an older people's telephone befriending support scheme which has 30 volunteers working with 130 regular users. The scheme is being rolled out across the county.

- o A Credit Union has been developed by East Durham AAP which is delivered by over 50 volunteers in 14 community venues with over 1,000 members.

This action focused approach has seen £21 million allocated to local priorities and just under £34 million attracted in matched funding over the last five years.

New ways of working have been piloted through AAPs and over 11,000 people are now involved as AAP Forum members, more than 30,000 people have attended decision making events and over 18,600 people have engaged in participatory budgeting events. Indeed our work on participatory budgeting has attracted attention from the USA, Canada and Denmark.

The work of AAPs, Thematic Partnerships and the CDP board together have effectively linked strategic vision with local action and improved our opportunities for success.

We recognise that to achieve our ambitions, greater public involvement presents a wealth of untapped skills, knowledge and capacity for action. Local people want to do more and the partnership is committed to providing the support and resources needed to enable local people to take greater control.

Added value of wider networks

We can only achieve our goals by working together through our wider networks. A shared approach to delivering the savings and increasing efficiency helps all partners to manage their services in a better way, than if they had to do it individually.

The **voluntary and community sector (VCS)** in the county contributes mutual understanding and a shared vision. The difference in skills and perspective that the sector offers complements the way the partnership has developed.

VCS organisations play a key role in the delivery of services, particularly at a time of major change for public sector organisations and are well placed to take advantage of opportunities and identify new ways of working. The sector can become a delivery agent that will ensure the sustainability of vital services across the county by taking a proactive approach. This joint approach shows how we are evolving and strengthening our ethos of partnership working.

Our Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy identifies that knowledge has improved, understanding increased and productive working relationships have developed. All partners recognise that a strong, active and flourishing VCS is a vital component in building resilient communities and enabling individuals to reach their potential.

Local councils are also engaged in the partnership and support other partners to achieve shared priorities and outcomes. As a democratically elected group, town and parish councils are informed by the views of local people and work on the behalf of their communities. These views are important to the partnership and are help shape local priorities and, perhaps more importantly, inform partners about the impacts of changes on local people.

There are a range of opportunities for joint working with local councils across partnership organisations that include efficiencies through joint procurement as well as devolution of services to reduce duplication.

The County Durham Partnership sets out its support for the **armed forces community** through its commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant. This encourages local people to support people in their area and to help them understand issues, service personnel may face on their return. We have also developed suitable approaches to support which include detailed information on a dedicated element of our website with links to a number of external organisations. We have highlighted armed forces personnel, through the work of some of our thematic partnerships, particularly when looking at employment support and the health and wellbeing of people and their families.

Our work with **faith communities** ensures that we acknowledge the contribution and resources offered to our communities by the huge range and variety of individuals, groups and organisations that make up this network. Much of the work supports the most vulnerable members of our communities which will become increasingly important as the economic landscape continues to change. This cooperation takes place through education provision in schools; in health and wellbeing projects; in imaginative employment schemes for young people; through creative and artistic cultural initiatives and other leisure focused activities; and philanthropic and charitable initiatives.

Given their role, faith communities are ideally placed to contribute to realising the county's vision, acting as 'critical friends' for other partners and co-creating a socially just and inclusive society.

Interdependencies

All parts of the partnership have an impact on each other and it is very important that plans or programmes are not developed in isolation. Tackling an issue by working in partnership offers benefits and opportunities that may not be realised if only one organisation or part of the partnership is involved. We all try to avoid duplication, as well as ensuring that services are not completely stopped in a community, if there is evidence that there is still a need for it.

Social determinants of health

People's health is often determined by wider social issues such as lifestyle, employment and housing. Our commitment to working together to address the social determinants of health is recognised across all of our priorities, but is most clearly defined in relation to health. The World Health Organisation (WHO) describes the social determinants of health as "the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age". They include jobs, housing, education, crime, access to services and other aspects of living conditions. People's health can be determined by a variety of factors such as their gender, age and genetic makeup as well as factors that they have more impact on and control over such as their lifestyle choices and social environment.

These factors can't be addressed by one single organisation or partnership as they have multiple impacts and contributory factors. We understand how our work impacts on the social determinants of health and what can be done to address them, while addressing individual partners or thematic partnership's own objectives. Some practical examples include:

- Education – low education levels are linked with poor health, more stress and lower self-confidence. Education plays a large part in shaping the futures of children and provides on going opportunities for adults to develop their skills.
- Physical environment – safe water and clean air, healthy workplaces, safe houses, communities and roads all contribute to good health.
- Employment and working conditions – being in employment is a key element of mental and physical wellbeing. Having more control over working conditions has a positive impact on health. Healthy workplaces can contribute significantly to improving the health of the workforce.
- Social support networks – greater support from families, friends and communities is associated with better health.
- Culture - customs and traditions, and the beliefs of the family and community all affect health.
- Personal behaviour and coping skills – individual behaviour and lifestyle choices can have a great impact on health and wellbeing.
- Health services - access and use of services that prevent and treat disease influences health, whether in a hospital or community.
- Age, gender and individual factors – these are clearly important factors that impact on health across an individual's lifetime. Health changes over

time as we age and certain biological and genetic factors affect some individuals more than others.

Profile of the county

In developing shared plans and strategies we aim to ensure we all have a shared understanding of County Durham and some of its key challenges. The following narrative looks at the make-up of the county in 2014 and recognises the diversity within it. It identifies inequalities between the major centres of population, smaller towns and other localities. We have collected a wide range of information relating to various priorities across all parts of the partnership which has identified some key trends.

Population Growth

Between 2001 and 2011 the population of the county increased by 4.0%, from 493,678 to 513,242, faster than the regional average but slower than the national average of 7.1% over the same period.

Population growth in County Durham is a recent trend. Now, the county has almost exactly the same total population as it did 30 years ago with growth very similar to the North East average. County Durham has the largest population in the North East, and looking to the future, is projected to continue to increase by 9.3% to 543,000 by 2030.

Age Profile

The county's population is ageing as well as increasing in number. The number of older people is increasing at a quicker rate than the population overall, whereas the number of younger people has fallen. This is similar to the regional picture, however nationally, younger age groups are increasing. County Durham already has a relatively large number of older people with almost a fifth (18%) of the population aged 65 or over compared to 17.3% regionally and 16.4% nationally.

The oldest age group (aged 85+) has also increased by the highest rate. Between 2001 and 2011 the number people aged 85 and over increased by 27.4% compared to 23.3% nationally.

These trends are likely to continue, largely because of the county's current age structure and trends in people living longer. The number of older people in the county is projected to increase substantially by 48.9% by 2030. This means the number of residents aged 65+ will increase from 93,000 in 2011 to 138,400 in 2030. The number of 85+ people is set to increase even more sharply over the same period, doubling from around 11,000 to 22,000 residents.

The working age population overall is projected to decline by 1.1% by 2030. The younger working age population (aged 16-39) will increase over this period by 12% whilst the older working age population (aged 40-65) is projected to decline by 11.9%. Despite declines in the number of children over the last ten years recent increases in births means the number of children aged 0-15 is projected to steadily increase by 6.6% up until 2022.

Local economy

Geographically, the county is both large and diverse. More than half the county's population live in the 12 major centres of population with around a third living in smaller town and urban fringe areas. The remaining population live in villages and hamlets some of which are the most rural areas in England. The county has many physical assets with a World Heritage Site, 70 parks and open spaces, an area of outstanding natural beauty covering the upper Teesdale and Weardale and 15km of defined Heritage Coast.

Our top priority is to improve the local economy leading to an Altogether Wealthier Durham. Economic factors shape the circumstances in which people are born, educated, live healthy lives, work and grow old. These circumstances, along with government policies, can help define life for our communities.

Local economic indicators show a significant gap between County Durham and England average. One of the ways we show this is through Gross Value Added (GVA) which measures the value of all goods and services produced in an area. In County Durham this shows that the local economy would need to increase by 70% to close the gap with the England average. Regional comparisons also show a significant difference, with a 25% increase needed to close the gap with the North East average.

Text box/Infographic quantifying trends in employment rate 2007-2012 e.g.

CD (2012) 65.1%, (change since 2007) -6%

NE 66.2%, -3.2%

GB 70.7%, -1.6%

Other economic measures show a similar trend. The local employment rate compared to the England average had been improving before 2008 but fell considerably during and following the recession. The proportion of local people in employment fell and remained low for a long time, only showing some signs of improvement in 2013.

The impact of the recession on local unemployment has been considerable. The number of people claiming Jobseekers allowance (JSA) doubled, adding to long term unemployment issues that the county has always had, with around one in ten of the working age population claiming a sickness related benefits. The number of young JSA claimants and those claiming for more than a year have both increased considerably which need new approaches and interventions to ensure we break the cycle of worklessness.

Text box/Infographic quantifying scale and trends in unemployment

1)JSA claimants 12,000 (up 110% May 08-May 13)

2)LT unemployment 4,500 (up 890% May 08-May 13)

3) youth unemployment (70% May 08-May 13).

Together these indicators illustrate the scale of the task and provide the partnership with further evidence as to why improving the local economy is the top priority. However, all thematic areas clearly remain vital in delivering a better quality of life for all residents.

Quality of life

More than one in four residents have no qualifications (27.5%) which is high when compared nationally (23.9%). There are also relatively fewer highly qualified residents in the county (21.5%) than compared nationally (28.7%).

There are, however, signs for optimism. In 2012/13, GCSE educational attainment showed a consecutive improvement for the eleventh year, outstripping the national average, with 62.9% of pupils achieving 5 or more A*- C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and maths.

Text box/Infographic quantifying scale of those going on to higher education (2011/12),

CD 16.1 per 1,000 18+ population, +20% since 2001

NE 18.1 per 1,000 18+ population, +25% since 2001

Eng 21.6 per 1,000 18+ population, +28% since 2001

This good performance at GCSE level is not reflected in higher education starts because relatively few people go on to study at university. Also, because of increases in apprenticeship starts locally, in both 2010/11 and 2011/12, more County Durham residents started apprenticeships than went on to study at university for a first degree.

New and improved approaches to health mean that life expectancy has been steadily improving in County Durham but is still relatively low when compared nationally. However, there is still a large gap between affluent and deprived areas within the county. A boy born today in the most deprived areas of County Durham is expected to live around eight years less than if he were born in the most affluent. Similarly girls born in the most affluent area are expected to live around six years longer than those born in the most deprived areas.

Text box/Infographic quantifying inequality in Life Expectancy 2008-2010

Male/Female

CD 77.0 years/81.0years

ENG 78.6 years/82.6years

Patterns in why people die early show that circulatory diseases and cancers are the main factors that contribute to poor life expectancy for males and females. However, smoking is the biggest single contributor to a shorter life expectancy in the county and contributes substantially to the many cancers. Between 2008 and 2010 cardiovascular disease (CVD) and cancer accounted for 65% of early or premature deaths in County Durham.

Almost one in four residents (23.6%) reported that they had a long term illness or disability which limits their day-to-day activities in the 2011 Census. Despite improvements since 2001 this remains much higher than national (17.9%) comparison.

Inequalities such as these are also shown in other population needs data which show referrals for social care are much higher in relatively deprived areas. Health and social care providers also have the added challenge of providing services for a rapidly increasing number of older people, many of whom have very complex needs.

County Durham is one of the safest places to live in the UK as crime is low and below the average for England. It is, however, relatively higher in more deprived areas. Anti-social behaviour remains a significant issue for many residents despite recent improvements.

Partnership Localities

In April 2013 the County Durham Partnership agreed to adopt a new partnership geography comprising five sub-county areas, to be used to develop a cross-thematic analysis for the consideration of priorities and need below county level. The following information describes how these areas vary in terms of population characteristics, trends as well as needs and will be used to support the geographic focus of the partnership's work.

Central Durham

Central Durham is home to the county's largest settlement, Durham City, and also includes various suburbs and satellite villages. It is also home to our world heritage site in Durham Cathedral and a world renowned university.

**Map of SPA geography
highlighting Central Durham**

Between the 2001 and 2011 censuses Central Durham had the highest rate of population growth of all of the five sub-county areas, with an increase of 6.6%, rising to 106,700 people. Parts of Durham City experienced particularly large growth.

This increase is mainly due to Durham City being the home to one of the country's leading universities and its expansion of undergraduate and postgraduate places prior to 2011. This added to the already disproportionately high number of 16-39 year olds living in Durham City. The role of the university can be clearly seen in the area's age profile with around a sixth (15.8%) of the area's population aged between 18-24, far higher than the county average of 9.7%.

The area differs to the rest of the county in other ways too. Mainly it stands out as the most affluent area of the county, albeit with some areas of deprivation. Unemployment (2.8%) and worklessness are relatively low (10.1%) compared to the national levels (3.6% and 11.4%). Both long term (1%) and youth unemployment (3%) are also low.

Educational attainment levels in the area are very good. In 2012 more than seven out of ten pupils achieved 5 or more A*-C GCSEs including English and maths. What is also notable is the relatively high level of attainment amongst disadvantaged pupils in the area, much higher than their equivalents elsewhere in the county.

Life expectancy is generally high with two areas, Belmont and Carville for females and Newton Hall for males, having the highest life expectancy in the county at 87.1 and 81.3 years respectively. However, despite the proportion of people in the area with a limiting long term illness being the lowest of all sub-county areas, it remains above the national average.

Text box/Infographic quantifying scale of poor health in Central Durham

Limiting Long Term Illness

Central Durham - 20% 19,000 people

E&W - 18%

Crime and antisocial behaviour in the area are very low when compared nationally.

East Durham

East Durham's two major centres of population: Peterlee and Seaham, have each experienced different trends in population change. The area had the lowest rate of growth in population of all five areas, with an increase of 1.2% between 2001 and 2011 rising to 95,100 people.

Map of SPA geography highlighting East Durham

This has been concentrated in areas with housing developments, particularly in the North Seaham area, with the East Shore Village development contributing to the 17.1% increase in the local population. The greatest increase was in Murton South and South Hetton which increased by 19.9% due to developments on former colliery and factory sites. These developments have radically changed the housing mix in the local area adding substantially to the number of detached properties available.

Peterlee, however, was the opposite with a fall in the overall population with central Peterlee and the Blackhalls falling considerably, each by 8.0% and 8.0%. The area has also experienced a relatively large fall in the number of school age children falling by over a fifth (-21.4%) almost double the county trend (-12.8%).

East Durham has long had high levels of worklessness despite recent improvements. The latest data indicates that around 13,000 people (21.4% of the working age population) claim out of work benefits of which over half (around 7,000 people) claim a sickness related benefit. In addition, the Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) claimant rate is high with youth unemployment more than twice the national rate.

Text box/Infographic quantifying scale of worklessness in East Durham

ED (Workless) 21.4% (JSA)6% (LTU)1.9% (YU)11.4%

NE 15.5%, 5.3%, 1.8%, 8.1%

Eng 11.4%, 3.6%, 1%, 5.1%

Smaller areas within East Durham show very high concentrations of worklessness. Almost a third of the working age population in parts of Easington Colliery, Eden Hill and Horden are claiming out of work benefits.

More than a third (34%) of the population aged 16+ has no recognised qualifications, much higher than county and nationally. GCSE attainment in 2012 was relatively low (57%) compared to the county average (65%) but is only slightly below the England average (59%).

Text box/Infographic quantifying scale of poor health in East Durham

Limiting Long Term Illness

East Durham - 28% 26,000 people

E&W - 18%

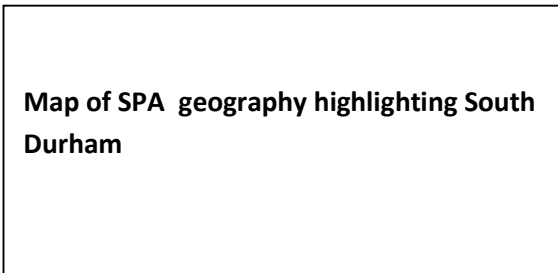
Poor health is also a significant issue with more than one in four residents (28%) reporting that they had a long term illness or disability which limits their day-to-day activities. Despite relatively large improvements since 2001 this remains far higher than national (17.9%) and regional

(21.6%) comparisons. Life expectancy in many areas of East Durham is also lower and referrals for social care are high.

Crime in the area is below national and anti-social behaviour is relatively high in the area and continues to be a significant issue for many residents.

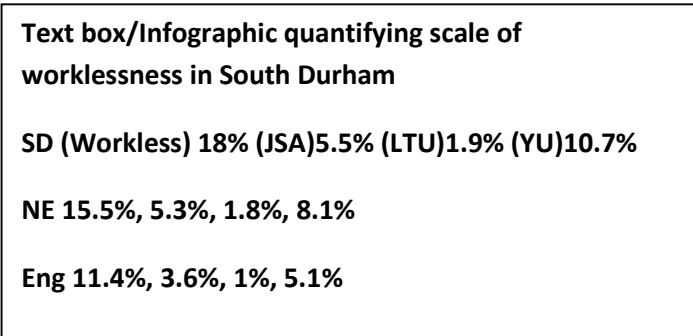
South Durham

South Durham is the most populated locality, with 145,000 residents, more than a quarter (28.2%) of the county's population. Between the 2001 and 2011 censuses this increased by a relatively small amount, 2.8% or 3,900 people.



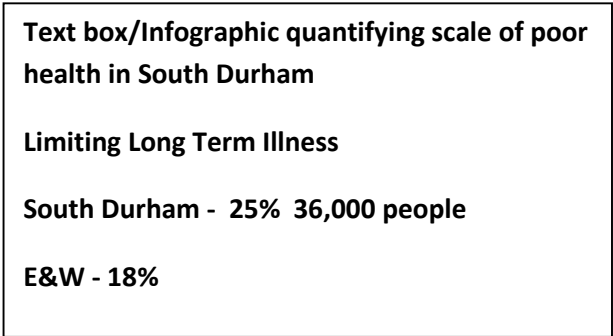
Almost three in five of the area's population (57.9%) live in the five major centres; Bishop Auckland, Crook, Newton Aycliffe, Shildon and Spennymoor. There have been small areas of high population growth in Bishop Auckland largely related to new housing. There have also been areas of population decline, most notably in parts of Spennymoor and Ferryhill, although this is an area which includes the Durham Gate project where housing developments are underway.

Worklessness is high in the area with over 16,000 residents claiming out of work benefits, equivalent to almost a fifth of working age population. Over the course of the recession JSA claimants more than doubled with youth unemployment more than twice the national rate.



Almost a third (30%) of the population aged 16+ has no recognised qualifications, higher than county (28%) or national comparisons (24%). However GCSE attainment in the area in 2012 (66%) was slightly above the county average (65%) and good compared to the England average (59%).

Poor health is also a significant issue in the area. Around one in four South Durham residents (24.8%) reported that they had a long term illness or disability which limits their day-to-day activities, higher than national (17.9%) and regional (21.6%) comparisons. Life expectancy in the area is low and referrals for social care are high.



Crime in the area is below national. Anti-social behaviour is relatively high in the area and continues to be a significant issue for many residents.

North Durham

The population of North Durham increased by 5.6% between 2001 and 2011 to around 133,500 people which was the second largest of the five sub-county areas.

North Durham is the most urban area with around 70% of its population living in the three major centres; Chester-le-Street, Consett and Stanley. Since 2001 housing developments in South Stanley and particularly in the Delves and Leadgate areas of Consett, have led to relatively high levels of population growth.

Worklessness is near the county average with around 12,000 residents claiming out-of-work benefits. Similar to county trends, just over half of worklessness is made up of people claiming sickness related benefits.

Slightly more than a fifth of the area's population (22.9%) reported that they had a limiting long term illness or disability which is higher than national (17.9%) and regional (21.6%) comparisons, though slightly lower than the county average (23.6%). Just over a quarter (26.4%) of the population aged 16+ have no recognised qualifications which is lower than county (28%) but higher than national (24%) comparison. GCSE attainment in the area in 2012 (62.7%) was slightly below county levels (65%) but better than the England average (59%).

Crime and antisocial behaviour in the area are very low when compared nationally.

Map of SPA geography highlighting North Durham

Text box/Infographic quantifying scale of worklessness in North Durham

ND (Workless)14.4%% (JSA)4.2% (LTU)1.4% (YU)7.9%

NE 15.5%, 5.3%, 1.8%, 8.1%

Eng 11.4%, 3.6%, 1%, 5.1%

The Dales

The Dales is the county's most rural locality with around a third of people living in small towns. Slightly less than half of these live in Barnard Castle, the only major population centre. Around two thirds of the population live in rural villages some of which are located in the most sparsely populated areas in England.

Map of SPA geography highlighting The Dales

This area has the lowest number of people out of the five sub-county areas with only 6.4% of the county's population, 33,100 people. Between 2001 and 2011 this population increased by 2.8% or 900 people. The number of people aged 65+ increased by 19.0% to 7,400 and those aged 85+ increased by 28.7% to just over 900 people. This means that people aged 65 and over account for more than a fifth of the local population, higher than the other four localities and the England average (17%).

Worklessness is low with around 1,800 residents claiming out-of-work benefits. Both long term and youth unemployment are also relatively low. This is reflected in general low levels of deprivation as nowhere falls within the top 10% most deprived when compared nationally¹. However because of the area's rural nature, the challenges are different from the rest of the county. For example, more than one in four households are believed to be in fuel poverty, higher than the county and England averages. This is likely to be related to the lack of mains gas supply in the area leading to many residents using alternative, more costly fuels.

Text box/Infographic quantifying scale of Fuel Poverty.

The Dales 4,000 households (26.4%)

CD 44,300 (19.5%)

E&W 320,900 (14.6%)

Just over a quarter (25.2%) of the population aged 16+ has no recognised qualifications, lower than county (27.5%) but higher than national (23.9%) comparison. GCSE attainment in 2012 (67.3%) was above county and national levels. There is however a large gap in attainment in the area between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.

Around one in five residents (21.1%) reported a long term illness or disability which limits their day to day activities, less than the county average (23.6%) but higher than the national average (17.9%). This is reflected in other health data with relatively low mortality rates as well as fewer social care referrals.

Crime and antisocial behaviour in the area are very low when compared nationally.

Text box/Infographic quantifying gap in

GCSE attainment 2011/12. %+ A*-C GCSE inc. Eng + Maths

	All	Disadv	Non-Disadv	Gap
Dales	67.3%	37.8%	75.7%	38%
CD	64.9%	44.1%	73.3%	29.2%
ENG	58.8%	38.5%	65.7%	27.2%

¹ Indices of Deprivation 2010

Altogether wealthier

Our Vision for 2030

Our vision is for a modern and dynamic county characterised by excellent quality of place, competitive businesses with a highly skilled and economically active labour market and high levels of economic activity. We will create sustainable places where people want to live, work, invest and visit whilst enabling our residents and businesses to achieve their potential.

By 2030 County Durham will be known for:

- Its diverse and competitive economy, which has made County Durham an attractive place to work and invest.
- Its importance as a significant visitor destination and the renaissance of its small towns and villages.
- Its well educated, skilled and enterprising people.

By recognising job creation, sustainable economic growth and regeneration as the top priority for County Durham we aim to ensure that, by 2030, it is a place people will want to visit, invest in and make their home. It will also support and enable local people and businesses to achieve their potential.

The county faces significant economic challenges, with high unemployment and low land values alongside low levels of investment. To realise our vision for growth we need to direct investment into the most effective way possible and ensure that we have the right infrastructure, the right support, in the right places, to support job growth.

It is vital that the county, its businesses and its people, are supported to take advantage of the opportunities available through the wider economy. If people are in employment it is recognised that they have more chance of enjoying a longer, healthier life. So by supporting more people into work, there is a benefit on the wider determinants of health. Also, children who grow up in a home where one or both parents are in employment will go on to achieve higher levels of educational attainment and employment themselves. It will also have an impact in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and provide a foundation for children and young people to achieve their potential.

Achieving our vision

To achieve our vision, our high level objectives are:

Thriving Durham City

- To **exploit the city's potential** as a major retail, business and residential centre, academic hub and visitor destination. Through a coordinated regeneration programme in the city centre we seek to build on the city's potential, attracting much needed private sector employment opportunities which will support economic growth.
- To deliver the cultural and tourism ambitions for the City which benefit the entire County. Through a variety of approaches, specifically the **County Durham**

Cultural Programme we will improve the cultural offer within the county and increase opportunities for people to experience and take part in cultural activities.

Vibrant and Successful Towns

- To embed a **'Whole-Town' approach** through coordinated investment in housing, infrastructure, employment, retail, leisure, education and health. By enabling and supporting the ambitions within the County Durham Plan and our regeneration frameworks we will help to stimulate investment in our towns which boost opportunities to support employment growth.
- To improve the **Economic Transport Corridors** to unlock the potential of our network of major centres. Through investments in key junctions and opening up new rail and road routeways we will improve transport network flows and access to our employment sites.

Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Rural Communities

- To **establish communities where people live, can live and want to live**. Working in partnership we will continue to provide support for residents and communities to improve their resilience.
- To **improve the housing offer** and narrow the deprivation and inequalities gap between communities. Through a joined up approach we will continue to effectively enhance the housing choices and support services available to our residents.
- To improve equality of access to employment and services. Through digital inclusion and delivering the **Digital Durham Broadband Delivery Programme** we will improve equality of access for businesses and residents, helping to enhance economic and social well-being by providing superfast broadband access to all businesses, homes and communities in County Durham.
- To mitigate the impact of welfare reform on our most vulnerable residents.

Competitive and Successful People

- To **raise the aspirations, participation and attainment of young people**. We will continue to promote apprenticeships as a viable route into employment, support employer led skill development and stimulate and promote the opportunities presented through entrepreneurship.
- To re-engage adults with work and move economically inactive residents into the labour market. By supporting people on paths back into work, including through volunteering opportunities and enhancing national employment support programmes we will work in partnership to increase our employment levels within the county. Through initiatives such as **County Durham Apprenticeship Programme** we will continue to help increase the numbers of 16-24 year olds participating in education, training and work by providing sustainable work based training opportunities. Interventions like the **Families First Project** provide families with a long history of worklessness with tailored support to overcome the barriers they face in finding employment.
- To stimulate demand for higher level skills and support an employer led skills agenda. Through joint working we will continue to support employer led skills development with our businesses, Durham University, our further education

colleges and training providers. With particular focus on our growth sectors we will enhance opportunities for business and employment growth.

A Top Location for Business

- To **nurture business creation, development and growth**, aligned with key wealth creating sectors. Business Durham and partners will continue to build on local potential to help grow and sustain businesses, expand labour markets, create new businesses and develop new business market growth.
- To **create the right environment for innovation and growth**. Through the development and delivery of the County Durham Innovation Framework opportunities for commercialisation and opening new business markets will be capitalised. Fostering business growth and through the enhancement of business sites within the county we will help to stimulate and grow our business base.
- To promote County Durham as an **attractive economic location for investment**. Through place promotion championed by Visit County Durham and Business Durham we will continue to promote the county as a top location for business. By removing development constraints and taking a development led approach to investment opportunities and stimulating the right infrastructure development we will enhance the county as a place to do business and improve our business offer.

The success of our delivery will be measured through five key outcomes over the lifetime of this strategy.

1. The County Durham employment rate to return to, and be maintained at, pre-recession levels (73% of the working age population) within the period 2010-2030 leading to 30,000 additional jobs for County Durham residents.
2. The number of businesses in the county to increase by 4,300 by 2030 contributing towards the rise in the employment rate.
3. Overall disposable income of households to rise within the next 20 years to 103% of the regions values (or 87.4% of the national figure).
4. The county's per capita GVA figure to rise to 87% of the regional value (or 68% of the UK figures) by 2030.
5. The number of areas in the county which are ranked nationally in the top 20% of the Index of Deprivation's for low employment to reduce from the current number of 174 to 64.

Of the five measures of success, the CDEP has agreed that the top priority outcome is to improve our **employment rate**. Taking into account changes in population, in order to achieve the pre-recession employment rate, we require an additional 30,000 residents of County Durham to be in employment. This will come from a mix of:

- Additional employment and self-employment opportunities located in the county.
- More residents being able to access employment within a broad travel to work area.
- Additional numbers of employed people becoming resident in County Durham.

Successes to build on

Much of our work involves working at a regional, national and, in the case of Hitachi Rail Europe, internationally. This area of work is particularly open to external forces and therefore the role of partners within the Economic Partnership is key in attracting businesses in to the county. Some of the successful services, initiatives and programmes include:

- Continuing to grow and support our business base through partnership working and tailored support:
 - Newton Aycliffe Business Park with Hitachi Rail Europe awarded the Intercity Express programme
 - Business Durham and its provision of proactive support to the business community through the promotion of enterprise and business start-ups. The Future Business Magnates continues to flourish and stimulate possibilities of enterprise for our young people and harness our employer education links.
- Improving the infrastructure of the county and its access to maximise opportunities for our businesses, residents and communities through initiatives like:
 - £5 million Transit 15 programme, improving connections between settlements and Durham City
 - Seaham North Dock St John's Square – public services centre including local authority and health provision
 - Securing funding for the Digital Durham Broadband Delivery Programme. This will be implemented and will improve the economic and social well-being of all residents by providing superfast broadband access to all businesses, homes and communities
- Supporting and enhancing national employment support programmes through local initiatives, raising aspirations and opportunities:
 - **County Durham Apprenticeship Programme** which aims to increase the numbers of 16-24 year olds participating in education, training and work by providing sustainable work based training opportunities.
 - **Families First Project** provides families with a long history of worklessness with tailored support to overcome the barriers they face in finding employment
- Development of the World Heritage Visitor Centre for the Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site
- County Durham 2013 Cultural Programme which provided a varied programme of events and activities and increasing opportunities for people to experience and take part in cultural activities.

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 help make people job ready or through involvement in initiatives such as the County Durham Apprenticeship Scheme. The approaches taken by different partnerships vary due to their locality and specific characteristics whilst some AAPs are delivering initiatives jointly.

Business advice with a twist

The Durham Creatives programme is a good example of the role the County Durham Economic Partnership can play by investing in the development of a potential growth sector, and enabling a fresh approach to delivery. It aims to deliver a package of prestart, start-up and growth support to County Durham's creative sector.

By offering "Business Advice- with a twist" they have been able to capture the attention of a wide range of potential creative start-up businesses and offer specialist support in a number of different fields.

Following a successful pilot a more comprehensive programme was commissioned. The initial funding of £175,000 was matched with a European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) contribution, creating a substantial project worth £350,000.

They have generated 17 new business starts and have at least five more in the pipeline. 307 people have engaged in the project, 67 of whom are now ready to start their own businesses.

Looking to the future

We recognise that we are operating in a global economic downturn with reduced resources as well as declining private investment, both of which lead to an underperforming local economy with high numbers of unemployed people. It is therefore more important than ever that we take advantage of our key assets, tackle constraints to growth and as partners, we work together to achieve our ambitions.

To drive forward our priorities the Economic Partnership will give attention to:

- **Making our places work** (our economic infrastructure) and promotion of County Durham as a place to invest, do business and visit.
- **Influencing and informing wider decision making priorities and investments** in particular the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) and North East Leadership Board (Combined Authority)
- **Enabling effective investment planning within the County** – developing, supporting, overseeing and promoting a pipeline of prioritised schemes and making the most of available resources. The CDEP will maximise the benefits of available funding and resources such as the EU 2014-20 Programme to help achieve our ambitions to support job creation.
- Creating **more opportunities for employment** and reducing disparities, with a key current emphasis on opportunities for young people and promoting training and skills development in new and emerging employment sectors.

Altogether better for children and young people

Our Vision for 2030

Our vision is for a Durham which is altogether better for children, young people and their families. We want all children and young people in County Durham to be safe, healthy and to believe, achieve and succeed.

By 2030 County Durham will be known for:

- The value it places on the views of children, young people and parents and for listening to what they say.
- Educational attainment and achievement, which consistently exceeds the national average.
- Working in partnership to ensure children have a safe, happy and healthy start to life that continues into their youth.

It is important for the future of the county that our children and young people are supported to make the best start in life and empowered to be able to make the right choices. As educational attainment continues to rise every year it is important that we continue to work with our partners in the private sector and further and higher education to ensure our children and young people have the right skills to be able to take on the opportunities available to them in the jobs market.

Achieving our vision

In order to achieve the aims set out in the Children, Young People and Families Plan we will deliver the following high level objectives:

Children and Young People realise and maximise their potential

- To **support children to achieve and develop during their early years.** Families are supported when needs arise through the development of the Early Help Strategy, and statutory changes in relation to Health Visitors and Family Nurse Partnerships will enable a whole systems approach to health improvement services and service delivery.
- To **support children and young people to achieve and attain during school years** to prepare them for adulthood in all phases of education. We will support schools to provide early support to children and young people who have additional needs but who do not require more specialist services.
- To support young people to **progress and achieve in education, employment and training** to meet their potential through access to impartial and independent careers advice. Young people also have access to, and benefit from, high quality, comprehensive education and training opportunities, including Apprenticeships. We will support young people into education, employment or training, and work will continue with young people who are not, in order to help maximise their potential.
- To support children with **additional needs** to achieve and attain and educational outcomes will be improved for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) with the introduction of new Education, Health

and Care Plans. A local offer will be provided so that families are aware of what services are available to them.

Children and Young People make healthy choices and have the best start in life

- **To reduce negative risk taking behaviour** through supporting children and young people to take part in positive activities which are appropriate for their age and reduce negative and sexual health risk taking behaviours e.g. smoking, drinking alcohol, teenage conceptions.
- **To reduce incidents of self-harm by children and young people** to ensure they are more resilient. Improvements will continue to be made to ensure the emotional wellbeing of children and young people and effective, appropriate mental health services will be provided to those who need it.
- To provide a range of **positive activities** for children and young people. We will review youth support services to provide a clear focus on delivering targeted support to young people who are vulnerable to poor outcomes, and will work with the voluntary and community sector to provide a comprehensive offer of positive activities for young people in County Durham.

A think family approach is embedded in our support for families

- To improve early intervention and prevention services which will **improve outcomes** for families and we will ensure that we target resources at the families who need it most in the most effective and efficient ways including implementation of the Team Around the School model which will be offered to all secondary schools, so that early help is provided to young people and their families.
- To embed the 'First Contact' system, which is a 'single front door' for children, young people and families to easily access services and advice. This is achieved by the service having one access point to one team through a single telephone number.
- To **protect children from harm** and ensure they are safeguarded and through effective working practices including, adult mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse services. We will implement joint agency response to child sexual exploitation / sexual violence and children who go missing from home and care.
- To offer **permanence and stability** in a timely manner for children who cannot live with their families, through our fostering and adoption work which streamlines processes to provide permanence and stability.

Successes to build on

Whilst financial and demand pressures on all services have increased significantly, we have maintained our quality standards and developed new and innovative approaches. We are ensuring all agencies working with families work effectively together using a 'think family' approach which joins up local services, dealing with each family's problems as a whole and using a range of methods of support and challenging poor behaviour. The 'Stronger Families' programme, known nationally as Troubled Families, supports families in the county experiencing problems or difficulties, including those who:

- have children who don't attend school or who are excluded;

- are involved in antisocial behaviour or crime;
- are not in work; and
- result in high cost services.

This includes families with children on the child protection list, families affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health problems.

Stronger Families is aiming for lasting change, resulting in families achieving positive outcomes. These include getting children and young people back into school, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and getting young people and parents back on the road to employment.

Another area of work that has been successful in achieving good outcomes for children and young people is our work on diverting young people from the criminal justice system and reducing re-offending. Our Pre Reprimand Disposal scheme is a voluntary programme offered to young people who commit their first offence and who otherwise would receive a police reprimand. It ensures interventions are based the needs of the young person and aims at preventing further offences being committed.

Our Intensive Employability Programme (IEP), which aims to achieve successful progression into appropriate and accredited training or employment for young people in order to prevent re-offending, has exceeded its targets. This is a major achievement considering the significant offending history and complex needs of the young people involved. The IEP provides programme of intensive support and provision, delivered on a 1-1 basis and tailored to young people's individual needs.

The number of looked after children in the county has reduced. Reviewing our work in this area provides a positive indication that the priorities are the right ones and actions are supporting the achievement of progress.

The Pre-Birth Intervention (PBI) Service, which launched in March 2012, has reached 30 highly vulnerable families with a wide range of complexities and risk issues, who have all experienced the previous permanent removal of children through the process of care proceedings. The PBI intervenes early in the pregnancy of high risk families, ensuring that parents have support to help them demonstrate that they can provide safe and appropriate care. Where this is not possible, the service aims to reduce delay and make timely decisions, enabling the child to form secure attachments to permanent caregivers.

There has been continued improvement in GCSE attainment, with Durham's young people performing higher than the national average. Particular improvements have been made with children who were looked after for 12 months and Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils. Also the percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training has increased. We received 'Outstanding' Ofsted ratings in latest inspections for Durham's Children's Services and Fostering Services, and will continue to build on this good work. These examples show that we are making on-going improvements with our children and young people and giving them the best opportunities.

Case Study

'Family A' was identified for the Stronger Families Programme in 2012 as their child was involved in anti-social behaviour in the community and had high unauthorised absence from school.

A lead professional met with the family to undertake an assessment which identified a wide range of issues impacting on the family including bereavement and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). A support plan was drawn up with the family including actions agreed by everyone and included practical actions including: a morning routine was established; one-to-one work between the child and a Youth Offending Service worker to address the consequences of their behaviour and the impact on the family; involving the wider family to provide additional family support and involving Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

As a result, school attendance improved to 89% and improved behaviour was recognised in school with the child being awarded merit points. There were no further anti-social behaviour incidents reported over a six month period.

Looking to the future

We are always striving to improve services that we offer to children, young people and their families and are seen as national leaders in many areas. This includes working with those children and young people who are at risk of offending as well as those that are in need of fostering and adoption.

This area of work is constantly changing and we all need to be able to plan effectively as well as react to changing situations and policies. We will be focussing on a number of key areas in the future in order to:

- Embed a Think Family ethos/approach, which seeks to provide early intervention for those families that have problems and cause problems to the community around them.
- Transform the way in which we respond to the demand for Children's Services, including the development of an Early Help Strategy which will ensure that we target resources at the families who need it most in the most effective and efficient ways
- Integrate Children's Care and develop a single assessment process and single point of access
- Focus resources to supporting families with children most in need
- Work together to implement the Special Education Needs and Disability reforms including implementation of the 0-25 Education, Health and Care Plans.

Altogether healthier

Our Vision for 2030

Our vision is for a Durham where people are **altogether healthier**. Where the health and wellbeing of the people of County Durham improves and health inequalities are reduced.

By 2030 County Durham will be known for:

Its strong focus on healthy lifestyles, which has significantly reduced deaths from cancers and circulatory diseases, and almost eliminated health inequalities within the county.

As a result of the national health reforms this priority theme has seen the most significant change in the last 12 months with the statutory introduction of Health and Wellbeing Boards and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) with the overall aim to **'Improve the health and wellbeing of the people of County Durham and reduce health inequalities'**. Central to this vision is that decisions about the services provided for service users, carers and patients, are made as locally as possible and involving the people who use them.

Achieving our vision

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy is delivered by the Health and Wellbeing Board. It is developed using evidence gathered in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and has six overarching strategic objectives, listed below. As health is such a complex area there are a number of cross cutting issues that will be addressed as part of the strategy and there are high level objectives that are shared with other thematic partnerships. The objective focussing on children and young people is shared with our Children and Families Partnership whilst the initiatives aimed at protecting vulnerable people from harm are delivered by the Safe Durham Partnership. An additional area of focus that has been added as a specific objective since the introduction of the Health and Wellbeing Board is that of end of life care which is led by the NHS.

To achieve our vision our overarching objectives are:

Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life

- To reduce **childhood obesity** by improving support to women to start and continue to breastfeed their babies. Also, to improve support to families with children who are obese or overweight.
- To reduce levels of **tobacco related ill health** by providing and developing a range of interventions to reduce the availability of age restricted products (e.g. tobacco) to children and young people. We will also improve **early health intervention services** for children and young people by implementing the 'healthy child' programme, a single pathway for early intervention by midwives and health visitors. Also, we will ensure our services are effective in coordinating the provision of early help to families identified with additional needs.
- To ensure that partner organisations work together to improve the **emotional wellbeing** of children and young people, and specifically to support those who **self-harm** including the development of open access and drop in clinics for

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, as well as increased utilisation of outreach work. We will increase publicity around the issues of self-harming and ensure parents receive appropriate advice and support. We will review the pathway for paediatric self-harm admissions and develop the knowledge and skills of school based staff to identify and support vulnerable young people engaging in self-harm behaviours.

Reduce health inequalities and early deaths

- To reduce **death from cancers and circulatory diseases** by implementing systematic approaches to primary and secondary prevention work. We will raise the profile of cancer awareness and earlier diagnosis and encourage the uptake of cancer screening programmes from communities where take up is low.
- To reduce levels of **drug related ill health** we will prevent harm, restrict supply and sustain a future for individuals to live a drug free and healthy life, whilst minimising the impact of drugs on communities and families through the implementation of the County Durham Drugs Strategy.
- We will address health issues caused by alcohol in County Durham through the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.
- To reduce **obesity levels** we will provide a wide range of physical activity opportunities across County Durham to support more active lifestyles. Through the Healthy Weight Alliance for County Durham we will aim to reduce the number of people who are obese. Our Food and Nutrition Plan for County Durham will include work around policy, food provision and access. We will ensure that national food and health campaigns are a visible part of health promotion strategies.
- To **reduce excess winter deaths** and improve life quality for those with an underlying health condition by commissioning interventions to address the impact of fuel poverty such as 'Hotspots'. 'Hotspots' helps vulnerable people who live in a cold, damp home and have an underlying health condition via referral to a range of services including advice on switching supplier, debt advice, home safety checks and access to an 'Emergency Fund'. We have also commissioned a 'Health through Warmth' service following involvement in the Warm Up North (WuN) Partnership, which helps residents improve the energy efficiency of their homes and save money.

Improve the quality of life, independence and care and support for people with long term conditions

- To ensure that **adult care services** are commissioned for those people most in need we will carry out a review of early intervention and preventative services and develop new services to meet gaps in provision, where appropriate.
- To increase **choice and control** through a range of personalised services we will use marketing campaigns to extend the number of people on the Durham Information Guide (DIG) website to provide more choice in the services available. We will also support people who have dementia to live in their own home for as long as possible where appropriate, and give people greater choice and control over the services they purchase and the care that they receive.
- To improve **independence and rehabilitation** we will support people on their return home from hospital and enable them to recover more quickly, through

better co-ordination of care. We will improve people's ability to reach their best possible level of independence by providing more short term care (reablement /intermediate care) in different settings.

- To continue the **joint commissioning of services** we will support and enable voluntary and community sector resilience and appropriate service provision through development, involvement and capacity building.

Improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the population

- To **maximise independence** by ensuring that people using mental health services who are in employment have a care plan that reflects the additional support needed to help them retain this employment.
- To increase **social inclusion** by identifying ways that will support the armed forces community who have poor mental or physical health.
- To reduce **suicides** through the implementation of our Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Strategy including a local workplace health programme which will support employers to promote healthy workplaces, and tackle the causes of mental ill health at work. Access will be improved for individuals into support and recovery, through early provision of activities such as supported employment, housing support, and debt advice. We will work to reduce stigma and discrimination towards people who experience mental health problems through awareness raising campaigns.

Protect vulnerable people from harm

- To improve the safety of victims and **reduce repeat incidents of domestic abuse** by providing support to victims of domestic abuse from their partners or members of the family. We will do this by increasing awareness of domestic abuse across services, organisations and the general public. We will provide training and continue to develop service delivery across agencies in line with lessons learned from Domestic Homicide reviews. A perpetrator strategy will be developed to understand what preventative intervention and rehabilitation capabilities are available for perpetrators and identify areas for activity. Teenage perpetrators of sexual violence will be targeted specifically in order to break the cycle of abuse.
- To **safeguard children and adults** whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protect them from avoidable harm. We will make it easier for individuals to highlight concerns of abuse, such as more efficient reporting procedures and work in partnership to identify signs of family vulnerability and to offer support earlier.

Support people to die in the place of their choice with the care and support they need

- To improve the **End of Life Pathway** and implement the North East Charter relating to a 'good death', which aims to provide a guide to those people who are involved with people who are approaching the end of their life. This will ensure the right services are available at the right time for individuals who are dying, their families and carers. We will reduce the **number of emergency admissions to hospital** for people who have been identified as approaching their end of life by providing palliative services in the community.

Successes to build on

We know that some interventions take many years to demonstrate improved health outcomes. There are a number of ways that we can monitor progress against those interventions and a number of initiatives and ways of working together have been developed in recent years that allow us to do this. Looking back we can see that there are improvements in people's health and wellbeing. For example, between 1991-93 and 2008-10, male life expectancy in County Durham increased from 72.2 to 77 years and female life expectancy increased from 77.5 to 81 years. Although there have been great improvements we need to continue our work to close the gap between County Durham and England and also within County Durham.

A specific area of focus is the death rate for cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases and cancers, which have reduced since 2001. One area that has seen considerable improvement is that of cancer screening rates, particularly for breast cancer and cervical cancer, which are both higher than the England average.

We have had remarkable success in reducing early deaths from cardiovascular disease in County Durham. The early death rate has reduced by 70% since 1993, faster than the average reduction across England.

There have also been outstanding and improving results from our reablement service, which provides personal care, help with daily living activities and other practical tasks, for a limited period, and encourages people to develop the confidence and skills to carry out these activities themselves and continue to live at home. Admission rates to residential care have reduced as people are supported to live independently.

The under-18 conception rate has continued to fall and performance is now better than the North East region but further work is needed to catch up to the England average.

Community based programmes have also seen good success. Examples within area action partnerships include:

- The Over 50's Healthy Living Project in Teesdale provided information and training courses on how to eat a healthy diet on a tight budget
- The Cancer Champions project in Chester-le-Street identified volunteers to promote cancer screening in areas with a low take up
- The Silver Talk telephone befriending service enables older people to have regular social telephone conversations with friendly, fully trained, volunteers.

Case Studies

At the heart of all health related services is the individual and there are a number of examples of how different services support the specific needs of people.

One such example is an 84 year old man who lives alone and has dementia. His daughter lives several hundred miles away. She would worry if her father didn't answer the phone, especially that he had gone out and had forgotten how to get home. He was provided with a 'buddi' device which is worn by him and enables his movements to be tracked via satellite. With his permission, his daughter is allowed to log onto a secure

website and check the whereabouts of her father. She is now re-assured that she knows where her father is, whilst he feels more confident that he can continue to live at home.

Looking to the future

There is no doubt that tackling health inequalities and the long-standing poor health of County Durham's communities will remain challenging in the long-term. The issues are complex and inter-related with no easy solutions.

An increasingly older population will see rising prevalence of mental health conditions, dementia, increased levels of disability and long term conditions and will significantly increase the number of people needing care, and possible financial support or services. There are however a range of actions that we can be taken forward in the short, medium and long-term. It is important to maintain a clear focus on reducing inequalities across all of our services and communities so that no one is disadvantaged because of where they live. We will continue to focus on prevention to reduce the pressure on our hospitals and other health services, particularly working with our voluntary sector. We will focus on support and rehabilitation services to help maintain independence and provide early help to families.

Altogether safer

Our Vision for 2030

Our vision is for a Durham which is altogether safer where every adult, child and place in County Durham will be, and will feel, safe.

By 2030 County Durham will be known for:

Its quality of life which is enhanced by low crime, safe neighbourhoods and public confidence in the ability of partners to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour. Partners continue to work together to reduce crime and disorder and, in Durham, we have seen considerable successes as a result. However, it is recognised that we still face major challenges ahead to narrow the gap between our more deprived communities, who are still more likely to be victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, and our more affluent areas, as well as people's perceptions and confidence.

Crime in County Durham is at its lowest since 1983 and during the last three years we have built upon this success and experienced on-going reductions in both crime and anti-social behaviour, with fewer young people in court and less re-offending. We continue to strengthen the support for victims of domestic abuse and provide more opportunities for people to recover from drug and alcohol misuse.

The Safe Durham Partnership Plan for 2014-17 demonstrates how we work together to tackle those issues that are of most concern to the people of County Durham, in order that our communities feel safe and have confidence in those agencies delivering services to them. Working in partnership will be crucial if we are to meet existing and emerging challenges during a time of significant change for those agencies working towards our vision. We will involve a wide range of agencies, members of our communities, voluntary and community sector, social enterprises and charities.

Achieving our vision

The Safe Durham Partnership Plan is developed through evidence gathered through the Safe Durham Partnership's Strategic Assessment. This helps us to identify priorities as well as highlight performance, progress and achievements against the commitments made in the 2011/14 Partnership Plan. It also identifies key crime and disorder risks and threats to the community.

To achieve our vision our overarching objectives, and associated outcomes, are:

Reduce anti-social behaviour

- To increase **public confidence** in the ability of partners to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour issues by developing awareness of, and increase community involvement in, the Police/Partners and Community Together (PACT) meetings and raise public awareness of opportunities, and benefits from, getting involved in improving their area through initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch;
- To reduce **anti-social behaviour** and low level crime - including secondary deliberate fires by targeting measured reductions including home safety checks;

- To create **high quality, clean, green, attractive, accessible environment** by carrying out targeted campaigns as residents tell us that dog fouling, litter and fly-tipping affect their perception of the local area.

Protecting Vulnerable People from Harm

- To provide protection and support to improve outcomes for **victims of domestic abuse and their children** - whilst working towards preventing its occurrence within County Durham by; by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it and intervening early to prevent it; taking action to reduce the risk to people who are victims of these crimes and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice; and, providing adequate support where abuse does occur and obtain the best outcome for victims and their families.
- To tackle **sexual violence** and the negative impact it has on individuals and families by giving victims access to the right help and support throughout the criminal justice process with services in place to support them including; preventing sexual violence and sexual exploitation and reducing the associated harm; ensuring that all victims of sexual violence have the access to the right help and support throughout the criminal justice process and that services are available to address their needs; and, improving the criminal justice response to tackling sexual violence and sexual exploitation.
- To reduce the impact of **Hate Crime** by increasing reporting through awareness raising activities carried out so that people know that hate crime can relate to disability, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and transgender/gender identify.

Reducing Re-offending

- To prevent **inter-generational offending** that occurs when, for example, parental offending increases the risk of their child offending, which will incorporate working with families to prevent first time entrants to the youth justice system by; maintaining and developing pre-court assessments and interventions for young people; meeting the health needs of young people who offend and embedding the 'Think Family' approach.
- To prevent **repeat offending** by delivering a range of offender management interventions and will include developing local transitional arrangements for the Government's Transforming Rehabilitation program to improve the management of offenders.

Alcohol and Substance Misuse Harm Reduction

- To **reduce the harm caused by alcohol** to individuals, families and communities through the 'prevention and control' element of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Delivery Plan including; delivering education and raising public awareness of alcohol related harm; reducing the number of alcohol related incidents and offending; supporting responsible licensed premises management; delivery of effective treatment and recovery services and helping people to break the cycle of alcohol misuse.

- To reduce the **harm caused by drugs/substances** - through prevention, restricting supply and building recovery. A Drugs Strategy will be developed in 2014 which will focus on these strands of action.

Embed the Think Family Approach

- To **embed 'Think Family' and 'Stronger Families'** into offender and victim services as part of the prevention and early help approach of supporting families. The Think Family approach joins up local services, dealing with each family's problems as a whole and using a range of methods of support and challenge poor behaviour.

Counter Terrorism and prevention of violent extremism

- To **implement 'CONTEST'** (national strategy) by responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it. We will work to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support. We will also work with key sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.
- To challenge **extremism and intolerance** by implementing a cohesion action plan in cases where a community is presented with risks from extremist groups.

Road Casualty Reduction

- To improve **education and raise awareness in communities** by delivering road safety education in schools, colleges, youth centres, children's centres and nurseries. We will also deliver road safety training including child pedestrian training, Bikeability Training and EXCElerate to young driver training in schools and colleges. A road safety publicity campaign will be delivered to embed safe road use.
- To improve health and wellbeing of communities through **road casualty reduction** including leading on the implementation of a revised speed management policy for the county, to ensure greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists and other road users.
- To **develop a safer road environment** by delivering a community speed watch and camera enforcement programme and develop a Speed Management Strategy to address both excess and inappropriate speed.

Police and Crime Commissioner

The introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) nationally has been a significant change in the community safety arena in recent years. The PCC's vision is "to achieve excellence in local policing and the highest levels of public confidence by working alongside communities and partners to address what matters locally"². As part of that vision, the PCC aims to achieve the following outcomes, underpinned by a personal commitment to work with and for our communities:

- **Making local communities and the victims of crime feel empowered** through: involving them in the design/redesign of local police and crime

² Police and Crime Plan 2013-17 page 3

services, listening to their feedback in the evaluation of service delivery, defining services that match the needs our communities have identified to us.

- **Maximising the benefits of partnerships** through the use of innovative shared working arrangements to tackle and prevent crime at its source.
- **Using our resources intelligently** to ensure what we do is both efficient and effective.

The Commissioner also has the responsibility of delivering against the policing priorities as well as engaging with local people to develop and deliver against their priorities through the development of a Police and Crime Plan. Priorities you have voted for in consultation are:

- To tackle anti-social behaviour.
- To tackle the harm caused to individuals and communities by alcohol and drugs.
- To improve road safety by tackling careless and dangerous driving, speeding and other related road safety issues.
- To make our policing services visible and accessible at all times.

In addition the Commissioner also has personal commitments which are:

- To reduce the impact of domestic abuse, particularly violence against women and girls
- To reduce the impact of hate crime
- To improve engagement with local communities across the Constabulary area

Successes to build on

Our approaches towards managing offenders, and the benefits of restorative justice, are two key pieces of work that have been developed and embedded in our everyday work. Restorative approaches is an important element of the work to have fewer victims, fewer crimes and reduced demand on the criminal justice system. A restorative approach brings those harmed by crime or conflict and those responsible for the harm together, enabling everyone affected by the incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward. Our schools are using this approach to improve the learning environment and developing important skills for learning; reducing exclusions and improving attendance. Neighbourhood police teams are applying restorative approaches to every day policing and our Youth Offending Service use the approach as an option for every young person who offends.

Another significant area of work that has continued to be strengthened is the approach we take to those young people who are at risk of committing crimes. Our Pre Reprimand Disposal scheme is a voluntary programme offered to young people who commit their first offence and who otherwise would receive a police reprimand. It ensures interventions are based the needs of the young person and aims at preventing further offences being committed. It has led to a 78% reduction in first time entrants in to the youth justice system between 2007/08 and 2012/13 which is significantly better than regional and national rates. The system has been recognised nationally and won the Youth Justice Category for the Children and Young People Now Awards 2012. It has also received commendations from organisations such as the Howard League Community Programmes Awards and the Butler Trust.

Domestic abuse has also been a key area of focus for the partnership with new ways of working introduced in order to ensure that both victims and perpetrators are offered support in the hope of stopping the abuse. Success for high risk victims of domestic abuse has also been achieved through the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). This is a co-ordinated and immediate approach involving the key agencies and is focussed on the individual who has suffered domestic abuse. Also, our Domestic Homicide Review Procedure makes sure that lessons are learned when a person has been a victim of a domestic homicide.

The Safe Durham Partnership has also continued to address issues such as anti-social behaviour as well as drug and alcohol misuse through existing strategies and working arrangements that undergo regular monitoring and reviews. Our communities have proved to be very important in terms of reducing anti-social behaviour; not least through the Safe Durham Partnership strategy to modernise Neighbourhood Watch. Our aim was for a bigger, stronger and more active movement and today, Durham Constabulary Force area has a higher percentage of households in a Neighbourhood Watch scheme than any other Force area in England and Wales. A range of initiatives have been put in place by Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators that have shown demonstrable success.

Our 'Building Recovery' objective demonstrates our aim to deliver effective treatment and recovery services in order to help individuals achieve abstinence from illicit drugs, to ensure that recovery is sustained and help people successfully re-integrate into their communities and wider society. A range of services are used to deliver this approach, including the 'Recovery Academy Durham'. The Recovery Academy works with up to a maximum of 14 clients, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The model includes a course of intensive 12 step study, on a one-to-one and group basis with trained peer therapists. It offers a secondary program after graduation to help with education, employment and training and ongoing recovery support.

Case Study

As alcohol misuse remains a concern, particularly amongst young people, the work of the Brief Interventions Team is important in working with people across the County. A 12 year old was found by the police to be in possession of one litre of cider. A home visit was arranged and it was found that the young person lived with their grandmother as they had refused to live with their parent. During the intervention it became apparent that they were consuming strong white cider regularly. Their safety was questioned following further disclosures and it was clear that the grandmother was in desperate need for support. These concerns were escalated to the initial response team and the young person was referred to the 4Real alcohol service that provided specialist support while additional support was provided to the wider family.

Looking to the future

The Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2014-2017 highlights some key areas for improvement under each of the seven high level objectives.

Despite reductions in levels of **anti-social behaviour** incidents, the public still perceive this to be a problem. Reducing people's perception and increasing confidence in the

police and partners efforts to deal with anti-social behaviour will be a key focus over the next three years. Specific issues which the public have raised include dog fouling, speeding traffic and rubbish lying around.

When trying to **reduce reoffending**, adult offender health assessments shows mental health has become the issue of greatest need, while a recent assessment of young people who offend has identified a range of health needs and in particular that of speech, language and communication needs. The partnership will develop timely access to specialist adult mental health services where appropriate and develop pathways and access for identified health needs of young people who offend with a focus on their communication needs.

Nationally identified risks associated with women offenders are reflected locally. These include abuse, anxiety and depression, substance misuse, safe accommodation, vulnerability from male offenders and leaving behind dependent children when entering prison. Highlighted as a new area of focus in 2013 the partnership will continue to tackle the vulnerability issues these women face.

Maintaining a strong understanding of the Prevent objectives, the drivers of **terrorism** and a strong, tried and tested Safeguarding Referral Programme, called 'Channel' will be the three important elements of stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. A multi-agency group is in place and is represented by all key sectors that understand the risk of radicalisation and their obligation to ensure terrorist ideologies, and those that promote them, do not go uncontested. It will be important that all key sectors are delivering a range of tools to ensure key members of staff, and others working within key sectors, have a good understanding of how to recognise those vulnerable, or subject, to radicalisation and know how to respond.

A new focus which is shared by the Police and Crime Commissioner is around **vulnerability**, particularly concerning increasing reporting of **hate crime**. There will also be a continued focus on increasing the reporting of domestic abuse while reducing repeat victimisation.

Altogether greener

Our Vision for 2030

Our vision is for an altogether greener Durham which makes efficient use of energy resources, has built resilience to extreme weather events, protects its natural assets for all to enjoy, conserves and made best use of its heritage through open access to historic buildings and where people are proud of their contribution to clean neighbourhoods.

By 2030 County Durham will be known as:

A place where people want to live and visit because of the quality of the natural and historic environment.

The Environment Partnership aims to develop innovative approaches to addressing environmental issues across County Durham, pooling collective resource and sharing best practice. The strength of the partnership lies in its ability to engage with, and harness, the commitment of communities and key organisations to work together to both improve the natural and built environment through enhancing existing assets, and to engender behavioural change in businesses and neighbourhoods to consider the environmental impact of their actions.

Since the Sustainable Community Strategy was developed in 2010, several changes that impact on this theme have taken place. Consequently the Environment Partnership has restructured to take these changes into account and build on previous successes.

These involved:

- Recognition that we need to engage much more closely with communities; therefore greater representation from AAPs, voluntary and community groups have been factored into each of the thematic groups.
- Development of two Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) cutting across County Durham which will drive improvements in relation to habitats and natural landscapes in accordance with natural boundaries rather than Local Authority boundaries.
- Changes in Public Health and the recognition of wider determinants playing a key role in the health and wellbeing of our communities. This presents an opportunity for more cross thematic working.

Achieving our vision

The priorities of the Environment Partnership have been collectively developed by all partners following community liaison and looking at a range of evidence.

To achieve our vision our overarching objectives are:

Deliver a cleaner, more attractive and sustainable environment

- To **reduce environmental crime**, ensuring streets and open spaces are well-maintained, free from litter, dog fouling, graffiti and fly-tipping. This is to be achieved through a targeted programme of activity, with joint educational campaigns and enforcement operations at hot-spot locations throughout the county. We will also instigate our locality teams to work in specific neighbourhoods to address issues such as poor housing environments.
- To **reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill** by delivering and promoting a range of services tailored to local communities and based on the principles of sustainable living. This will include educational campaigns to convey the benefits of re-using, recycling and composting, whilst promoting self-sufficiency by encouraging individuals and communities to utilise appropriate spaces to grow their own produce and work with organisations who can share the benefit of this with those struggling financially.
- To harness the contribution individuals and local communities can make toward a cleaner, greener and sustainable environment by **raising awareness of everyone's contribution to improving the local environment and increasing volunteering** to encourage businesses and communities to get involved. We will build on our existing activity, for example the Big Spring Clean, Britain in Bloom, as well as developing new local campaigns across the county and promoting community champions

Maximise the value and benefits of Durham's natural environment

- To **increase the value of local landscapes, biodiversity and eco-systems** by encouraging all to utilise and enjoy our natural environment. We will promote the natural environment as an ideal place to take exercise and be in contact with nature.
- To **implement a sympathetic grassland management regime** on selected verges and open spaces across the county to **maximise their biodiversity potential**. We will also identify sites suitable for wildflower planting and include poppies to commemorate World War I.
- To actively **encourage the sustainable management of our woodland resources** by promoting the development and marketing of woodland products and encouraging planting schemes whilst ensuring any impact on wildlife is positive.
- To utilise the benefits of the **natural environment** we can maximise opportunities to use our natural habitats for the absorption of carbon emissions
- To protect our **valued natural environment** we will work with businesses and key organisations to consider what defences can be put in place to address the impact of extreme weather events

Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change

- To **support communities to deal with the increased frequency of extreme weather** events, e.g. flooding, by changing how they think and encouraging them to act now. We will undertake a co-ordinated approach to increase environmental awareness and encourage householders and businesses to reduce energy consumption and limit CO₂ emissions as well as adapt to climate change.

- To **address and reduce incidences of ‘fuel poverty’** by increasing the take-up of households energy efficiency improvements through the ‘Warm Up North Scheme’ without up-front cost as these are paid back via energy bill savings as part of the government's green deal scheme.
- To facilitate a programme of energy efficiency in our business community buildings and schools to reduce energy costs, cut carbon and increase comfort.

Promote sustainable design and protect Durham’s heritage

- To **develop and retain the expertise** essential to repair historical sites and maintain our built heritage by working with local training organisations to provide opportunities for skills development
- To seek funding opportunities to support **‘Heritage at Risk’ projects** across the county.

Successes to build on

There are many examples of community volunteering projects through which local people give their time to improve their local environment. The most high profile event is the Big Spring Clean which ran in 2013 and saw nearly 1,500 volunteers giving up over 2,000 combined hours to collect over 1,000 bags of rubbish at 85 locations. Many other local events, litter picks and community clear ups take place on an almost continuous basis, the number mostly limited by the availability of supervisors and equipment. In addition, a number of ‘Weeks of Action’ have taken place at hotspot areas. Responsible dog ownership continues to be promoted through the Green Dog Walkers Scheme and to date almost 1,000 dog owners have signed up to the scheme.

A hotline to enable responsible walkers to report any environmental anti-social behaviour issues has been set up to protect the coastline. We not only protect the natural environment but also our wildlife, for example the ‘Little Tern’ Project located at Crimdon and funded by the Heritage Coast. We have worked with the RSPB to improve the little tern’s habitat and therefore its population. The attractiveness of the local environment is reflected in the number of awards the county has received which includes 21 green flags for parks and green spaces. We continue to work hard to reduce carbon emissions across the county and have already achieved a 40% reduction from our baseline year of 2011. A low carbon recovery is being encouraged and we are aiming for an 80% reduction from levels in 1990 by 2050.

We continue to inform residents of the home insulation measures available to them: take-up resulting in lower carbon emissions and energy bills, reducing the impact of climate change as well as fuel poverty. County Durham has the highest uptake of free insulation measures in the North East and between 2008 and 2013, the energy efficiency of more than 54,000 homes was improved. We will build on this success with the Warm Up North Scheme, a multi-area partnership with eight other North East local authorities which maximises the uptake of the Government’s Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation Scheme grants and is the largest and most advanced such partnership in the UK.

During September each year, properties across the county take part in Heritage Open Days and we continue to promote this scheme and encourage all to visit. The number of sites participating increases each year 78 properties took part in 2013.

Case Study

The Chester Le Street School & Community Gardening Project aimed to encourage local children and young people to take pride in their local environment through planting up a half barrel for their school grounds or communal space.

Chester-le-Street & District AAP engaged with young people from 22 local schools and six youth groups in planting activities to improve their environment and benefit communities across the area. They also received an information pack with additional ideas for growing projects.

The ultimate aim was for children and young people to feel a sense of achievement and ownership of their own gardening project and, through this, they gained an increased understanding of the local environment as well as wider environmental issues.

Looking to the future

The partnership recognises that a greater emphasis on adaption to extreme weather and climate resilient communities is needed. A countywide climate adaptation campaign emphasising self-help, awareness raising and encouraging investment in adaptation measures in homes and businesses has been proposed which would focus on high risk communities and vulnerable citizens and building on existing networks and channels of communication. There are plans for a programme of green infrastructure improvements including sustainable urban drainage, peatland protection, tree planting, wetland creation and flood mitigation schemes.

An increase in severe weather events, including prolonged winter snow, hotter summers, heavy rain storms, high winds and flooding, as a consequence of climate change will make it more difficult to manage services and will have a significant impact on both the natural and built environment.

As the economy improves and the business sector grows, it is imperative that County Durham remains a low carbon economy and that any growth is sustainable. Increased energy costs are proving challenging for both businesses and households. Due to this it is possible that more people will experience fuel poverty. Almost half of buildings or structures on the national Heritage at Risk Register do not have a beneficial use so there is no economic incentive to look after them. In addition, the funding gap between the cost of repairs and the value of the building or structure (conservation deficit) has increased significantly since 2012. Many buildings and structures have been on the register for a long time and the partnership is committed to finding solutions for them.

Shaping the Future

Together we want to shape a better future for County Durham. It is important that we continue to be ambitious and collectively identify areas of work that will add value. Working in partnership is more important than ever and looking for new and innovative ways of doing things is equally as important.

We recognise that the key to a stronger future is jobs and all parts of the partnership are focused on creating jobs, building the skills and confidence needed to seize opportunities and addressing those problems that prevent people accessing high quality employment.

Building on Community Strengths

Our communities are one of our strongest assets and, as such, offer a wide and diverse range of skills and experience. Communities coming together around a common goal or purpose and achieving something positive can facilitate and support the wellbeing of individuals, families and neighbourhoods.

As the resources available in the county change and many partner organisations are no longer able to provide the same range of services for local communities, or these services are reduced, it is more important than ever to make sure our communities are supported and enabled to meet many of the challenges they face.

We know that there are many examples across the county of where the benefits of the strengths, skills and knowledge that lay within communities are being recognised every day across the diverse range of communities that make up County Durham. People are volunteering and helping to maintain the social fabric of their communities by helping to keep their local community centre or church hall open, or by supporting vulnerable people who live nearby. All of these acts enable service providers to join up with activities taking place in localities and also, with resources reducing, to be able to identify areas that could offer savings whilst not seeing services reduce. We recognise that individuals and communities are themselves a resource and not only users of services. There are a number of examples of how this works including local people involved in the running of local community venues including community centres and leisure centres.

Case Study – Macrae House

We have undertaken one of the biggest asset transfer programmes in the country in order to support a network of sustainable community buildings. Each building and management group has brought its own unique set of needs and issues as well as a wealth of history and experience.

Macrae House and Murton Community Centre were both located quite close together in Murton and each had different strengths, from the activities on offer to the wealth of knowledge from the management committee. Through the support of our team the two groups met and decided that the community centre would close and their activities would transfer to Macrae House. Importantly everyone felt that this was the best outcome for their respective centres and worked closely together in order for the new working arrangements to feel right for everyone involved.

The centre is now successfully running many projects that fully engage the community and reach previously 'hard to reach' groups therefore benefiting everyone by reducing social isolation. The personal journeys of the management committees of both original organisations have been life changing with new skills learnt, self-confidence raised, an increased sense of well-being and many actively engaged in many social and fitness activities.

Cross thematic focus

We have set out how we plan to focus on key issues such as jobs, growth, families, health inequalities, anti-social behaviour and the environment. In short we are aiming to improve quality of life and create an altogether better Durham. To enhance this work the County Durham Partnership Board has set out its commitment to focus on what matters and identify key actions that members can drive forward to make a difference. These are issues that will benefit from additional joined up working and cut across more than one theme of our work.

In addition to the work programmes of the thematic partnerships and the AAPs, the County Durham Partnership Board has identified six key areas that they will jointly focus on to shape and delivery shared work programmes. These are:

- Job creation
- Volunteering
- Mental Wellbeing
- Stronger Families
- Alcohol
- Reducing inequalities

A member of the County Durham Partnership Board will lead each work programme and seek to bring a different perspective to some of the County's most difficult issues. Importantly, this work will add value to existing programmes being driven forward by thematic partnerships and AAPs and ensure that the Partnership makes a real difference and facilitates change. We will be innovative in our approach and set a clear programme for change. The actions will look towards encouraging community independence and supporting local people to develop new and innovative solutions and take ownership of local services and facilities where this supports their needs and aspirations.

The areas we are focusing on are:

Volunteering - in the present climate there is significant potential and need to increase the number of volunteers. 'Volunteering' has many different elements to it, both for the individual and for the organisation and can offer a wide range of benefits to both.

Building the capacity, skills and a strong CV for someone wanting to build up experience to compete for work is invaluable and the work the voluntary sector does to support individuals is very important. Volunteering is also important for strengthening communities. It brings people together around a common cause and can achieve real outcomes for people. As public sector resources reduce, volunteering and supporting volunteers will enable activities to continue.

Through work on these we aim to develop a consistent approach to volunteering that will work for both the individual, and for the organisations with which they volunteer. This will improve the way volunteers are matched with placements as well as enable both parties to be supported as necessary. It will also offer a sustainable approach that can be developed to meet specific needs.

Job creation - is considered vital that this remains our number one priority and the focus of more intensive work. Without employment, so many of the challenges faced by all parts of our communities would be compounded and the quality of life of people and their families would be affected in so many ways. It is acknowledged that there is a lot of work already taking place in this area across the partnership, however, it is hoped an additional emphasis across all areas will add value to this.

This work offers an opportunity to explore new and innovative ways of working and will help to ensure that everyone can benefit from a comprehensive range of support that links to all parts of the broader partnership's work. People seeking good quality employment face difficulties in the present climate and individuals with multiple issues or who have been unemployed for a long period face additional pressures that partners will work together to address.

As this is our top priority we will also ensure that all parts of the partnership address this when developing new plans and work programmes. It is important that opportunities to train, support and employ local people are recognised in all parts of our work and we will learn from examples of where partners have done this already.

Mental Wellbeing - There are a number of external pressures that can impact on people's wellbeing and these run through every aspect of the work of the County Durham Partnership including employability, parenting, crime and health. It is also important that any activity that takes place helps to counteract the stigma of mental health issues and enables people to seek help and support that is appropriate to them.

Through supporting people suffering from mental health difficulties we will help to combat the feelings of social isolation. We will also look at the range of support services available for both young people and adults and ensure they are appropriate and accessible when they are needed. We will further engage with employers to broaden the scope of our healthy workplace programme. We will also proactively support individuals and their families who are impacted on by external factors such as changes to the welfare system to mitigate the need for health based services.

Stronger families - the Stronger Families programme is our new way of working with County Durham families who need intensive support. If any member of the family - a child, young person or adult - has a problem, it generally has an effect on other people in the family. If the whole family is supported, it's more likely that things will improve and it is important to understand the role that all partners and partnerships can play in this emerging agenda.

Through all thematic partnerships and partner organisations being involved in this work families who may not be immediately identified could receive support. Also, practices developed through this programme could be rolled out to other areas of work such as employability initiatives and the work of community safety partners.

Alcohol – all partners acknowledge that alcohol misuse is a problem and that there is a significant amount of work carried out across the partnership on this, focused on the County Durham Alcohol Harm Reduction, which sets out a number of objectives under the three themes of Prevention, Control and Recovery. It is acknowledged, however, that more could be done with a challenging approach that may not be possible without a strategic cross thematic focus.

The costs to public services from alcohol misuse is estimated at nearly £200M per annum for County Durham and covers health, crime and policing, licensing and social services as well as time lost from the workplace. In times of reduced resources and increasing demands on services it is important to review what we are doing to check we are still meeting the needs of local people.

Inequalities – Running through this cross-cutting work will be a focus on addressing inequalities. We know that there are many areas of deprivation in County Durham and overall improvements can often mask significant inequalities. Throughout our partnership work we will therefore seek to support the most vulnerable members of our community, reduce deprivation and child poverty and address inequalities. We have seen how changes to welfare support can exacerbate the problems people face and we know how problems can multiply, as one issue leads to another, putting significant pressures on individuals and families. Our action plans will therefore seek to narrow the gap in our communities; proactively ensure that changes and new policies do not impact heavily on the most vulnerable people and seek to take action that will build community capacity and prevent further problems emerging.

Facing the Challenges

All organisations involved in the County Durham Partnership are committed to the vision of an altogether better Durham. Whilst public sector partners face reduced resources which may impact on service delivery, some partners, particularly in the education and private sectors, are seeing increases in resources and opportunities available to them. Through working together to achieve our vision we aspire to meet the changing needs of our communities. We will continue to prioritise the economy and ensure we support local people back into employment.

The government's austerity programme has reduced public sector expenditure and local authorities in northern and most deprived areas have been hit the hardest, not only by higher levels of reduction in local government grant support, but also by the wider impact of welfare reform and lower rates of economic growth. We have planned and managed our changes and engaged communities in financial planning and decision making and sought to find innovative ways forward whilst maintaining front line service provision. Local people have also risen to the challenge taking on services such as leisure centres and taking control of community buildings.

Our approach is about enabling communities to flourish by supporting them, where appropriate, in the helping in the running of assets and services that matter to them and finding solutions to local problems when the public sector can no longer afford to provide the response.

There are important learning points that have helped us to successfully transfer public sector assets to local people in a well-managed and supportive way, utilising the

experience of the VCS and the skills of the University. This work has helped communities to flourish, gain confidence and establish plans beyond expectations and will inform future asset transfer in the county.

We recognise that moving forward we need to target our resources where they are needed most. To reduce health inequalities and improve health and wellbeing we are investing in preventative services, community based services and using personal budgets to enable local people to make their own decisions about their care. Working with and through the community and voluntary sector we are making great progress in supporting local community and voluntary action to tackle health, wellbeing and social isolation.

Strategically we have set out to change the culture of the county and fundamentally change the way we work – promoting and supporting independence and community resilience, which will enable us to target finite resources to where they are needed most.

Our ambitions and confidence that we can successfully achieve our vision for the county in 2030 remain high. We have set in place the foundations for robust and sustainable growth and continue to search for and identify new opportunities. We are willing to try new things and work differently in order to achieve better outcomes for local people.

We will continue to work together to maximise our resources and, with careful planning and good management, we will continue on our clear path forward to deliver value and achieve our shared priorities for County Durham.