

**7 April 2014**

**Council Plan 2014-2017 – Refresh of the  
Work Programme for the Economy and  
Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**

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**Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to provide Members with information contained within the Council Plan 2014 – 2017 that is relevant to the work of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This allows the opportunity for Members to refresh the Committee's Work Programme to reflect the five objectives and subsequent outcomes identified within the Council Plan for the Council's "Altogether Wealthier" priority theme.

**Background**

2. The current work programmes of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees focus on the priority areas identified within the context of the Council Plan, Cabinet's Notice of Key Decisions, Sustainable Community Strategy, Partnership plans and strategies, performance and budgetary control data and changes in Government legislation.
3. In relation to the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members will recall that the Work Programme was refreshed at the Committee meeting held on the 24 June 2013, ensuring that areas of focus were in line with current and forthcoming priorities within the Committee's remit. Further areas of focus for the Committee have been added throughout 2013/14 to reflect changing Government policy and at the request of Members.

**Council Plan 2014-2017**

4. The Council Plan is the overarching high level plan for the County Council, which covers a four year period in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan and is updated on an annual basis. The plan sets out how the Council will consider the corporate priorities for change and the key actions the Authority will take in delivering the long term goals in the Sustainable Community Strategy (2010 – 2030) and the Council's own change agenda. Attached as Appendix 2 is the "Altogether Wealthier" section of the Council Plan for Members to consider.

5. Within the Council's "Altogether Wealthier" priority theme, the focus is on creating a vibrant economy and putting regeneration and economic development at the heart of all our plans. In comparison with the region and nationally, County Durham's economy is underperforming.
6. To help address these issues the Council has identified 5 objectives which are set out in the Regeneration Statement together with outcomes to achieve the overarching objectives. They are set out below. Some of the outcomes are new or have been amended to those included in the 2013 – 2017 Council Plan.
  - **Thriving Durham City**

W1 - Improved retail, business and tourism in Durham City and its immediate locality.  
W2 – Increased developer interest in key sites.  
W3 – Improved infrastructure to support economic growth.
  - **Vibrant and successful towns**

W4 – Improved retail, business, and tourism in major town centres.  
W5 – Increased developer and operator interest in key sites.  
W6 – Improved infrastructure to support economic growth.
  - **Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities**

W7 – Improved quality and choice of housing across County Durham.  
W8 – Improved infrastructure to support economic growth in rural areas.
  - **Competitive and successful people**

W9 – Increased numbers of people in employment and training with a focus on young people.  
W10 – Improved access to and promotion of employment opportunities.  
W11 – A co-ordinated approach to pre-and post-employment support.
  - **A top location for business**

W12 – Increased business creation.  
W13 – Development of existing businesses and safeguarding employment.  
W14 – A business friendly council.
7. Over the next four years, the Council will strive to deliver a step change in the economy of County Durham by focusing on the actions required to achieve the above objectives.
8. The Council Plan contains a series of High Level Action Plans detailing the work which needs to be undertaken by the Authority in order to deliver the outcomes identified above, see Appendix 2 (copy attached).

## **Current Work Programme**

9. During 2013 – 2014 the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee has undertaken budgetary and performance monitoring, in depth Scrutiny Reviews, systematic six monthly reviews of progress against recommendations and overview presentations in relation to the following areas:

**\* Denotes inline with Council Plan 2014-2017.**

### **In depth Scrutiny Reviews**

- \* ● Impact of public sector funding changes on the economy of County Durham (Covers all objectives and actions) – Member’s Reference Group - Ongoing.

### **Systematic Review**

- \* ● Empty Homes – Review of recommendations – Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities – W7 – Improved quality and choice of housing across County Durham.
- \* ● Increasing young people’s employment opportunities (18-24) in County Durham - Review of recommendations – Competitive and successful people – W9 – Increased numbers of people in employment and training with a focus on young people.

### **Areas of Overview Activity**

- \* ● Regeneration Statement - (Covers all objectives and actions).
- \* ● Master Plans for County Durham - Vibrant and successful towns - Action –W4 – Improved retail, business and tourism in major towns.
- \* ● County Durham Infrastructure Delivery Plan – A top location for business – W12 - Increased business creation – W13 –Development of existing businesses and safeguarding employment -Vibrant and successful towns – W3– Improved infrastructure to support economic growth.
- \* ● Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - A top location for business – W12 - Increased business creation – W13 –Development of existing businesses and safeguarding employment -Vibrant and successful towns – W3– Improved infrastructure to support economic growth.
- \* ● The County Durham Plan - (Covers all objectives and actions).
- \* ● Overview of the work of the County Durham Economic Partnership – (Covers all objectives and actions).

- \* ● Homelessness Strategy – Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities – W7 - Improved quality and choice of housing across County Durham.
- \* ● Durham Key Options - Choice Base Lettings Policy - Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities – W7 – Improved quality and choice of housing across County Durham.
- \* ● Stock Options Transfer – Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities – W7 – Improved quality and choice of housing across County Durham.
- \* ● Performance monitoring of Durham City Homes and the 2 ALMO's – Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities – W7 – Improved quality and choice of housing across County Durham.
- \* ● Adult Learning Strategy – Competitive and successful people – W9 – Increased numbers of people in employment and training with a focus on young people.
- \* ● Tourism - Thriving Durham City – W1 - Improved retail, business, and tourism in Durham City and its immediate locality – Vibrant and successful towns - W4 – Improved retail, business, and tourism in major town centres.
- \* ● Business Support – Business Durham – A top location for business –W1 increased business creation – W13 - Development of existing businesses and safeguarding employment..
- \* ● LEP Independent Economic Review (Covers all objectives and actions).
- \* ● European Funding Programme 2014-2020 (Covers all objectives and actions).
- \* ● Combined Authority (Covers all objectives and actions).
- \* ● Youth employment Initiative – Competitive and successful people – W9 – Increased numbers of people in employment and training with a focus on young people – W10 – Improved access and promotion of employment opportunities – W11 – A co-ordinated approach to pre-and post – employment support.
- \* ● Digital Durham – A top location for business – W12 – Increased business creation –W13 - Development of existing businesses and safe guarding employment – W14 – A business friendly council.

- \* • Affordable Homes Policy – Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities – W7 – Improved quality and choice of housing across County Durham.
- \* • Skills Development – Competitive and successful people – W9 – Increased numbers of people in employment and training with a focus on young people – W10 – Improved access to and promotion of employment opportunities – W11 – A co-ordinated approach to pre- and post - employment support.

### **Budgetary and performance monitoring**

- \* • Quarterly budgetary and performance monitoring for RED Service Group.

10. The Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny has also considered the following cross cutting items:

- \* • County Durham Plan – (Covers all objectives and actions).

### **Areas for consideration in the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny work programme**

11. In addition, the Altogether Wealthier section of the Council Plan for 2014 – 2017 identifies the following new high level actions which have not already been considered by committee that could be included in the 2014 – 2015 work programme:

### **Council Plan**

#### **Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities**

- Deliver the first Durham County Council market housing scheme for rent and sale - overview of scheme.
- Refresh of the Housing Strategy – overview of strategy and the process to be used for the refresh.
- Work with partners to develop Houses in Multiple Occupation Strategy to improve the standards and quality of HMO accommodation within the private rented sector – Overview of the strategy to be provided.

#### **Competitive and successful people**

- Deliver a programme to support the progression of young people classed as 'Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) – An overview of the programme.
- Financial Inclusion Strategy – An overview of the strategy.

**Areas which cut across all objectives within the Council Plan (Altogether Wealthier)**

- RED Capital Programme – (Covers all objectives of ‘Altogether Wealthier’) – Overview of the programme and the process.
- RED Investment Plan - (Covers all objectives of ‘Altogether Wealthier’) – Overview of the plan and the process.

**Cross Cutting Themes**

12. Below are areas which have cross cutting issues from other ‘Altogether’ themes that link into Altogether Wealthier.

<b>Altogether</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Link to Altogether Wealthier</b>
Children and Young People	Children and Young people realise and maximise their potential.	C2 Children and young people are supported to achieve and attain during school years to prepare them for adulthood.  C3 Young people are supported to progress and achieve in education, employment and training to achieve their potential.	W9 Increased numbers of people in employment and training with a focus on young people.  W10 Improved access to and promotion of employment opportunities
Greener	Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change.	G7 The Council homes and businesses are more energy efficient.	W7 Improved quality and choice of housing across County Durham.
Better Council	Working with our communities.	ABC 6 The effects of the Welfare Reform agenda are managed.	W11 A co-ordinated approach to pro- and post - employment support.

## **Next Steps**

13. The Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the appropriate section from the Council Plan, Appendix 2 (copy attached) to inform the Committee's Work Programme for 2014 – 2015, reflecting on the current work programme detailed in paragraphs 9 and 10 and the new high level actions identified in paragraph 11 above.
14. Members will receive a further report at the next Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirming/agreeing the Committee's Work Programme for 2014 – 2015 based on today's discussion.

## **Recommendations**

15. That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the information contained in Appendix 2 (copy attached).
16. That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee refresh the Work Programme for 2014 – 2015 by discussing and considering those actions identified, under "Altogether Wealthier" priority theme of the Council Plan 2014 – 2017, Appendix 2 (copy attached) and reflected in paragraphs 9, 10 and 11 of the report.
17. That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 23 June 2014, receives a further report detailing the Committee's Work Programme for 2014 – 2015.

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<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Stephen Gwilym, Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer</b>	
<b>Tel:</b>	<b>03000 268 140</b>	<b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:stephen.gwilym@durham.gov.uk">stephen.gwilym@durham.gov.uk</a></b>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Diane Close, Overview and Scrutiny Officer</b>	
<b>Tel:</b>	<b>03000 268 141</b>	<b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:diane.close@durham.gov.uk">diane.close@durham.gov.uk</a></b>

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**Appendix 1: Implications** *(The following implications are taken directly from the report to Cabinet on 19 March 2014: The Council Plan and Service Plans 2014 – 2017).*

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**Finance**

The Council Plan sets out the corporate priorities of the Council for the next 3 years. The Medium Term Financial Plan aligns revenue and capital investment to priorities within the Council Plan.

**Staffing**

The Council's strategies are being aligned to achievement of the corporate priorities contained within the Council Plan.

**Risk**

Consideration of risk is a key element in the corporate and service planning framework with both the Council Plan and Service Plans containing sections on risk management.

**Equality and diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty**

Individual equality impact assessments have been prepared for each savings proposal within the Medium-Term Financial Plan which also underpins the Council Plan. In addition a full impact assessment has previously been undertaken for the Council Plan. The actions in the Council Plan include specific issues relating to equality and aim to improve the equality of life for those with protected characteristics.

**Accommodation**

The Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan is aligned to the corporate priorities contained within the Council Plan.

**Crime and disorder**

The Altogether Safer section of the Council Plan sets out the Council's contributions to tackling crime and disorder.

**Human rights**

The priorities and actions in the Council Plan are in line with relevant articles of the Human Rights Act, for example, many of the actions support the right to family life.

**Consultation**

Council and partnership priorities have been developed following an analysis of available consultation data including consultation carried out as part of the development of the interim Sustainable Community Strategy and this has been reaffirmed by subsequent consultation on the budget. Results have been taken into account in developing our resourcing decisions.

**Procurement**

None.

**Disability Issues**

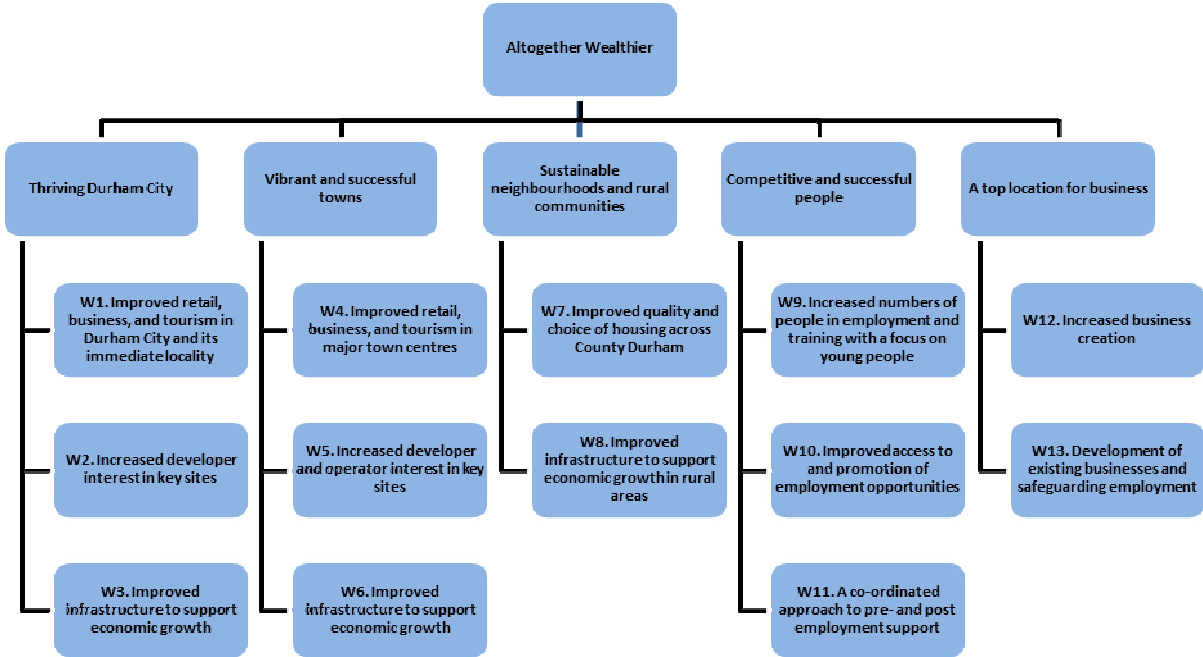
See equality and diversity implications above.

**Legal Implications**

None.



# Altogether Wealthier



Our ambition underpinning the vision of an Altogether Wealthier Durham is to shape a county where people want to live, work, invest and visit and enable our residents and businesses to achieve their potential. This ambition requires commitment to the transformation of the county, shared across public and private stakeholders and supported by residents. Placing Durham City as our key driver for growth, success will require us to capitalise on untapped potential in order to narrow the productivity and employment gap between the county, the region and the UK.

The County Durham Regeneration Statement looks over the next ten years to a challenging integrated programme of activity which takes advantage of our key assets and tackles constraints to growth. Our partnership Regeneration Statement has five key ambitions and objectives to drive forward activity; Thriving Durham City; Vibrant and Successful Towns; Competitive and Successful People; Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Rural Communities; and a Top Location for Business. We will strive to deliver a step change in the local economy by lifting the constraints on development and stimulating investment in infrastructure at a time of limited resources and significant national policy shifts.

The key driver to stimulate an economic renaissance within the county is the employment rate; for improving this will increase levels of disposable income, increase the number of businesses, and should, as a result, begin to reduce the chronic levels of relative deprivation. As a county we need to aim to achieve an extra 30,000 in employment over the next 20 years, through business growth, inward investment and business creation. It is also important that we continue to invest in our human capital through skills development and by supporting our residents to access and maintain employment opportunities. We must continue to address the needs of our most vulnerable residents and mitigate the impact of welfare reform, in order to improve people’s quality of life and improve economic prosperity.

## 1. Thriving Durham City

At the heart of the North East, Durham City is a hub of economic and cultural activity that stands out as a key economic driver for the county and region. The city has enormous potential and will help to deliver a significant share of a step change in the growth of the region and the largest contribution from the county as a whole. The city needs a critical mass of employment, population and visitors to build on the assets already inherent to become a city of regional, national and international significance. We aim to exploit Durham City's potential and what the city has to offer. By maximising the development opportunities of the city we will help to stimulate retail, business and housing growth, which will lead to job creation and increased business confidence. A core business quarter at Aykley Heads, a housing offer that complements economic growth, a visitor offer that encourages visitors to stay longer, together with the associated infrastructure needed to support this growth is therefore central to our approach.

### Going well

- The Former Ice Rink site in Durham City has been demolished and construction has started for a mixed use development, including business space and leisure to be known as 'Freemans Reach'.
- There have been 584,243 passenger journeys on the three Durham City Park and Ride sites, which is a 9% increase in usage compared to the same period last year. This could be attributed to the excellent summer weather and events like the Gospels, Streets of Durham and the Brass Festival.
- The bus corridor improvement works at the A167 at Croxdale have been completed.
- A new Police Headquarters at Aykley Heads is due for completion by September 2014.

### Cause for concern

- The economic climate continues to make it difficult for the private sector to invest in schemes across the city.
- The level of homes completed in the city remains low.
- Delays to the extension of Sniperley Park and Ride site mean it will not be completed until December 2015.
- Funding for flood mitigation from the government remains challenging but the Council continues to discuss options with partners.

### Did you know?

- The 'Lumiere' light festival attracted 175,000 people into the city between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2013.
- 97,208 tickets were sold for the Lindisfarne Gospels exhibition (1 July - 30 September 2013).

- Transport modelling for the Western and Northern Relief Roads has been completed, which will inform public consultation on the County Durham Plan.
- The Pearl Izumi Tour Series Cycle Race 2013 in Durham City attracted 12,000 spectators and TV viewing figures of 297,000.
- Durham International BRASS Festival attracted more than 35,000 visitors.
- Durham Book Festival 2013 reached more than 8,000 people.
- The 180<sup>th</sup> Durham Regatta in 2013 welcomed more than 600 crews from all over the UK to compete on the River Wear.

#### Look out for:

- A regeneration framework for Durham City is expected to be completed by April 2014.
- Details of the strategy and business case for Aykley Heads will be produced in 2014.
- Development of a new roundabout on the A167 at Sunderland Bridge.
- Completion of housing regeneration works at Esh Winning.
- Development of a new bus station in Durham City expected by December 2015.

#### High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Agree the development plan of Elvet waterside	Head of Economic Development & Housing	September 2014
Produce a delivery strategy for Aykley Heads	Head of Economic Development & Housing	March 2015
Construction of a new roundabout at Sunderland Bridge	Head of Transport & Contract Services	March 2015
Agree a delivery plan for Milburngate House	Head of Economic Development & Housing	June 2015
Relocate the bus station on North Road	Head of Transport & Contract Services	December 2015
Obtain planning consent for the Western Relief Road in Durham	Head of Transport & Contract Services	December 2015

## 2. Vibrant and successful towns

Vibrant towns are good for business: they create jobs, attract investment and generate income - they are engines for economic growth. At their best, they create a discernible local buzz and define the wider area, attracting people from near and far. County Durham has a dispersed settlement pattern with a large number of distinct towns, not all of which are meeting the needs of local communities. Through our 'Whole-Town' approach we will increase the vitality and vibrancy of our main settlements. This 'Whole-Town' approach is specific to each settlement and enables tailored solutions and coordinated investment for each place depending on its needs and service potential for its locality. Creating vibrant and successful towns is a complex task, dealing with interrelated issues and driven by wider economic and environmental factors. Each town is different, with its own opportunities to take advantage of and needs and issues to tackle. However, we aim to create places that are attractive, well managed, and well designed with a range of amenities and facilities for that given community.

### Going well

- Highways works at DurhamGate are now complete.
- Physical improvements to Barnard Castle Town Centre have been completed including landscaping works at the Castle and Scar Top and Amen Corner.
- A Heart of Teesdale website has also been launched.
- The County Durham Plan has been out for consultation and work is ongoing to prepare the "Publication" Draft Plan which is the version which will be submitted to the Secretary of State.
- Construction of the Horden link road project is now complete.
- Co-location of Durham County Council and Cestria Community Housing in a new customer access point in Chester-le-Street town centre.
- Digital Durham - the official launch of the first 'fibre cabinet' which can supply fast speed broadband to businesses and residents in the heart of the city, supporting regeneration, economic growth and job opportunities.

### Cause for concern

- The number of applications for planning permission, seen as an indication of the buoyancy of the economy has been declining since 2011/12.
- Development of additional car parking at Auckland Castle has been delayed to July 2015
- The St. John Square redevelopment in Seaham has been delayed and will now be completed in September 2014.

### Did you know?

- The North Dock Marina at Seaham was opened to the public, with a launch event held in July 2013.

- Durham’s Emirates International Cricket Ground at Chester-le-Street hosted its first Ashes Test Match, the fourth in the series from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2013.
- Restoration of Witham Hall, Barnard Castle has provided a new venue for creative and cultural industries with a 225 seat auditorium for conference, theatre, events and cinema, created 61 jobs and supported 34 businesses.
- A further new business centre at Consett was completed in November 2013.
- Marie Curie Cancer Care Etape Pennines cycle race attracted more than 1,000 cyclists.
- You can see the hygiene ratings for over 3,500 catering and retail businesses operating across County Durham by visiting <http://food.gov.uk>.
- The Council successfully bid for Government funding to get junction 63 on the A1(M) at Chester-le-Street upgraded by March 2015.

**Look out for:**

- Completion of a new roundabout at Northlands and Perkinsville, Chester-le-Street.
- The Examination in Public of the County Durham Plan.
- Completion of improvements of Heighington Railway Station serving Aycliffe Business Park.
- Improvements to the council’s industrial unit property portfolio, including Tanfield Lea Business Park at Stanley and Stella Gill Industrial Estate at Chester-le-Street.
- Delivery of the South Durham Embracing Local-Motion project in Bishop Auckland, Shildon and Newton Aycliffe. This will provide improvements to travel facilities including rail stations, cycling facilities, bus service enhancements and an expansion of the electric vehicle infrastructure.
- Refurbishment of Spennymoor Cricket Club

**High level Action Plan**

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Introduction of a new signal controlled roundabout at Northlands, Chester-le-Street	Head of Transport & Contract Services	August 2014
Complete and share the Tourism visitor market assessment to enable the private and public sector to increase support for the tourism economy	Head of Economic Development & Housing	September 2014

Delivery of the Food and Drink Campaign	Head of Economic Development & Housing	December 2014
Complete road access improvements at Front Street, Stanley	Head of Transport & Contract Services	December 2014
Adoption of the County Durham Plan	Head of Planning & Assets	March 2015
Deliver improvements to Heighington Railway Station to support the Hitachi facility at Merchant Park	Head of Transport & Contract Services	March 2015
Develop and deliver a co-ordinated Events Programme for the county as set out in the Events Strategy	Head of Culture & Sport	March 2015
Deliver new car parking capacity at North Bondgate to support significant increase in tourists visiting Bishop Auckland	Head of Economic Development & Housing	July 2015
Construction of a new railway station at Horden on the Durham Coast Railway Line	Head of Transport & Contract Services	March 2016
Agree the delivery plan for the Seaham Colliery site with the Homes and Communities Agency	Head of Economic Development & Housing	May 2016
Secure a developer for a residential project for the North East Industrial Estate at Peterlee	Head of Economic Development & Housing	December 2016

### 3. Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities

Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities are places where people can and want to live and are places that help to enhance the wellbeing and potential of our communities. A sustainable place provides a quality built environment, with good housing and living conditions and access to services, through appropriate infrastructure. However, deprivation and inequalities persist in some communities in County Durham and also across the region as well as nationally. Industrial restructuring and job losses in manufacturing have disproportionately affected some of our communities within the county. The county's dispersed settlement pattern, low car ownership, low job density and rurality can compound deprivation and inequalities. This can have damaging effects upon an individual's life chances in a number of ways. There are both varying needs and a varying quality of place across the County and like the 'Whole Town' approach; each neighbourhood requires a different level or type of support to ensure sustainability.

We will continue to provide tailored and appropriate solutions for our neighbourhoods. Investment in housing and transport is an essential component to regenerating our communities and improving our economic performance.

### **Going well**

- Dale & Valley Homes and Durham City Homes are on course to achieve their target for all homes to meet the Government's decency standard by March 2014.
- East Durham Homes are well ahead of schedule and have extended their target from 25% to 21% of homes being non-decent by March 2014.
- At the end of Q3 2013/14, 674 private sector properties have been improved as a direct consequence of local authority intervention.
- Between April and December 2013, 80 properties were brought back into use as a result of local authority intervention.
- Traveller sites at Tower Road, Stanley and Drum Lane, Birtley are being refurbished.
- The number of affordable homes delivered at the end of Q3 was 314 against a profiled target of 262.

### **Cause for concern**

- Analysis shows there is high demand for one bedroomed properties, and falling demand for three bedroomed properties. Houses let through the council's Durham Key Options scheme have increased but the number of empty properties is also increasing.

### **Did you know?**

- The Government's decision is expected by April 2014 as to whether the council has a place on the transfer programme for the Council owned housing stock.
- Between April and December 2013, 3682 people were re-housed through the Durham Key Options System.
- 23.9 million bus passenger journeys were made on the network in 2012/13. As of September 2013; 11.9 million journeys have been made in 2013/14.

### **Look out for:**

- Completion of housing regeneration works at Easington, Dawdon, Wheatley Hill and Craghead.
- Completion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites at West Rainton and Bishop Auckland.
- The decent homes improvement programme for Durham City Homes worth £3.5m will be completed by April 2015.
- A tenant vote on the future of the council's 18,500 homes in the summer of 2014.

## High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Work with partners to develop a Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Strategy to improve the standards and quality of HMO accommodation within the private rented sector	Head of Environment, Health & Consumer Protection	July 2014
Obtain agreement with landowners to pursue the development of a Crook to Howden Multi-user Route	Head of Transport and Contract Services	March 2015
Implement a new 'in-house' County-wide Home Improvement Agency	Head of Economic Development & Housing	March 2015
Pursue the preferred option for the future of Council housing across County Durham	Head of Economic Development & Housing	March 2015
Bring the following empty homes back into use through a programme of targeted support:	Head of Economic Development & Housing	
South Durham - 55		March 2015
East Durham - 40		March 2015
North Durham - 25		March 2015
Implement a £3.5m decent home improvement programme for Durham City Homes	Head of Direct Services	April 2015
Redevelop the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller permanent sites at the following locations:	Head of Economic Development & Housing/ Head of Direct Services	June 2015
Adventure Lane, West Rainton		
Tower Road, Stanley		
Drum Lane, Birtley		
Green Lane, Bishop Auckland		



Deliver the first Durham County Council market housing scheme for rent and sale	Head of Economic Development and Housing	June 2016
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Digital Durham: Increase availability of technology across the county by developing the Digital Durham programme for next generation broadband delivery to all areas of the county - in partnership with Broadband Development UK (BDUK). Deployment to commence from quarter 1 2014/15	Head of ICT Services	September 2016
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#### **4. Competitive and successful people**

The skills, abilities and attitudes of the current and future County Durham workforce are critical to the future economic success of the county and will underpin a more competitive and productive economy. County Durham has below national average employment and higher skills attainment levels, and above regional and national average economically inactive residents claiming benefits. We need to provide pre and post-employment support and encourage people to develop their skills and recognise transferable attributes for current or future employment in order to increase individual success, improve life chances and to ease the progression into work or within work. At a time of uncertainty, compounded with the onset of significant welfare reform and limited resources, we continue to work with partners, employers and employability support providers to ensure support for County Durham residents and to help them access employment opportunities.

It is important that we work closely with employers and continue to raise aspirations, participation and attainment of our young residents so they can make the most of available opportunities and have the best chance of being competitive and successful.

#### **Going well**

- There have been 109 apprentices who have started through the council's apprenticeship programme as at Q3 2013/14.
- 1036 cases of homelessness were prevented through advice and assistance provided by the council.

#### **Cause for concern**

- The proportion of people who have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for one year or more has continued to increase and is 36.35% (December 13).

#### **Did you know?**

- The merger of the three credit unions in County Durham is now complete.
- The Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 has been published.
- A triage process has been introduced to manage the impact of welfare reform and assist tenants and residents across County Durham.

- The council's bespoke apprenticeship scheme has directly helped 357 residents to start an apprenticeship since the scheme began in November 2011 up to December 2013.

**Look out for:**

- Development of a real time travel information system across the county.
- A decision will be made on the future management of 19,000 council owned houses in late 2014.

**High level Action Plan**

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Deliver a programme to support the progression of young people classed as 'Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	Head of Economic Development & Housing	June 2014
Develop and implement a real time travel information system across the county	Head of Transport & Contract Services	September 2014
Prepare and submit a funding bid and develop a programme for the 'Erasmus Project' to enable an international exchange programme for apprentices	Head of Strategy, Programmes & Performance	March 2015
Deliver a County Durham Apprenticeship Programme to support people into work through the provision of wage subsidy to employers	Head of Economic Development & Housing	March 2015

**5. A top location for business**

County Durham is home to a wide range of businesses from micro rural businesses to large multinationals, from small scale engineering to large scale manufacturing and from business services to internationally leading research companies. The county offers businesses support and development opportunities and these must be sustained to serve the diversity that exists.

County Durham's business base grew during the sustained growth of the last decade up to the start of the recession. However; we did not experience the same gains as other areas during a period of expansion, we were harder hit during the economic downturn and we have been slower in regards to employment growth since the UK economy has emerged from the recession. Public sector contraction and government cuts since 2010 have further compounded the issues. It is important we continue to take a balanced approach to growing and sustaining existing businesses, developing our labour force, establishing new businesses and attracting inward investment.

Investment must embed with our local supply chains and networks to boost our economic potential. To become a top location for business we are supporting innovation, removing constraints to investment and growth, and enabling infrastructure development to improve our business offer.

### Going well

- The Hitachi supply chain capability mapping is progressing well
- 76.5% of Council owned factories and business support centre floor-space was occupied.
- The 'Viewpoint' Business Centre at Consett was completed in November 2013.

### Cause for concern

- Lack of funding to support new business start-ups is restricting the ability of partners to increase our business space.
- Access to finance is still a problem for small businesses in the county.

### Did you know?

- The Future Business Magnates Awards ceremony was held in June 2013.
- There have been nearly 3 million recorded visitors to the main attractions in County Durham and almost 400,000 in Durham City alone for the first two quarters of 2013/14.
- The Bishop Auckland Food Festival held in April 2013 was run over two days for the first time and was attended by around 25,000 people.
- NETPark, the North East's science, engineering and technology park at Sedgefield now has 400 staff working there and supports 1,000 indirect jobs.

### Look out for:

- A new Visitor Pocket Guide will be launched in Spring 2014.

## High level Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Develop a £12m EU funded programme of activity to deliver access to finance support targeted at County Durham businesses	Head of Economic Development & Housing	December 2014
Develop relationships with businesses to identify and secure business growth and diversification	Head of Economic Development & Housing	March 2015
Deliver enterprise initiatives to stimulate enterprise awareness, actions and networks, including; the Future Business Magnates and the establishment of the Rural Enterprise Hub network	Head of Economic Development & Housing	October 2015

Further develop NETPark and attract more businesses by developing the premises and expanding the product offer to a broader technology community to grow the economic activity of NETPark

Head of Economic  
Development & Housing

March 2015