

Council Plan 2015-18

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Foreword

Local government in County Durham has undergone significant change in recent times. The creation of a single unitary council for the county in 2009 was followed by the introduction of unprecedented public spending reductions by the government which required us to reduce council spending by nearly £137m to date. We face further change over the next three years, with the government projecting that austerity measures are likely to continue until at least the end of the decade. We have calculated that this will mean that the total sum to be saved by 2019 will exceed £250m. This equates to a 60% funding reduction in government grant since the austerity programme began. During the same period Durham will receive £135m of European funding to create economic growth. This gives us a dual challenge: to invest money effectively for the long-term benefit of County Durham, and to save money to ensure that we have sustainable public services. This will involve looking at new approaches to the delivery of local services to our communities.

We have had an application to transfer ownership and management of our 18,000 homes to a new company approved by the Government, a decision that has been supported by our tenants. This will help secure the necessary long-term funding required to maintain and improve the quality of the housing stock. We also have a history of working with communities to transfer ownership and manage assets such as leisure centres, allotments and community buildings to local people. We are exploring further opportunities to transform our services through extending this approach to other council facilities over the next year.

The economy remains this council's main priority and we have set an ambitious development plan to achieve 30,000 additional jobs from 2011 levels, further develop the county's main towns and realise the full potential of Durham city as a major retail, business and residential centre, academic hub and visitor destination. This will build on success of attracting private sector investment in the Hitachi plant to Newton Aycliffe, bringing Atom, the first new full service bank in the UK for 100 years to Durham, the planned extension of NETpark in Sedgfield and the Freeman's Reach development in Durham. A key piece of work in the early stages of this plan will be to consider the planning inspector's interim report and establish the next stages of developing the County Durham Plan. Balancing the need to grow our economy with the imperative to make our public services more cost effective will be the two major objectives facing our council over the medium term. Local government has demonstrated time after time that it remains the most efficient branch of the public sector and Durham County Council has consistently made the necessary savings in a planned way and through close consultation with our residents. Our strong corporate approach to planning and managing change was recognised when we received the prestigious Local Government Chronicle Council of the Year award for 2014. Challenging times lie ahead for Durham but I am confident that we will manage the process effectively.

Councillor Simon Henig
Leader of the Council

County Durham

Place

County Durham is a unique place with a rich cultural history. Durham city has been an important spiritual centre and place of pilgrimage from early medieval times. Today, the castle and cathedral are recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site because of their international cultural and physical significance. The site remains a top attraction in the county for tourists from all over the world. Historic market towns of Barnard Castle and Bishop Auckland also date from the Middle Ages. In its later history, the county developed as a powerhouse of the industrial revolution. An economic past of heavy industry based around mining, metal production and manufacturing leaves its legacy today in our diverse spatial geography based across 12 main towns and numerous villages and smaller communities. The county is blessed with some beautiful countryside. Two of the region's major rivers, the Wear and the Tees, rise in County Durham within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, one of the most remote and unspoiled places in England. The unique geological heritage of the North Pennines was also considered to be of such international significance that it has been recognised by UNESCO when it became the first Geopark in Europe. The whole of Durham's coastline in the East has been extensively reclaimed from its heavily industrialised past and is now defined as a Heritage Coast reflecting its natural beauty and rare ecology.

As a local authority, we recognise that we can be a major force in reducing the human impact on the environment in County Durham. Over the last few years we have strived to achieve a more sustainable approach to disposal of waste through the introduction of alternate weekly collection and retendering our services which has increased household waste recycling, reduced operational and contract costs, increased energy generation from waste and virtually eliminated waste going to landfill.

We have actively worked to reduce our carbon footprint through installation of solar PV panels on our buildings, retrofitting schemes to improve energy efficiency of some of our older centres, installation of biomass boilers where appropriate and acquisition of more fuel efficient vehicles which has driven down our emissions by over 16% in five years. This contribution forms part of our overall commitment to help reduce CO₂ emissions by 40% by 2020.

We will continue to act to tackle issues of environmental concern. County Durham has some countryside of enviable beauty and we will not tolerate people who flout the law and blight our landscape by illegally dumping household and trade waste. The number of incidents that we have had to clear has increased by over 20% in the last year. Whilst this is a national trend, we have been working in partnership with the police and have pursued successful prosecution of perpetrators where there has been sufficient evidence.

Despite this increase in environmental crime, County Durham still remains a low crime area when compared to the rest of the country. Whilst there has been a moderate increase in overall crime in the last year, this is against a backdrop of

falling crime rates over the last five years. Incidents of anti-social behaviour have also been falling.

People

In terms of population, County Durham is the largest local authority in the North East region and the sixth largest all-purpose council in the country. The population is growing. Between 2001 and 2011, the population of the county increased by 4%, from 493,678 to 513,242 which is faster than the regional average. Population growth is also projected to continue.

Life expectancy at birth in County Durham has been improving over time for both males and females, although not as fast as for England. The absolute gap is increasing for both males and females. In County Durham, males from the most affluent areas will live 8.2 years longer than those from the most deprived areas. Females in the most affluent areas will live 6.7 years longer than those in the most deprived areas. These gaps have not changed significantly over time. Whilst the gap for males is smaller than the national average and similar to the England average for women, it should be noted that almost 50% of County Durham's population live in deprived areas and life expectancy is relatively low, therefore the difference between the most and least deprived is likely to be limited compared to the national average. There are a number of factors affecting health including lifestyle choices and wider determinants such as the social conditions in which we are born and live.

Prevalence of risk factors in County Durham

	Period	County Durham	North East	All England
Percentage of adults smoking (annual) ¹	2013	22.7	22.3	17.9
Adult participation in sport and active recreation ² (1 x 30 minutes per week) (3 x 30 minutes per week)	2014	31.3 25.0	34.5 25.4	34.5 26.0
Children who are overweight or obese (%) ³ Reception year Year 6	2013/14	23.81 36.13	24.55 36.21	22.97 32.93
Obese adults (annual) %	2012	27.4	26.2	22.9
Rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 for alcohol related harm ⁴	14/15 Q1	591	679	481

People living in poverty are likely to experience fewer life chances, shortened life expectancy, poorer health and fewer opportunities to lead a good life.

They are less likely to benefit from education to the same degree as others; are less likely to be in higher paid skilled jobs; and are more likely to live in poor housing and in neighbourhoods where crime is more prevalent and where safety is threatened.

Durham is the most deprived authority in the North East region in terms of the scale

¹ Public Health England

² Sport England Active People Survey

³ National Child Measurement Programme, health and Social Care Information Centre

⁴ Hospital Episode Statistics, North West Health Observatory

of income deprivation with nearly half (42.4%) of its population living in the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally. Latest data (2011) show that 22.1% of children live in low income families in County Durham compared to 17.5% nationally. 11.4% of households are also defined as living in fuel poverty i.e. they spend more than 10% of their income on fuel to maintain a standard level of warmth.

One of the single most powerful contributions that the local authority can make to people's lives is to work with our schools to ensure that our children and young people are getting the best start in life and are achieving their potential. Educational attainment in County Durham has seen some consistent improvements over the years. In the academic year 2005/06, 40.4% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades including English and mathematics GCSE. This was the same as the North East but lower than the England average (45.6%). Over the next four years the achievement gap consistently narrowed and by 2009/10, attainment rates exceeded regional and national averages with 55.8% of the county pupils achieved this level compared to 52.9% in the North East and 53.5% in England. Latest data (2013/14) indicate relatively strong performance continued with 57.6% of county pupils achieving this level compared to 54.3% in the North East and 56.7% in England.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) in the county achieve substantially below this level with 38% achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English and mathematics GCSEs in 2012/13. This is slightly lower than the England value (38.1%) but higher than the North East average (35.1%). However, it should be noted that the relative gap between County Durham and England has been closing over the last five years.

One of our priorities remains to improve progression of our young people from secondary education and to reduce the number of people not in education, employment and training which was 7.1% in County Durham in 2013/14 compared to 7.6% in the North East and a 5.3% national average.

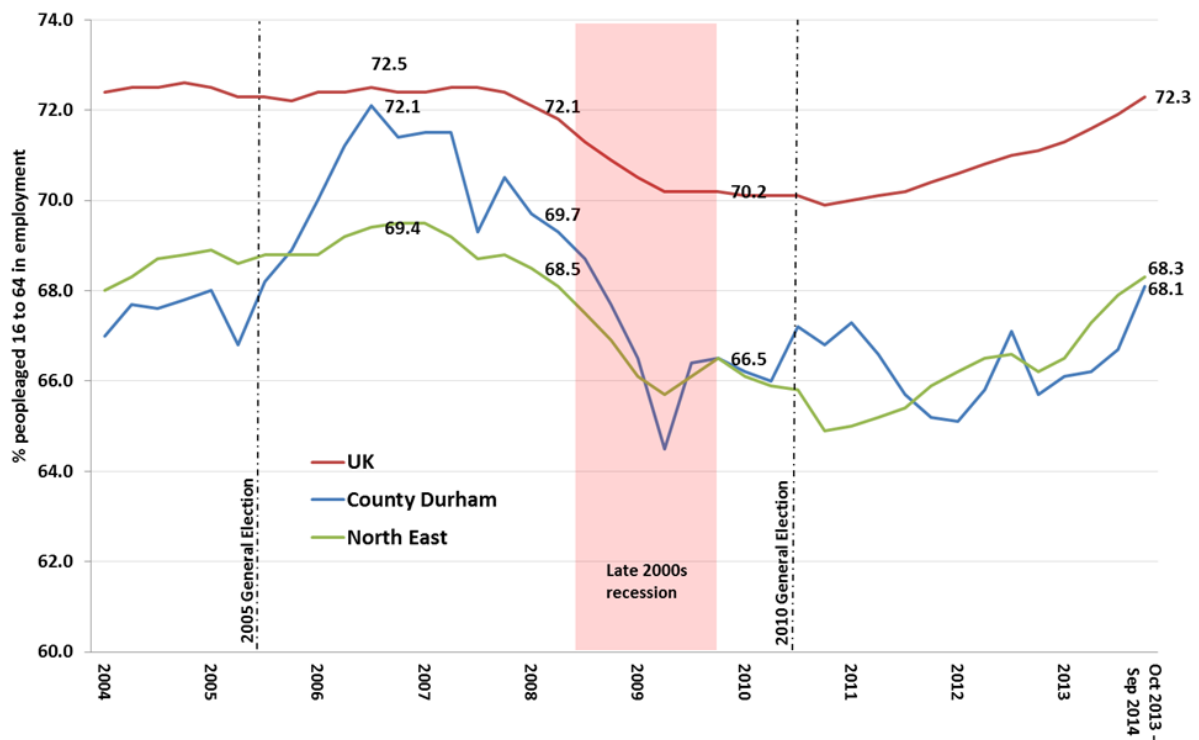
It is also important that children and young people make healthy choices to give themselves the best start in life and that they are not drawn into a cycle of negative and risk taking behaviours such as offending, smoking, drinking alcohol, taking drugs and teenage conceptions.

	Co. Durham	North East	All England
Under 18 conception rate per 1,000 teenage population (2012)	33.7	35.5	27.9
Alcohol related hospital admission rate for under 18s per 100,000 teenage population (2010/11 – 2012/13)	81.5	72.2	44.9
First time entrants to the Youth Justice System per 100,000 10-17 yr old population	556	734	567

We will continue to work with a range of partners to take a multi-agency problem solving approach to those families in the county with multiple and complex needs through our Stronger Families Programme. This has already yielded considerable success and has turned round the lives of nearly 50% families already signed up for the programme.

Employment levels in County Durham have remained relatively low in comparison with the rest of the country for a long time. In 2007, the employment rate in County Durham peaked at 72.1% which was only 0.4 percentage points behind the UK rate and higher than the rate for the North East. However the recession had a significant impact on employment levels in the county with the rate sharply declining to 64.5% at the end of the recessionary period compared to the national rate of 70.1%. Employment has slowly started to recover in the post recessionary period but levels still remain low in County Durham. The latest figures (October 2013 – September 2014) show that the county is still 4.2 percentage points behind the UK rate.

Employment Rates in County Durham, North East and UK 2004-14



Gross Value Added or GVA is a measure of the amount of money generated by an area and is a key indicator of productivity of the local economy. In 2013, the GVA per person in County Durham was £14,225 which is considerably less than both the North East and UK rates. However, the rate of growth of GVA in County Durham is much stronger. While higher relative levels of growth are encouraging, the lag between national and regional levels is evident. Although locally, economic growth rates have tended to be slightly higher they have made little impact on narrowing the gap with the UK. The current GVA per person rate of the county is 82% of the regional value and 60% of the national value.

2013 Workplace based GVA per head at current basic prices

Area	GVA (£ per person)	% growth in GVA	
		since 2012	since 2001
County Durham	14,225	6.8%	53.6%
North East	17,381	2.8%	52.3%
UK	23,755	2.5%	48.1%
UK (less London and the South East) ⁵	20,462	2.8%	44.9%

Gross disposable household income in County Durham has increased by 16.2% since 2008 which is higher than the increase enjoyed in the North East region (15.9%) or nationally (12.7% in the UK) over the same period. However, local disposable income per head remains low compared to national income and if the trend over the last 15 years is to continue then the gap will widen even further.

2012 Gross disposable household income (GDHI) per head at current basic prices

Area	GDHI (£ per person)	% growth in GDHI	
		since 2011	since 2001
County Durham	14,151	+3.9%	+39.1%
North East	14,397	+4%	+42.8%
UK	16,791	+3.3%	+41%
UK (less London and the South East) ⁶	15,526	+3.3%	+41.3%

We will work in close cooperation across the seven local authorities in the North East Local Economic Partnership⁷ to ensure that our regional economy will provide one million jobs within the next ten years. Our regeneration plans are to reach pre-recession employment levels. This will require growth to replace and exceed the level of jobs lost alongside a reversal of the high proportion of the working age population claiming out of work benefits. Increasing employment levels in the county

⁵ All data from Office for National Statistics except UK (less London and the South East) which have been calculated using total GVA and ONS mid-year estimates.

⁶ All data from Office for National Statistics except UK (less London and the South East) which have been calculated using total GDHI and ONS mid-year estimates

⁷ Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, Northumberland County Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council

will drive up disposable income levels and help to address the productivity gap between the county and the rest of the country. The County Durham Plan which sets out the new development that is planned for the county is predicated on a labour force growth target of 30,000 jobs for Durham residents which will help to increase the proportion of the workforce that is in employment to pre-recession levels. Central to these plans is to realise the economic potential of Durham City as an important centre for economic growth in the North East. Durham, is in a competitive location on the A1 and east coast main line with world class tourist attractions. Through strategic investment and sensitive planning we can grow the central business quarter of the city to capture emerging high growth sectors, expand and enhance the city's leisure and tourism offer and meet the need for new homes in an expanding population. A key piece of work in the early stages of this plan will be to consider the planning inspector's interim report and establish the next stages of developing the County Durham Plan.

Increasingly, residents and businesses need to have access to reliable digital services. The Digital Durham programme aims to deliver superfast broadband at speeds of over 25 Mbps to every business, home and community in County Durham which will increase the competitiveness of our strategic business sites, improve services to local people and increase educational opportunities.

The county's population is ageing and the pace is increasing. The 65+ population in County Durham has grown by around 10,000 people in the last four years, equivalent to 11.1% growth, much more than other age groups and more than double the growth in the previous four years⁸.

This growth mirrors the national picture for the UK and many other European countries. This is as a consequence of the age structure of the population alive today, in particular the ageing of the large number of people born during the post-war baby boom. It also stems from increased longevity – a boy born in 1981 had a life expectancy at birth of 71⁹ years. For a boy born today the figure is estimated to be 80 years and by 2030 it is projected to be 83. The trend for women is similar. A girl born in 1981 was expected to live for 77 years and one born today might be expected to live to 83. Projections suggest a girl born in 2030 might live to 86.

However, a rise in life expectancy does not automatically lead to a similar rise in years spent in reasonable health. Recent data¹⁰ shows healthy life expectancy for older people is increasing slower than life expectancy. Between 2000 and 2011 life expectancy at 65 for men and women increased by 2.1 and 1.6 years respectively, yet healthy life expectancy at age 65 grew by 1.3 years over the same period. Currently, the average healthy life expectancy in County Durham is low at 58.7¹¹ years of age for men and 59.4 for women.

⁸ Growth in the 65+ age group between 2009 and 2013 (ONS Mid-Year Estimates) was 11.1% compared to 5.2% between 2005-2009

⁹ ONS, 2014, Historic and projected expectations of life (ex) from the 2012-based life tables: Principal Projection. GB

¹⁰ ONS, 2014, Change in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between 2000–2002 and 2009–2011, in Great Britain

¹¹ ONS, 2014, Healthy Life Expectancy for Upper Tier Authorities 2010-12

Increasing life expectancy, a low healthy life expectancy combined with sharply increasing older population has significant consequences for us as proportionately greater demands are being placed on local services such as adult social care, transport and Care Connect, our community alarm service. In the 2011 Census¹², more than a fifth (20.7%) of the county's over 65 population said their health was bad or very bad, equivalent to over 19,000 people, relatively high compared to national levels (15.5%). If this proportion remains constant the number of older people in poor health will increase by 50% by 2030, equivalent to an extra 9,500 people compared to 2011.

Further information about the population of County Durham and its current and future health and social care needs can be found in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which can be found on the council's website (www.durham.gov.uk)



¹² ONS, 2013, General Health by Age, nomisweb.co.uk

The Council

Durham County Council was established in 2009 when unitary local government was created in the county following the merger of the former county council and seven district and borough councils. We employ just over 18,000 people including schools based staff and have a gross revenue expenditure budget of £1.178bn. We are made up of 126 members representing 63 electoral divisions throughout the county. The current political makeup is 96 Labour councillors, 17 Independent councillors, nine Liberal Democrat councillors and four Conservative councillors.

We operate a leader and cabinet style model of political governance and the cabinet is made up of ten councillors with the following portfolios:

Councillor		Portfolio
Councillor Simon Henig		Leader of the Council
Councillor Alan Napier		Deputy Leader and Finance
Councillor Morris Nicholls		Adult Services
Councillor Ossie Johnson		Children and Young People's Services
Councillor Jane Brown		Corporate Services
Councillor Neil Forster		Economic Regeneration
Councillor Eddie Tomlinson		Housing and Rural Issues
Councillor Maria Plews		Leisure, Libraries and Lifelong Learning

Councillor Brian Stephens		Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships
Councillor Lucy Hovvels		Safer and Healthier Communities

Our overview and scrutiny function is made up of six committees with an Overview and Scrutiny Management Board providing an oversight of the work of these committees which is made up of 26 councillors and five other representatives.

We are broadly comparable with a major company in size. We provide a large range of services that include: teaching our young people and caring for our older people; lending the latest best sellers and protecting 900 year old documents; fixing road bridges and creating bridges in our communities; helping children to swim and helping adults to work; planting trees in nature reserves and recycling paper from our homes. In fact, any local service you can think of, we will probably have a hand in it somewhere. To help us manage this undertaking, we employ a Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and four Directors who make up the Corporate Management Team of the council.

Chief Executive

George Garlick

Designated as statutory Head of Paid Service. Who has overall responsibility for the management of the authority, professional advice to the leadership of the authority, representing the council on partnerships and external bodies, regional and national networks.

Assistant Chief Executive

Lorraine O'Donnell

Corporate policy, communications, corporate planning and performance, partnerships and community engagement, overview and scrutiny, civil contingencies, emergency planning, Durham County Record Office.

Corporate Director Resources

Don McLure

Finance, procurement, legal and democratic services (inc. electoral and registration services), human resources and organisational development, information and communications technology, internal audit, risk, insurance and corporate fraud, welfare rights (inc. management of the Citizens' Advice Bureau contract) and revenues and benefits (inc. creditors and debtors).

Corporate Director Children and Adult Services

Rachael Shimmin

Adults' and children's social care and safeguarding, commissioning, public health, adult learning, fostering and adoption, looked after children, education development services, school admissions, attendance and exclusions, school transport, youth offending service, community safety, early intervention and partnership services.

Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services

Terry Collins

Waste management, parks, customer services, grounds maintenance, street cleaning, civic pride and enforcement, neighbourhood wardens, bereavement services, facilities management, housing maintenance, fleet, environmental health, trading standards, licensing, markets, sport and leisure, countryside management, museums and galleries, cinema and theatres, libraries, street lighting, coastal protection, road safety, highways, winter maintenance, building design.

Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development

Ian Thompson

Physical and economic regeneration, transport, asset management, spatial policy and planning, support for business, tourism, strategic housing, landlord and tenant services, housing solutions, environment and design services, Care Connect, strategy, programmes and performance support.

Our Vision

We have a vision and priorities which are shared together with partners and which are based on consultation with local people and Area Action Partnerships. This vision developed by us reflects the views and aspirations of the community and opportunities for improvement. It focuses around an altogether better Durham and comprises two components; to have an altogether better place which is altogether better for people.

This vision provides a framework which guides all of our detailed plans and programmes which will turn our vision into a reality. This is achieved through organising our improvement actions into a structure comprised of five priority themes:

Altogether Wealthier

Focusing on creating a vibrant economy and putting regeneration and economic development at the heart of all our plans;

Altogether Better for Children and Young People

Ensure children and young people are kept safe from harm and that they can 'believe, achieve and succeed';

Altogether Healthier

Improving health and wellbeing;

Altogether Safer

Creating a safer and more cohesive county;

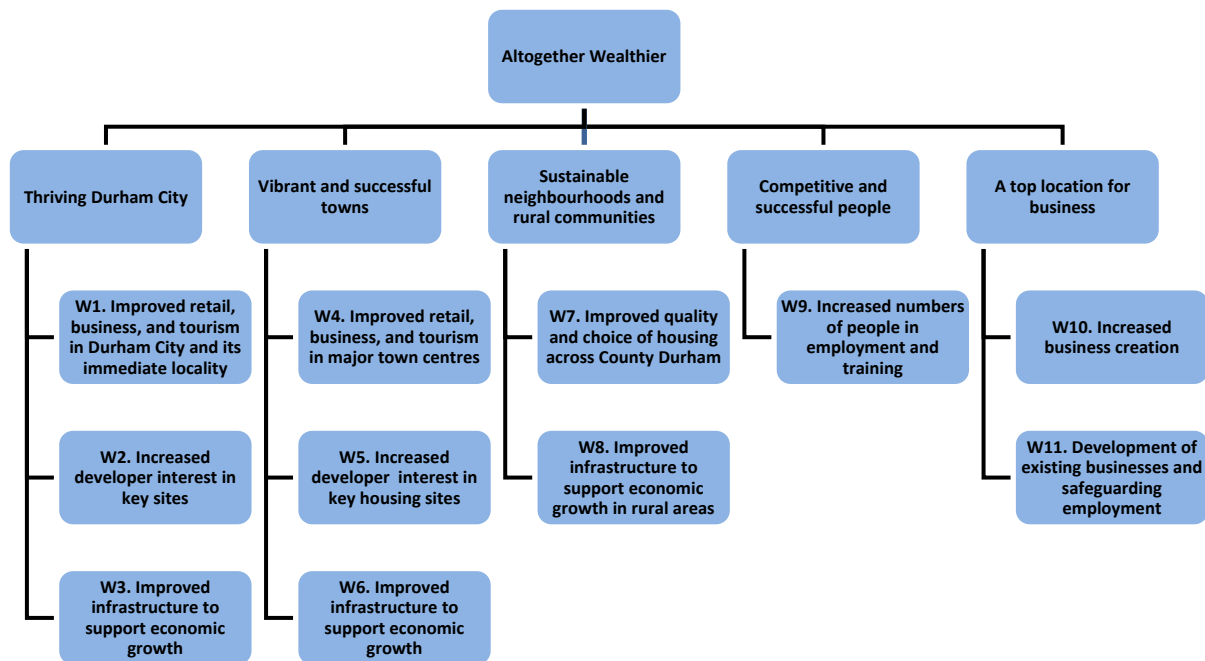
Altogether Greener

Ensuring an attractive and 'liveable' local environment and contributing to tackling global environmental challenges.

This vision is shared with our partners and set out in the county's Sustainable Community Strategy. It is reassuring to note that during the current economic climate with all public sector agencies facing large reductions in government funding, we and our partners have reaffirmed our commitment to the above vision and the objectives that have previously been developed for each of the above priority themes.

The Council Plan sets out our corporate priorities for improvement and the key actions that we will take in support of the delivery of the long-term goals in the Sustainable Community Strategy. It also identifies the improvements that we want to make in how we manage our organisation. These actions are captured in a sixth priority theme of an **Altogether Better Council**.

Altogether Wealthier



Our Vision

Our ambition of shaping the County into a place where people want to live, work, invest and visit underpins the vision of an Altogether Wealthier Durham. This ambition requires commitment across public and private stakeholders along with support from residents. Placing Durham City as our key driver for growth and 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 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 a growth target of 30,000 jobs for Durham residents 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.

To help achieve our vision Altogether Wealthier has the following high level objectives:

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 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. For these reasons, the delivery of the Durham City Regeneration Framework is a priority for us. There are a number of key projects within the framework that will be delivered over the coming years that will contribute towards boosting the economy of Durham City.

One of the key projects in the County Durham Plan is the development of the **Central Business Quarter of the city centre**, including redevelopment of Aykley Heads as a major, prestigious business park, potentially supported by the redevelopment of **Milburngate House** site. This will create significant new employment space, mixed-use space, housing and between 5,000 and 7,500 jobs within the city. The redevelopment of **North Road** will provide opportunities for food/department store as well as other retail investments, leisure facilities and franchised outlets, improved public transport/pedestrian interface and improved public realm.

The construction of a **Western Relief Road** will provide the necessary infrastructure to support the proposed additional housing and increased businesses expected following the approval of the County Durham Plan. Improvements are also planned to ease the **traffic flow in and around Durham City**. This will include the installation of variable message signs for road users, and the installation of traffic signals on Gilesgate roundabout and Leazes Bowl roundabout.

We will review operations at the **Gala Theatre, Durham Town Hall and the Durham Light Infantry museum** to improve the city's tourism offer and the experience of visitors. Our 2015/16 programme of cultural, sporting and community based events will continue to raise the profile of the county and contribute significantly to our local economy. The programme will be expanded during 2015/16, a year which will also see the return of our signature event '**Lumiere**'.

Clearly some of these elements contained within the County Durham Plan have been challenged by the interim inspection report. A key piece of work in the early stages of this plan will be to consider the planning inspector's report and establish the next stages of developing the County Durham Plan.

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. County Durham has a dispersed settlement pattern with a large number of distinct towns, not all of which are meeting the needs of local main settlements. Through our 'Whole Town' approach we will increase the vitality and vibrancy of our main settlements.

We have prepared the draft **County Durham Plan**, which sets out the new development that is planned for the county. It contains allocations which show where

development will take place and how it will be managed and also contains policies for determining planning applications. This plan has now been through an examination in public and the interim report from the planning inspector has been received. We will be considering the planning inspector's interim report and establishing next steps in the development of the plan. A **Regeneration Framework** has been produced for each of the 12 main towns across County Durham. A number of key projects taken from the frameworks are planned for delivery over the next three years, including physical regeneration improvements in Peterlee, Seaham, Crook, Consett, Stanley, Spennymoor and Shildon town centres.

We are working under a Joint Venture Agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency to bring forward three key sites for redevelopment in Seaham, providing additional housing and a new school on the **former Seaham Colliery Site**.

We are involved in the redevelopment of the **North East Industrial Estate in Peterlee**. The site has outline planning permission for 390 new homes and work is underway to relocate the existing businesses.

The creation of a **railway station on the East Coast mainline in Horden** will help to boost the local economy and will improve access to employment for residents.

Improvements will be made to the infrastructure at **Newton Park, Newton Aycliffe** to support existing and new businesses, as well as the condition of our Industrial Unit property portfolio.

We will continue to support the **North East Combined Authority** and the **North East Local Enterprise Partnership** to deliver the Strategic Economic Plan for the North East Region. Seven councils have been brought together to create a strategic authority with powers over transport, economic development and regeneration.

In addition to delivering our 2015/16 programme of **cultural, sporting and community based events**, which will continue to raise the profile of the county and contribute significantly to our local economy; we will investigate how we can increase tourism opportunities across the county. We will be completing a feasibility study of Bishop Auckland Town Hall and its links to Auckland Castle as well as determining the feasibility of a further science museum at Shildon.

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. To establish sustainable communities and improve the housing offer in County Durham a number of key projects have been identified for delivery over the next three years.

One key project is the delivery of our first **new build housing scheme for market sale and rent**. The overall project will provide over new 300 homes subject to the satisfactory completion of a pilot scheme in Newton Aycliffe, which will provide 60 homes.

The delivery of the **Digital Durham** programme will provide superfast broadband to all businesses homes and communities in the county.

We have also maintained subsidies of bus routes in rural areas in 2015/16 and operate a number of schemes to support the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors and encourage diversification of rural economies through the Rural Development Programme.

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. One of our priorities is to increase the employment rate and prepare for a higher level skills workforce in County Durham. To enable this, key projects were identified for delivery, including the delivery of **Pre-Employment Opportunities** through a range of initiatives County-wide including skills support for the unemployed, targeted recruitment training and apprenticeship programme involving the subsidising of 350 apprenticeships to support people into work and to also sustain and improve people's employment potential.

We will also deliver **Post Employment Opportunities** through a range of initiatives County-wide including skills support for the workforce, youth employment programme and mental health trailblazer to support people into work and to also sustain and improve people's employment potential. We will deliver skills support for work with businesses with workforce development enquiries and work with the engineering and manufacturing sector to encourage skills development.

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. County Durham's versatile economy needs a balanced environment for innovation and growth. To enable further development of businesses, a number of key projects have been identified for delivery.

One of the projects is NETpark in Sedgefield, which celebrated its tenth birthday in 2014, is the North East's leading science, engineering and technology park and has received funding of £12.9m for the **expansion of NETPark** which will support the creation of 800 jobs over the next 3 years both at the park itself and as part of the construction

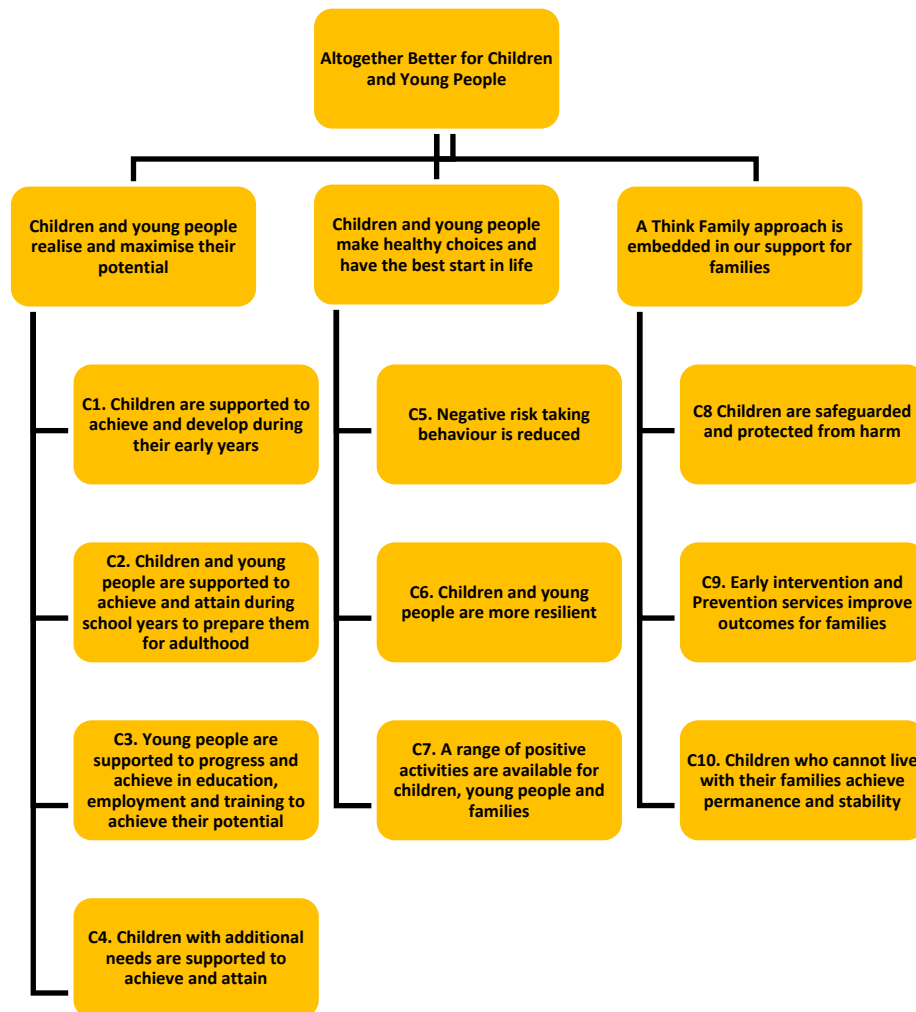
We will continue to lead the **North East Satellite Application Catapult Centre** to raise the profile of the use of technology and data satellite applications with North East businesses. The Catapult Centre offers opportunities and partnerships to unlock market opportunities within the North East which will benefit local and national economies. The centre will ensure the successful commercialisation of new technology and innovations by cementing the UK's position as a key player in the satellite technology sector.

We will also work with the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and the County Durham Economic Partnership to develop a £12m EU funded programme to deliver **access to finance support** targeted at County Durham businesses

Summary

<p>Going Well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have supported the inward investment of Atom, which has decided to locate its headquarters in Durham City. The business will create up to 400 jobs as it builds a bank serving customers across the UK. • Hitachi Rail Europe will be operational from 2015 in their new premises in Newton Aycliffe, creating over 800 jobs. • We are the first local authority nationally to refurbish all of our Gypsy Roma Traveller sites through sponsorship from the Homes and Communities Agency Programme. 	<p>Look Out For:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Lumiere' light festival will take place in November 2015 • Completion of the Sunderland Bridge Roundabout in Durham • Implementation of the multi-operator ticketing system across the County's bus network • Old Shire Hall in Durham City will be transformed into a hotel. • We will be transferring our remaining housing stock to the Durham Housing Company
<p>Cause for Concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An additional piece of work will be to consider the planning inspector's interim report and establish the next stages of developing the County Durham Plan. • The approval of the EU Growth Fund programme has been delayed by the Government until summer 2015 • There are some technical difficulties with the 'Real Time Traveller Information System' that will delay the installation. 	<p>Did you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of Q3 2014/15 2192 planning applications were received • 840 net homes were completed between April 2014 and December 2014 • 817,717 visitors clicked on the 'thisisdurham' website in 2013/14 • 144 empty homes have been brought back into use between April and December 2014

Altogether Better for Children and Young People



Our Vision

We support the overarching, multi-agency strategy for the delivery of priorities for children and young people in County Durham.

Working with the Children and Families Partnership, we aim to ensure that effective services are delivered in the most efficient way to improve the lives of children, young people and families in the county. We will continue to support children and young people from their early years through their school years and on to employment, training or apprenticeships.

The vision is for all children, young people and families in County Durham to be safe and healthy and to be given the opportunity to believe, achieve and succeed. To help achieve our vision, Altogether Better for Children and Young People has the following high level objectives:

1. Children and young people realise and maximise their potential

We want to ensure that children and young people in County Durham are supported and encouraged to 'believe, achieve and succeed', whatever their aspirations.

It is widely recognised that the early years of a child's life have a powerful influence on the rest of his/her life. We will **implement the Early Years Strategy** by creating sufficient nursery places to accommodate 75% of disadvantaged two year olds in the county to ensure readiness for school. Through **restructuring the Children's Centres** which provide a service for children up to five years old in County Durham we will also ensure that a more targeted and effective approach to family support is established, which will provide improved outcomes for children and make services more accessible.

We want to ensure that children and young people are able to thrive in the environment in which they live and learn in order to achieve their very best. **Increasing the participation of young people in education, employment and training** is a key priority for us and will be addressed through the county's 'Believe, Achieve and Succeed' Improving Progression Plan. This demonstrates our commitment to provide opportunities for all groups in society, including care leavers, young people who offend, teenage parents, and Gypsy Roma Traveller communities. We will do this by implementing the reviewed personal advisor service to ensure that there is a clear focus on the effective progression of young people who are not in education, employment or training, and we will work with the Improving Progression Partnership to ensure that clear progression pathways are in place for young people to progress post 16 to Level 3 and encourage additional support to be made available for young people previously eligible for free school meals.

Educational achievement and attainment remains a key priority for us. We will respond to the government's changes in the curriculum, through the provision of **appropriate challenge, intervention and support to assist schools to improve educational attainment** in both primary and secondary schools, to continue to narrow the attainment gap for vulnerable children and young people with those of their peers. We will monitor, challenge and intervene in schools where success rates are not improving fast enough and ensure that effective plans are in place to support those pupils who are not making the expected levels of progress. We will provide additional support to those young people who have behavioural or emotional issues with the aim of improving their school attendance and educational attainment and reducing the need for excluding them from school. This will be done through professionals from the school, One Point and other agencies working together in an innovative way called the **Team Around the School model** which will provide early help and engage young people in fun but challenging and appropriate activities which enable them to explore and manage those feelings and behaviours which are preventing them from engaging positively in school life.

We will aim to meet the needs of children with special educational needs through the implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy. This will also result in the **improvement of educational outcomes for children with special educational needs** by implementing Education, Health and Care assessments and providing support. We will further develop the Local Offer to include feedback from service users and young people. We will also review the

educational placement process for children with special educational needs including those in the non-maintained and independent sector. We will lead the implementation of the **Youth Employment Initiative programme** for County Durham to tackle youth unemployment in the county. This will provide activities to develop young people's employability skills and tailored pre-employment support, underpinned by work with employers to increase the number of employment opportunities for young people. We will also improve employment of looked after children by creating apprenticeship/training schemes for care leavers.

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

Children and young people need the best possible start if they are to be successful and thrive later in life. We want to provide support and promote healthy living from an early age, providing opportunities and choice for young people to participate in a range of sport, leisure and physical activities, helping to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

We will implement statutory changes in relation to the commissioning of **Health Visitors and the Family Nurse Partnership**, as this responsibility is transferred to local authorities from NHS England in October 2015.

We will support children, young people and their families to take part in **positive activities which reduce negative and sexual health risk-taking behaviours**, for example, smoking, drinking alcohol and teenage conceptions. This will aim to encourage children and young people to be more resilient through being able to look after themselves and others by making positive decisions about their behaviour and lifestyle. We will focus particularly on ensuring that vulnerable young people have access to this support. We will provide a wide range of physical activity opportunities across County Durham to support more active lifestyles for children and young people and contribute towards tackling 'lifestyle conditions'.

Through our **Youth Support Strategy** we will focus on **delivering targeted support to young people vulnerable to poor outcomes**. Working with the voluntary and community sector, we will provide a range of positive activities which will be targeted at those children and young people who are most in need.

Emotional health and wellbeing is crucial in the development of healthy, resilient children and young people. Some children and young people, however, may have mental health needs. In order to address this we will develop and implement the **Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Plan** in partnership with key stakeholders, including NHS services. This will include **working together with partners to reduce incidents of self-harm by young people**. We will provide a range of support to schools to tackle bullying and harassment.

We will also provide support to encourage breastfeeding and work with partners to reduce the number of women who smoke during pregnancy.

3. A Think Family approach is embedded in our support for families

'Think Family' is a multi-agency approach which seeks to provide coordinated support to those families which have problems and cause problems to the community around them. It requires all agencies to consider the needs of the whole family when working with individual members of it. To 'Think Family' is to understand that children's problems do not sit in isolation from their parents and that parents' problems impact on their children.

The complex issues faced by families who are in need of help often cannot be addressed by a single agency but demand a co-ordinated response, especially for families who have children with additional needs. Through the use of a range of methods to support families, we will work with the most vulnerable families across County Durham to promote positive outcomes. The **implementation of the Early Help Strategy** will allow the delivery of effective early intervention and prevention services to families in County Durham, whilst continuing to provide additional support to protect children and young people who need it. The council propose to deliver a new approach to social work, learning from past initiatives. The intention of this new approach is to meet the needs of children sooner by addressing the root causes of the problems and so reduce the number of families who are re-referred for support. This will be underpinned by a significant programme of workforce development to give our staff new skills and attitudes through training, mentoring and challenge. We will create 10 early help and social work teams across the county to deliver this which will significantly increase the range, access, quality and effectiveness of services for the whole family across all their needs. We also plan to develop alliances with the third sector in all areas of the county to build capacity and sustainable change for families. We will also significantly enhance service user engagement to help improve the relationship between professionals and service users. The bid to the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme was successful and will be used to fund this improvement work.

We will support our workforce to assertively identify, help and support children, young people and families to stop their needs developing and to enable them to meet positive outcomes. **A single support plan for the whole family** will be provided which will clearly indicate the objectives of the family and the associated responsibilities of the family and practitioners.

The Think Family approach is also embedded in our 'Stronger Families' programme (known nationally as Troubled Families) whereby we ensure that children and young people are kept safe from harm and that vulnerable families receive the support they need. Through implementation of Phase II of this programme, we will be able to offer support to a broader range of families if they meet at least two of the following criteria:-

- Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- Children who have not been attending school regularly
- Children who need help – either identified as in need or subject to a Child Protection Plan
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion, or young people at risk of worklessness
- Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
- Parents and children with a range of health problems

We will link in to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, which aims to achieve faster and more consistent responses to concerns about vulnerable children. We will also **evaluate the multi-agency challenge process in collaboration with the Local Safeguarding Children Board** to provide an opportunity for challenges regarding the child protection process to be raised in a timely way, which leads to improved outcomes for children and young people.

We will implement the **Looked After Children Reduction Strategy** to provide effective alternatives to care and create permanent places for children and young people, as well as reduce the number of looked after children reported as missing from care.

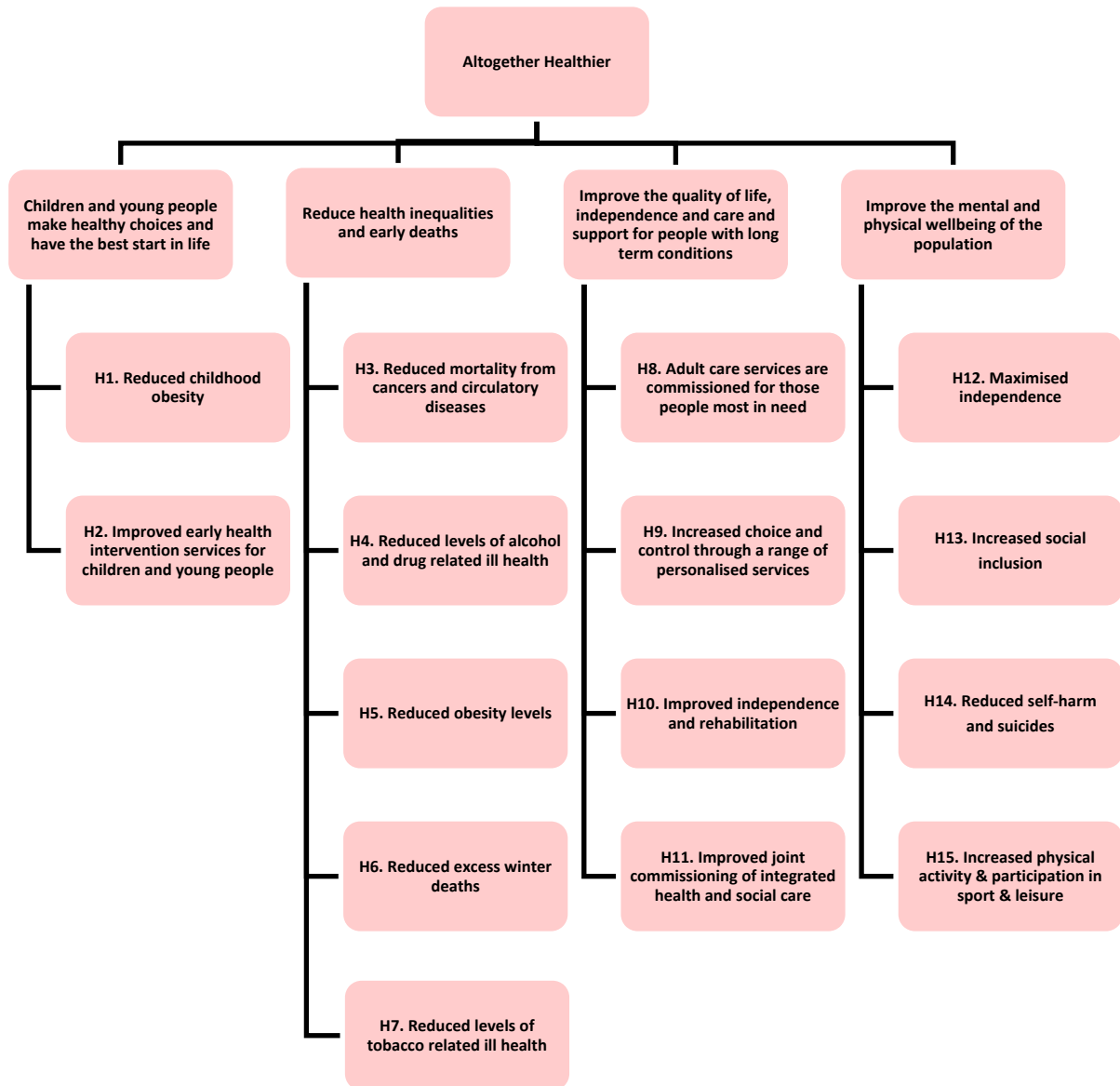
We will provide support to young people in their caring role, by reviewing the carer's card to **give young carers access to a wider range of services**. The card offers discounts and concessions at retail and leisure venues throughout County Durham.

We will improve engagement with children and young people and their families by establishing children, young people and parent forums and electronic surveys, so that standards within children's social care are met and children and young people are appropriately safeguarded

Summary

<p>Going Well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 932 families in County Durham have been 'turned around' through the Stronger Families programme to October 2014; County Durham is in the top 20% nationally for 'turning around' Troubled Families.• There has been a 25% reduction in children and young people not in education, employment or training in 2014/15• In 2013/14, 65% of Durham's pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C (or the equivalent), compared to 63.8% of pupils nationally.	<p>Look Out For:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The development of a comprehensive Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Plan, which will aim to support children and young people who experience mental health problems.• From 1 October 2015, we will take on commissioning responsibility for public health services for children aged 0-5, enabling a whole system approach to health improvement services and service delivery.
<p>Cause for Concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less of our looked after children achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs than anticipated.• The rate of young people (10-24yrs) admitted to hospital as a result of self-harm is higher than the national rate.• Alcohol related hospital admission rates for children and young people under 18 years of age are higher than the regional and national rates	<p>Did you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Since the First Contact Service was established in April 2014, there has been a 33% reduction in those entering statutory services.• There has been an 81% fall in first time entrants to the youth justice system since 2007/08 in County Durham.

Altogether Healthier



Our Vision

The health of the people in County Durham has improved significantly over recent years but remains worse than the England average. We know that there is a clear link between poor health outcomes and deprivation and that levels of deprivation are higher and life expectancy is lower in the county than the England average. Health inequalities also remain persistent and pervasive.

Working with the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board, the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015/18 outlines a vision and objectives for the next three years. The vision we share is to 'improve the health and wellbeing of the people of County Durham and reduce health inequalities'. Central to this vision is the fact that decisions about the services provided to service users, carers and patients should be made as locally as possible, involving the people who use them. Our vision is also shaped by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for County Durham and the Care Act 2014.

We will focus on providing social care support to those who are eligible to receive it, joining up services with partners and giving people more choice over the services provided to meet their eligible needs. We will also focus on providing support to people in our communities who are particularly vulnerable to social isolation or loneliness, as this can affect their quality of life and wellbeing.

To help achieve our vision, Altogether Healthier has the following high level objectives:

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

What happens to children before they are born and in their early years can affect their health and opportunities later in life. Those who grow up in a safe environment and have a healthy relationship with their parents and peers are more likely to do better as they go through life. Supporting children and young people to be healthy and to reach their full potential through offering support at the earliest opportunity is, therefore, vital to them achieving successful outcomes.

We want to help children to be as healthy as possible, by preventing illness and encouraging healthy behaviours. We will continue to **support women to start and continue to breastfeed their babies**, and provide support to families and children to **develop and sustain a healthy weight**, through providing strategic leadership to support partners in the county to achieve UNICEF Stage 3 baby-friendly accreditation and through implementing actions from the National School Food Plan.

To improve early health intervention services for children and young people, we will **review the 5-19 school nursing service** and ensure that a high quality service is delivered which is value for money and meets the needs of children and young people.

Working with partners across the county we will **implement the Unintentional Injuries Strategy** to reduce accidental injuries in children and young people and ensure quality of care for those involved in accidental injury. This will involve collating and sharing injury profiles, including Accident and Emergency Department attendances, with relevant partners to help plan and evaluate injury prevention programmes.

2. Reduce health inequalities and early deaths

Although health in County Durham has improved over recent years and people now live longer lives, the rate of progress has not been equal across the county and health inequalities are still evident. We will **implement the Wellbeing for Life service** to address factors affecting health and wellbeing and to tackle health inequalities in County Durham. We will do this by taking a holistic approach to lifestyle and other relevant issues which impact on people's health, for example housing and employment.

Lifestyle choices remain a key area of focus to reduce premature deaths and many people in County Durham continue to make poor lifestyle choices, compared to England averages. The development of a **Healthy Weight Strategic Framework** for County Durham will promote the benefits of a healthy diet and improve access to physical activity, by encouraging and supporting people to walk and cycle more.

Alcohol is a significant contributor to ill-health and rates of hospital stays for alcohol-related harm remain significantly higher in the county than the England average. We will **implement the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy** to raise awareness of the dangers and mitigate the harm caused by alcohol through social marketing campaigns. We will also examine the best approaches to tackling alcohol related harm in public houses and other licensed venues as part of a wider review of specialist drug and alcohol provision. A new **Drug Strategy** was agreed by the council and partners this year. The aims of this strategy are to prevent harm, restrict supply, minimise the impact of drugs and build recovery within communities and families. This strategy will be rolled out to provide training and education to support individuals, professionals, communities and families to address the harm caused by drugs and sustain a future for individuals to live a drug free healthy life. A contract for drug and alcohol treatment services has recently been commissioned and treatment centres will commence in 2015. A social marketing plan will be implemented to raise awareness of drugs, targeting schools and families and train professionals to advise and support on addiction.

We will undertake social marketing campaigns to **raise awareness about the harm of alcohol** and agree the best approaches to tackling alcohol-related harm in pubs, other venues and places, as part of the wider review of specialist drug and alcohol provision.

We will develop a **substance related deaths group** and **increase access to abstinence based programmes**.

Cancer and cardiovascular disease contribute significantly to the gap in life expectancy between County Durham and England and as such remain priority areas for action. Through **raising the profile of cancer awareness and earlier diagnosis** we aim to encourage the uptake of cancer screening programmes, whilst **targeting access to the Health Check Programme** in County Durham to people **at greater risk of developing cardiovascular disease**. This will involve expanding Check4Life health checks into all GP practices in County Durham. Smoking is the biggest single contributor to shorter life expectancy. However, a participation rate in smoking cessation services has recently declined. This is a national trend. We therefore intend to **review and modernise stop smoking services**. This will involve looking at best practice, consultation with interested parties, market testing and engagement

and procurement or negotiation of a new contract over the forthcoming year. The council will also implement a **smoke free play areas initiative** across the county at outdoor play areas and play parks to help reduce tobacco related ill health.

We will work to improve the quality of life for those with underlying health conditions by developing and commissioning interventions to **address the impact of fuel poverty** through improving energy efficiency of homes. This will involve raising awareness of fuel poverty among professionals who deal with vulnerable people through the delivery of a briefing programme to health and social care staff on how to make referrals to the appropriate organisations for help. This includes energy saving improvements through Warm Up North such as central heating, double glazing and home insulation, advice on discounts on fuel bills and benefit payments and signposting to community oil buying schemes for those with oil fired heating systems.

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

The number of people with long term chronic conditions requiring health and social care services in County Durham is forecast to increase. Those requiring additional support to maintain independence in their own homes is also expected to rise. An increasingly older population will see increased levels of disability and long term conditions and will significantly increase the number of people who provide care to family members or friends.

We will implement a new home loans service and identify opportunities for minor adaptations, through the assessment process, to support more people at home.

We will support adults with autism to access preventative services and remain independent in their own homes.

Through the Care Act 2014, the government is changing the care and support system so that it focuses more clearly on people's wellbeing, supporting them to live independently for as long as possible. Through **implementation of the Care Act**, we will help people to have more control over their assessment and care planning by **implementing an integrated transitions team** between children's and adults services and **reviewing the assessment process to take into account additional demand from self-funders**.

We will offer more choice and control to the adult social care users through providing **joined up social care and personal health budgets**. We aim to increase the number of personal health budgets administered through the direct payments process by working with health partners to join up social care and health budgets. This will also help to deliver greater efficiencies for the council and health partners.

People with poor health, who have had an accident, have a disability or impairment should have the opportunity to learn or regain some skills they may have lost. This will give them greater confidence and help them maintain their independence. This is the aim of the reablement service. We will increase the number of service users who are supported through the **reablement service** to increase their independence.

We will develop a neighbourhood network model, linked to the Wellbeing for Life service, to empower people in communities to develop their knowledge and skills to promote their own wellbeing and improve individual and community resilience.

In the June 2013 spending review the Government announced a £3.8bn **Better Care Fund** (BCF) to ensure a transformation in integrated health and social care. County Durham's allocation is £43.7m. The BCF is a pooled budget which will be deployed locally on health and social care initiatives from 2015/16. The BCF Plan will support the aim of providing people with the right care, in the right place, at the right time, with a significant emphasis upon care in community settings and the express aim of reducing admissions and readmissions to secondary care and alleviating pressures on the acute health sector. The vision for the BCF in County Durham is to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of County Durham and reduce health inequalities. This is a major programme of change for the council and its partners and is being managed through a series of seven workstreams. These are looking at:

- **Short term intervention services** - This includes intermediate care community services, reablement, falls and occupational therapy services
- **Equipment and adaptations for independence** - This includes telecare, disability adaptations and the Home Equipment Loans Service
- **Supporting independent living** – This includes mental health prevention services, floating support and supported living and community alarms and wardens
- **Supporting carers** – This includes carers breaks, carer's emergency support and support for young carers
- **Social inclusion** - This includes local coordination of an asset based approach to increase community capacity and resilience to provide low level services
- **Care home support** - This includes care home and acute and dementia liaison services
- **Transforming care** - This includes maintaining the current level of eligibility criteria, the development of IT systems to support joint working and implementing the Care Act

4. Improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the population

Good mental wellbeing and resilience are fundamental to our physical health, relationships, education, training, work and to achieving our potential; this is the foundation for wellbeing and the effective functioning of individuals and communities.

We will **develop and implement programmes to increase resilience and wellbeing** and roll out the **Mental Health Implementation Plan** to focus on the mental wellbeing of the whole population, the physical health of people with mental health problems, people's experience of care, and experience of stigma and discrimination. This includes work as part of the Crisis Care Concordat (improving outcomes for people experiencing mental health crisis) and self-harm and suicide prevention particularly amongst vulnerable groups. It also includes child and

adolescent mental health services. An accessible 24 hour support service will be developed to enable people to get advice on what services are available locally which are most appropriate to their needs.

A new service called the Wellbeing for Life Service will commence in April 2015. This is being delivered by a consortium of public and voluntary sector organisations to work with individuals and families to set personal wellbeing plans to improve health around diet and nutrition, increased physical activity, healthy weight, reduced smoking, improved mental wellbeing and signposting to other services such as housing and community learning.

It is recognised that maximising independence for people is an important contributor to positive mental health. We will develop and implement programmes to increase resilience and wellbeing whilst developing a more integrated response for people with both mental and physical health problems. We will work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector to identify those who are, or who are at potential risk of becoming socially isolated by undertaking local campaigns to raise awareness amongst the public and within the workplace to reduce stigma and discrimination towards people who experience mental health problems.

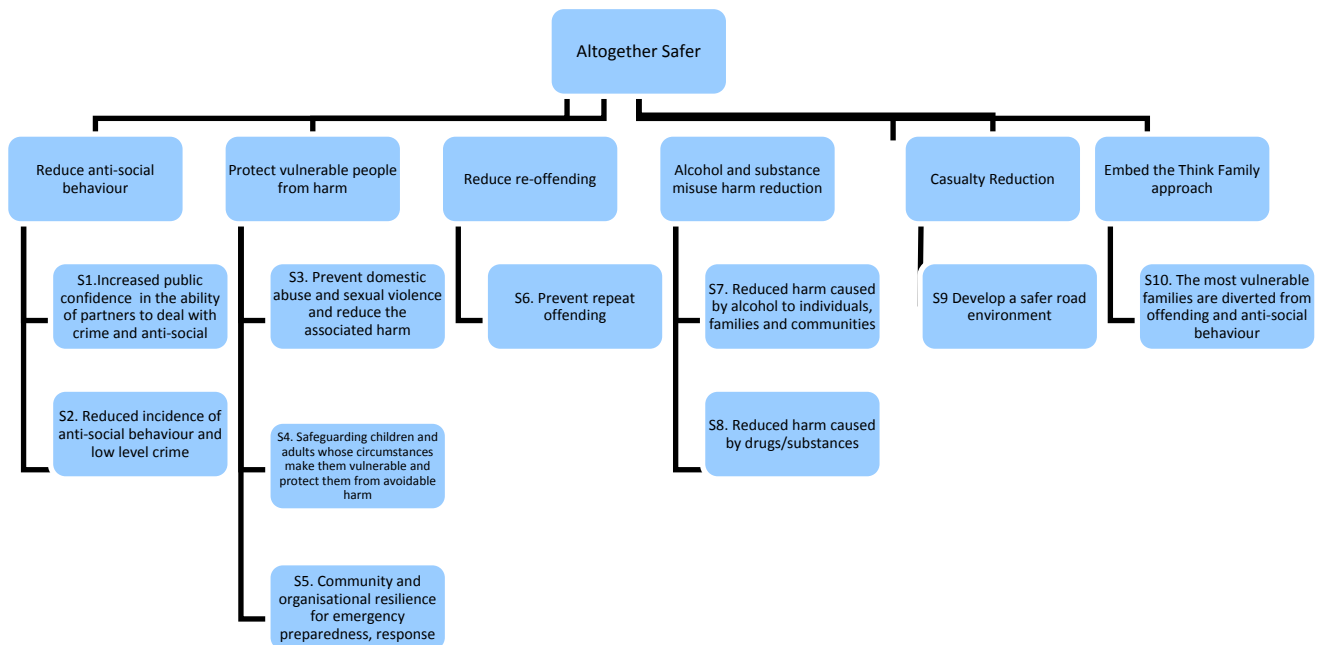
We will implement the Dementia Strategy to **support people who have dementia** to live in their own home for as long as possible, help them to maintain independence, and provide them with end of life/palliative care which ensures dignity and respect. We will carry out the accreditation process for Dementia Friendly Communities in pilot towns in Chester-Le-Street and Barnard Castle. We will also review the provision of memory cafés across the county to ensure that coverage is appropriate and that it is meeting the needs of people living with dementia and their carers.

Through the **implementation of the Physical Activity Delivery Plan**, we will provide a wide range of physical activity opportunities for local people and **develop the culture and sport core offer** in County Durham so that more active lifestyles can be supported.

Summary

<p>Going Well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Male and female life expectancy has been improving over time.• The rate of teenage conceptions in the county has decreased faster than the North East rate over the last 10 years.• A Better Care Fund Plan has been agreed for County Durham, which will support work to integrate health and social care initiatives locally.• We are achieving our target of 93% of social care service users reporting that the help and support they received has made their quality of life better.	<p>Look Out For:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Health and Wellbeing Board 'Big Tent' Engagement Event in October 2015. In 2014, over 240 people attended to provide views and contribute towards health and wellbeing services in County Durham.• The roll out of 'Dementia Friendly Communities', which will focus on improving inclusion and quality of life for people living with dementia - first two sites Barnard Castle and Chester le Street.
<p>Cause for Concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smoking related deaths are significantly higher in County Durham than the England average.• More adults in County Durham have an unhealthy weight than the England average.• Breastfeeding initiation and prevalence rates in County Durham are significantly lower than the national rate and also below regional levels.• Recorded prevalence of many long term conditions is greater in County Durham than England, for example diabetes, hypertension, chronic heart disease.	<p>Did you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have implemented a suicide and attempted suicide alert process for young people at risk of suicide or self-harm.• A Palliative and End of Life Care plan for the county will provide help for those diagnosed with a life-limiting condition and also their carers.

Altogether Safer



Our Vision

As a responsible authority of the Safe Durham Partnership, we work closely with partner organisations to tackle crime and disorder in County Durham and play a key role in the development of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan.

The Safe Durham Partnership Plan describes the ‘Altogether Safer’ priority objectives and outlines the strategy for tackling crime and disorder and responding to these priorities. The Plan demonstrates how strong leadership, planning, performance management and problem-solving will result in action plans which aim to deliver positive outcomes for our communities.

We will continue to support the Safe Durham Partnership in delivering on shared priorities, building on achievements and working together to meet the challenges ahead. Working in partnership is essential to achieving our vision, which is for

County Durham to be 'a county where every adult and child will be, and will feel, safe.'

An emerging issue for us is counter terrorism, as recent national and international events have led to the government increasing the national threat level to 'severe'. The Counter Terrorism and Security Bill places local authorities at the heart of 'Prevent', the government's strategy for preventing people being drawn into terrorism and so, together with partner organisations, we will need to build on existing work to respond to this emerging issue.

To help achieve our vision, Altogether Safer has the following high level objectives:

1. Reduce anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is linked to everyday problems such as noise, abandoned cars, litter, vandalism and intimidation and can affect people's happiness and pride in their local communities. Although reported anti-social behaviour has reduced over the past 5 years, it is still one of the main issues the people of County Durham want the police and partners to tackle.

As a result, we will support the work of the Safe Durham Partnership through the development of the **Safe Durham Partnership Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan** to identify what the crime and disorder issues are in the local area and how the partnership plans are responding to them.

There are many complex factors that contribute to ASB within our communities; deprivation, unemployment, alcohol and substance misuse being just a few examples. To be truly effective we must tackle these underlying causes, and one such initiative to address this is our **Community Action Team (CAT) Programme Scheme**, an eight week rolling programme which brings together residents and a range of organisations to identify and tackle local concerns such as housing, environmental concerns, noise, underage drinking and smoking. The CAT programme includes 5 priority area based initiatives per year.

The Safe Durham Partnership has been engaged in activity such as the 'Getting Involved Campaign' which encourages people to get involved with Neighbourhood Watch, Speed Watch and the Green Dog Walkers scheme. Initiatives such as Operation Aires engages young people in fun activity to raise awareness of the harm caused by alcohol and the impact it can have on behaviour.

The 'Multi-Agency Intervention Service' works with adults who persistently cause, anti-social behaviour or crime in order to change their behaviour. The service develops a package of support and intervention based on individual needs. It will help to resolve some of their problems and to stop further anti-social behaviour or crime being committed. The service also supports victims so they can be reassured that the offending behaviour will stop.

We will continue to work with partners to tackle ASB and low level crime and will **strengthen the effectiveness of the Joint Partnership Team** through improved sharing of information and intelligence, integrating the work of our Safer Neighbourhood Units with other community safety operations and fully utilising the combined range of enforcement powers available, including those set out in the new Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

2. Protect vulnerable people from harm

Protecting vulnerable people from harm has been identified as a key priority for us and our partners through the Safe Durham Partnership and work taken forward is closely linked to the work of the local Safeguarding Adults Board and Local Safeguarding Children Board, where appropriate to do so. This priority includes effectively responding to, and better protecting, those vulnerable individuals and communities most at risk of serious harm, improving the safety of domestic abuse victims and their children, reducing repeat incidents of domestic abuse, as well as supporting those who are a victim of sexual violence.

We will work with partners to implement the **Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Delivery Plan** to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse in County Durham. We will do this through implementing the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group joint training plan, taking action to reduce the risk of victims and bringing perpetrators to justice by implementing the new integrated service model.

Work will also be undertaken to ensure the implementation of **the first strategic plan for the new statutory Safeguarding Adults Board**, in line with the requirements of the Care Act 2014.

We have a statutory duty, as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to provide an Emergency Response Service. We are supported by Durham and Darlington Civil Contingencies Unit and other key voluntary agencies, to ensure that it provides **organisational resilience and emergency preparedness**, response and recovery arrangements through its Emergency Response Team.

3. Reduce re-offending

The government's objective to reduce crime and the number of victims of crime demonstrates a continued focus on re-offending.

We will continue to support the Safe Durham Partnership in delivery of the Reducing Re-offending Strategy 2014/17. We will support effective offender management interventions such as Checkpoint, Integrated Offender Management, Womens Diversion Scheme and Restorative Justice, to reduce levels of re-offending.

We will implement the **County Durham Youth Offending Service Youth Justice Plan 2014/16** and reduce first time entrants to the youth justice system, by implementing a quality assurance framework and improvement plan for pre-court work and working with partners to implement the Out of Court Disposals scrutiny process. Durham and Cleveland Local Criminal Justice Boards are working in partnership to implement and operate an out of court disposal scrutiny process. Out of court disposals allow the police to deal quickly and proportionately with low level, often first time offending which could be more appropriately resolved without going to

court. It provides the opportunity for interventions to be put in place to prevent further offending and gives prompt resolution for victims. Further improvements will be made to the assessment and planning interventions framework which is used to assess why individuals commit a crime and how the person can be prevented from further offending.

We will work with partners to implement a restorative approaches training programme for DCC staff, to enable them to deliver restorative practice within their role so that re-offending is reduced and people are kept out of the criminal justice system.

We will continue to provide the Safe Durham Partnership with strategic level co-ordination of partnership issues relating to the Ministry of Justice 'Transforming Rehabilitation' programme during the transition of probation services across County Durham. We will work with the National Probation Service, Durham Tees Valley Probation Community Rehabilitation Company and HMP Durham through the contract post award process and delivery of new working arrangements.

4. Alcohol and substance misuse harm reduction

Alcohol and substance misuse contribute to a significant proportion of crime and anti-social behaviour. Alcohol is a contributory factor in many incidents of domestic abuse and sexual violence. It is also a significant factor in child neglect and child protection. Alcohol consumption plays a substantial part in homicides and domestic homicides, whilst alcohol misuse causes harm to people's health, mental health and can impact on the ability of individuals to access or sustain employment.

Drug misuse is a serious issue not only to the health and wellbeing of the individual affected by it, but to that of their families and the wider community. Tackling drug misuse requires a co-ordinated approach involving a wide range of partners.

We will continue to **implement the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy** to reduce the impact of alcohol-related crime and disorder. As part of this work, we will improve the sharing of alcohol-related violent crime data between hospital emergency departments and partners and use the shared data to prevent alcohol-related violent crime.

Our multi-agency alcohol seizure procedure has been highlighted as national good practice by the Home Office Alcohol Team. It has contributed to the reduction in anti-social behaviour and has helped us understand more about how children and young people access alcohol. This has provided the opportunity for them to engage and benefit from early intervention.

We and the Safe Durham Partnership will implement the **County Durham Drug Strategy 2014/17** to reduce drug use and drug-related incidents and to sustain a future for individuals to live a drug free and healthy life, whilst minimising the impact on communities and families.

The 'Recovery Academy Durham' is just one of our services aimed at building recovery. Clients benefit from working with trained peer therapists who have had similar experiences. After the client has graduated they are offered a secondary

programme to help with education, employment, training and ongoing recovery support.

Following the tragic deaths of three university students in the river Wear in Durham city over a fourteen month period, the council has been working closely with the university, the police, Durham Students' Union and the cathedral as the City Safety Group to agree and implement a series of actions and measures to improve personal and riverside safety in the city. These actions include working with students and licensed premises in the city to ensure that alcohol is supplied and consumed in a safe and sensible way.

5. Casualty Reduction

Overall road casualty numbers in the county are lower than national levels and there has been a general downward trend. Although 2013 saw the fewest number of road casualties since detailed records began in 1979, concerns remain about the level and severity of injuries to vulnerable road users, particularly children.

Numbers of people who have been killed or seriously injured remains small. The vast majority of accidents result in slight injuries. An analysis of location data for all child casualties in County Durham over a four year period shows that the majority (86%) of incidents occur within a 600 metre radius of a school. Furthermore, there are 33 schools within the county that experience collisions of more than twice the mean within this radius. National accident statistics show that pedestrians knocked down by a vehicle travelling at 40mph have only a 5% chance of surviving; at 30mph it is 45% but at 20mph, the chances of surviving rise to 95%. Reducing speed also reduces the chances of having a collision at all.

The council has therefore agreed to **introduce part-time 20mph limits** on main and distributor roads around the 33 schools with the highest accident rates, subject to local consultation and scheme design.

6. Embed the Think Family approach

'Think Family' is a multi-agency approach which seeks to provide early intervention for those families which have problems and cause problems to the community around them. It requires all agencies to consider the needs of the whole family when working with individual members of it. To 'Think Family' is to understand that children's problems do not sit in isolation from their parents, and that parents' problems impact on their children. This approach ensures that all family members are able to get the support they need, at the right time, to help their children achieve good outcomes. This means making sure that families receive co-ordinated, multi-agency, solution-focused support.

The Safe Durham Partnership and the council have adopted this approach in order to provide families with the best possible opportunity to avoid involvement in crime and disorder and to reduce their impact on services. This will lead to financial benefits and will present social benefits for areas of the county where communities suffer most.

The County Durham Stronger Families Programme is currently on track to turn around its targeted number of 1320 families by May 2015. Families have received help and support delivered with a 'Think Family' multi-agency approach coordinated

by a Lead Professional and a Team around the Family utilising a single multi-agency care plan in order to reduce duplication and maximise impact.

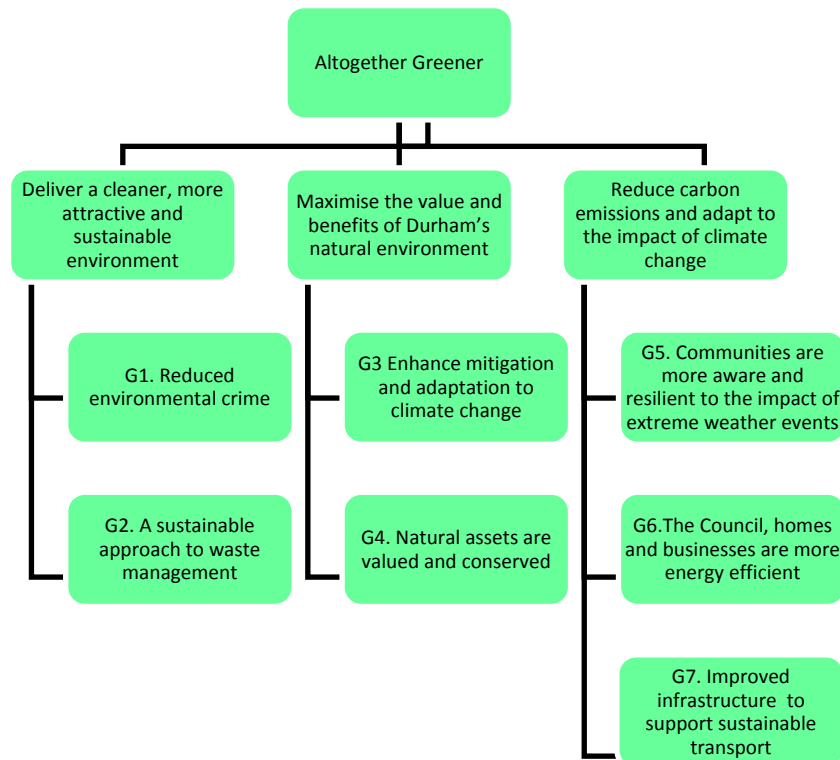
In June 2014, the Government announced plans to expand the Troubled Families Programme for a further five years from 2015/16 and to reach an additional 400,000 families across England; for Durham this means an additional 4000 families will be targeted. Due to County Durham's success in turning around the lives of families on the Stronger Families Programme it has been asked to enter the expanded programme early.

We will continue to develop and **train staff in restorative approaches for early intervention when working with families**, to prevent them from offending.

Summary

<p>Going Well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-social behaviour fell by 4.9% in 2013/14 and has fallen by two thirds since 2006/07. • The rate of adult re-offending has reduced by 65% for offenders within the Integrated Offender Management programme. • The number of first time entrants to the youth justice system reduced by 17% in 2013/14. • 93.6% of adult social care users surveyed reported that care and support services received helped them to feel safe and secure. • Repeat cases of domestic abuse are lower than the national average 	<p>Look Out For:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “Sorry’s Not Enough” domestic abuse campaign and a dedicated website for the public. • New tools and powers to tackle anti-social behaviour. • A new integrated drug and alcohol service delivering prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and promoting recovery. • A new Community Rehabilitation Company, ARCC (Achieving Real Change in the Community), delivering rehabilitation and offender management services. • Safe Places - a place to go for those who feel anxious, confused or unsafe.
<p>Cause for Concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not as many people have gone through drug treatment as we had hoped - a national trend. • A 9.7% rise in overall crime over 2013/14 is forecast to be followed by a 1.7% increase in total crime in 2014/15. • 11.7% of all crime was alcohol-related in 2013/14. • 15.3% of all anti-social behaviour incidents involved alcohol. • Increase to the national terrorist threat level to severe. • County Durham experiences significantly higher alcohol specific hospital admission rates than England for both men and women. 	<p>Did you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Care Connect emergency calls are dealt with in 60 minutes (somebody arrives at the property) • Due to success, County Durham was selected to start phase 2 of the Troubled Families programme early (known locally as Stronger Families). • County Durham has more households in a Neighbourhood Watch scheme than anywhere else in the country. • We are planning a new model to prevent domestic abuse and tackle perpetrators by challenging behaviours. • £500,000 external funding secured for a volunteer Safer Homes Project.

Altogether Greener



Our Vision

The key aims of the Altogether Greener priority theme are to make environmental improvements and drive sustainable development across the authority area. Key areas of focus include tackling the negative impacts of climate change; encouraging sustainability and energy efficiency; and improving the quality of our local environment.

The Altogether Greener agenda has had to be reconsidered and balanced in line with our diminishing resources and the priorities of our local communities. The need to work collaboratively with partners, residents and businesses to build collective ownership and action has never been greater.

To help achieve our vision Altogether Greener has the following high level objectives:

1. Deliver a cleaner, more attractive and sustainable environment

Research shows a person's local environment has a profound impact on their quality of life and wellbeing, with neglected environments creating a sense of unease which can create and/or intensify problems of anti-social behaviour. Our local communities recognise this link and consistently rank the quality of their local environment as important.

Over the next three years, we will be **reviewing our operational procedures in relation to street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance**, to ensure that streets and open spaces are consistently well-maintained and free of litter, dog fouling, graffiti and dumped rubbish. We will **reduce environmental crime** by continuing to

target those who deliberately blight our environment using multi-agency countywide programmes of improved intelligence, greater education and awareness, and tougher enforcement measures.

Delivery of the **Waste Programme** remains a key area of focus. The Waste Programme underpins our Municipal Waste Management Strategy, which places an emphasis on sustainable waste management, prioritising waste reduction, re-use and recycling. It will deliver significant cost and environmental savings through operational changes, reduced contract costs, elimination of landfill tax payments, increased recycling and energy generation.

Future improvement projects include: maximising the potential of our Waste Transfer Stations following significant capital investment; reviewing our approach to business waste in Durham City to improve cleanliness, harmonising collection arrangements for clinical waste, and implementing both the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) provision plan and the garden waste collection scheme.

However, success will not be achieved by us alone. To be truly successful we need to build a strong sense of community and increase the number of people engaged in the improvement of their own communities, for example, participation in 'in-bloom' initiatives. We will continue to build on environmental initiatives within schools and colleges, promote our environmental awareness programmes and encourage local volunteering.

2. Maximise the value and benefits of Durham's natural environment

Our natural environment is incredibly important. It provides employment, education, areas to enjoy, relax and reflect, as well as the resources and raw materials essential for life. In addition, research has consistently shown that engagement with 'green' environments by, for example, visiting the countryside, enjoying green spaces in towns and cities, watching wildlife or volunteering can provide significant physical, mental and social benefits. Therefore, as a society we need to value the natural environment and ensure it is protected for future generations.

We will continue to work with our partners and communities to deliver projects that will conserve and enhance the unique biodiversity, geo-diversity, landscape, rich heritage and cultural assets of County Durham. Through **landscape scale projects** delivered by various partnerships, we also work to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of specific landscape areas such as the North Pennines AONB and Durham Heritage Coast. We are also aware that resilient and healthy ecosystems across our rural and urban landscapes play a crucial role in absorbing and storing carbon, and thus helping to protect us from climate change.

Where budgets allow, and in line with community requirements, we will carry out improvements to enhance our urban parks and open spaces, for example, the commencement of an improvement programme for **Wharton Park** in Durham City. We will also be working with our communities to **maximise the use of allotments** and encourage sustainable food production.

We will continue to support delivery of the **Contaminated Land Strategy**, which outlines how we will identify historic sources of contamination and work with land owners to prevent, remedy or mitigate any harm or pollution that may have resulted, as well as **Air Quality Action Plans**, which set out how we will reduce air pollution levels and improve standards of air quality.

3. Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change.

The reality of climate change is now generally accepted and although it may bring some localised benefits, such as fewer winter deaths in temperate climates and increased food production in certain areas, the overall effects are likely to be overwhelmingly negative. In recent years, we have experienced more extreme weather events and we expect more major flooding incidents as well as hotter summers in the future.

As a reflection of the seriousness of climate change, European targets have been set that oblige us to achieve a 40% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. Our **Carbon Management Strategy** not only sets out how we will achieve this target but also how we will lessen the impact of the unavoidable consequences of climate change. Improvement projects underway include increasing the energy efficiency of our buildings, reducing the carbon footprint of our operations, retrofitting 41,000 street lights as part of the 6 year **Street Lighting Energy Reduction Programme** and incorporating Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS) to reduce surface water flooding and improve water quality at a local level. We are working through the North East partnership scheme **Warm Up North** to help households with energy saving improvements, for example central heating, double glazing and wall or loft insulation. The scheme can help private homeowners, rented property owners and those on low incomes meet upfront costs of making their properties more energy efficient.

We will continue to invest in a programme of improvements that will encourage and enable people to commute to work, education and services by sustainable modes of transport. One of such initiatives will be to develop and improve the **strategic cycle route network** across County Durham to provide improved links and access to main towns and rural locations. Not only would this enhance the environment, it would also contribute to the quality of people's lives, fitness, health and well-being.

Summary

Going Well:

- Our Street Lighting Energy Reduction Programme is 50% complete; more than 20,000 street lights retrofitted to date reducing energy costs by £450,000
- Over 1,100 households received installations to improve energy efficiency through 'Warm Up North' Scheme
- 1,700 people volunteered as part of the 2014 Big Spring Clean campaign. During the 3,000 volunteer hours, 1,200 bags of litter were collected and, trees and debris were removed from the River Wear in Durham City.
- Work is progressing with the development of a new cycle/walk multi user route between Shildon and Newton Aycliffe (Note: moved from 'Going Well' in Wealthier section)

Look Out For:

- A shared-use walking and cycling path in Aycliffe industrial estate (between Heighington station and Hitachi);
- Resurfacing of the national cycle network route 14 (Durham City Riverbanks);
- Construction of the next phase of the Great North Cycle Way between Chester le Street and Durham and a new shared use route between West Rainton and Carrville, which will become Cycling Super Routes.
- 2015 Heritage Open Days which will allow free access to nearly 70 venues across the county for 4 consecutive days in early September 2015
- Volunteering opportunities to help improve the local environment and make neighbourhoods a cleaner and greener place to live;
- Opportunities to make a valuable contribution to improving our countryside as a Volunteer Countryside Ranger
- 2015/16 Community Action Team Programme identifying the 10 locations across the county which are most in need of targeted interventions to tackle local housing and environmental issues
- 2015 Big Spring Clean (28th February to 18th April)

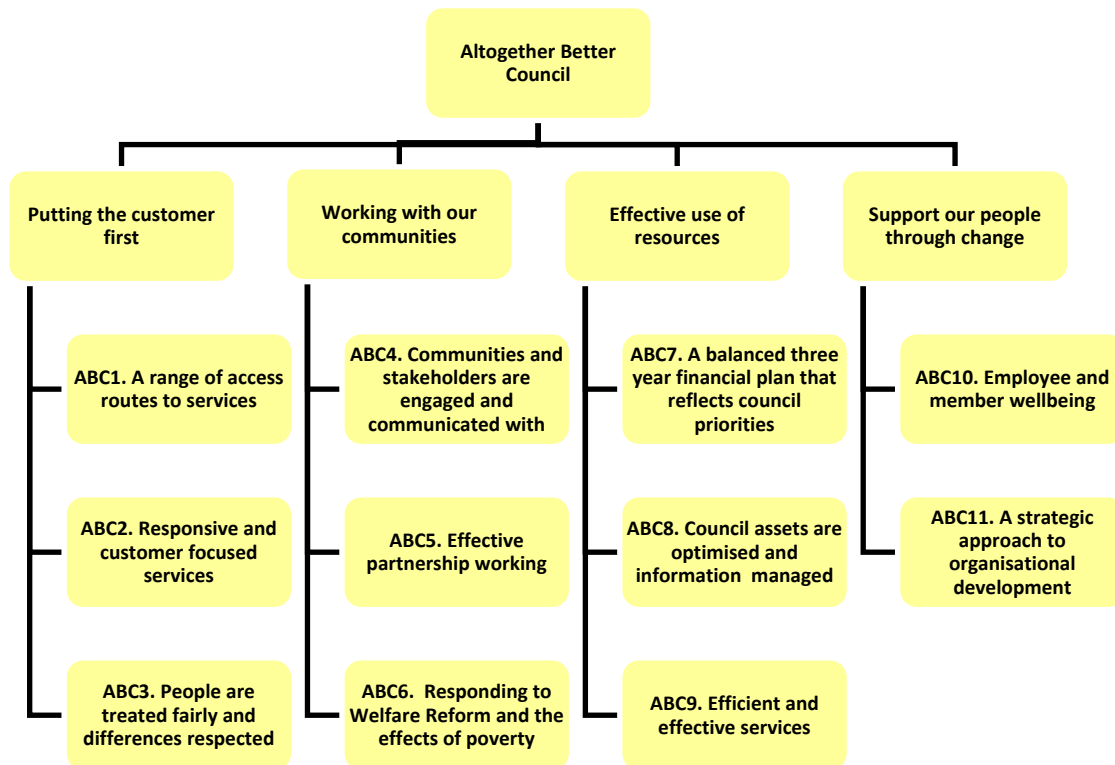
Cause for Concern:

- Increase in severe weather events; including prolonged winter snow, heavy rain storms, high winds

Did you know?

- 97.1% of municipal waste is now diverted from landfill
- More than 2,200 tonnes of furniture and household items were saved from disposal and provided for families on low incomes as part of the DCC's Reuse Scheme. The County Durham Refuse forum received a prestigious best Partnership Award in 2014 from the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee
- DCC were awarded 15 green flags for our parks, open spaces, countryside sites and cemeteries
- Durham City and Sedgefield were both being awarded a gold gilt award for their entries in Britain in Bloom 2014.

Altogether Better Council



Our Vision

Like much of the public sector, Durham County Council faces the dichotomy of rising demand for many of its services and reducing resources available to help deliver them. The future for local government therefore involves investigating new ways to manage demand such as reducing avoidable contact, providing self-service options for some of our simpler services and looking at new models of service delivery, often together with our communities. We also owe it to our taxpayers to ensure that our services are operating as efficiently as possible and that both our service performance and finances are effectively managed. The local authority of tomorrow is likely to look very different to our current setup. It is therefore important that we have a strategy in place to make sure that our organisation develops and that the transformation is made smoothly.

1. Putting the customer first

Technology is changing the way people interact and our customers are demanding faster, easier contact at a time and place that is convenient to them. Our **Customer First Strategy** sets out how we will meet this demand, putting the 'customer first' and providing cost effective services. The Customer First Strategy has three main outcomes.

- We will provide a range of effective and easy to use ways in which our customers can deal with us. A number of projects are being implemented to achieve this, including; **making our website easier to use, providing more self-service** and online facilities, using social media more widely, and **making better use of our buildings**. We will also ensure **our customers**

receive the right information, advice and support at their first point of contact, and that their information is held securely.

- It is important that we provide responsive and customer focussed services by **communicating clearly to our customers how and when services will be delivered**, and keeping them informed of progress. Our staff will be kept informed of customer needs through a programme of customer care training, which will improve the standard of customer interactions.
- We need to **use customer feedback to inform learning and improve services**. We will always take customer views into account before changing any aspect of our services, and following any change we will monitor its impact. We will continue to use feedback to shape service provision and let our customers know the difference it has made through the 'you said, we did' approach. We will also acknowledge where we have got it wrong and be clear on what we will do to put it right.
- We will treat people fairly through ensuring that any changes to council policies and the way that we do things is **properly assessed** to ensure that certain groups of people are not disproportionately affected by any changes.
- Another area of relevant council activity, putting the County's residents at the centre over the duration of this plan, will be the effective and efficient delivery of all **elections** in compliance with the Electoral Commission's performance standards, beginning with the Parliamentary General Election in May 2015.

2. Working with our communities

We have a reputation for working with our communities. We have carried out extensive consultation work on changes to our budgets with members of the public. Our 14 Area Action Partnerships are real catalysts for change in our local communities. We have introduced innovative participatory budgeting in our localities and have worked with a range of partners in ensuring that public services in County Durham are joined up.

- We will work with communities to commemorate the massive role that the people of County Durham played in **World War One** throughout the centenary of the conflict.
- We will develop the **Durham Ask** programme to transform the delivery of services through supporting organisations interested in running local facilities.
- As part of our work with communities and stakeholders, during 2015/16 we will undertake a full **review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme**, originally agreed following extensive consultation and adopted from April 2013.
- We recognise the powerful role that partners in the voluntary and community sector can play in the delivery of local services to residents. We will work with

Durham Community Action to deliver a **Centre for Volunteering and Social Enterprise** to help strengthen the capacity of this sector in the future.

- We will continue to manage changes introduced by the **Welfare Reform Act 2012** such as the proposed rollout of Universal Credit. We will also ensure that our policies take into account the effects of **poverty** on our residents.

3. Effective use of resources

It is imperative that we utilise all available resources both efficiently and effectively; this is especially the case when faced with unprecedented reductions in government funding requiring us to deliver savings of £225m between 2011 and 2018.

- To plan effectively over the medium term, we will produce a **rolling three-year financial plan** which reflects council priorities and feedback from budget consultation processes, forecasts government funding reductions and budget pressures, and identifies the savings required to ensure we can annually set a balanced budget.
- Detailed plans to meet the required individual savings will continue to be subject to the robust assurance process currently in place to ensure that all savings are achieved, and **managers will be supported** throughout this complex process of significant and ongoing organisational change, whilst managing budgets within cash limits.
- Phase II of our **Office Accommodation Project (OAP2)**, with its focus on identifying further efficiencies that can be delivered through the way in which we use our portfolio of office and public buildings.
- Underpinning this work on office accommodation are the delivery of our **ICT Strategy** and the Organisational Development Strategy, which together set out to link our future accommodation plans, to the development and design of Human Resource processes, whilst taking full advantage of emerging ICT technologies.
- With a view to releasing efficiencies, developing capacity and knowledge through the reduction of overheads, removing duplication of activity, management and support costs, and the sharing of specialist knowledge and skills, we will explore opportunities to **work collaboratively with external organisations**.
- We will ensure that the highest standards of **information governance** are being adhered to through our practices and procurement arrangements to ensure that personal data is adequately protected and also that we are being open and transparent in the publication of information.

4. Support our people through change

In the current climate we need to look at very different approaches to how services are delivered and ensure that the workforce is able to contribute by being enabled to be creative and flexible, and possess the right skills to respond positively in a changing environment.

- Our **Organisational Development Strategy** outlines our approach that connects people management and development with organisational improvements. The strategy includes an action plan which focuses on four overlapping themes that provide a coherent approach to improvement: a flexible workforce and workplace; employee engagement; leadership, learning and talent development; and health, safety and wellbeing.
- We need leaders and managers that can effectively empower, engage and motivate the workforce to deliver 'optimum' service delivery at a time of significant austerity. The **Durham Manager** programme has been designed to meet the development needs of our managers, in alignment with our corporate culture, values and priorities. Going forward we will continue to evaluate and develop the programme to support managers and meet the changing needs of the organisation.
- Effective learning and talent development activities will also be provided and utilised including extending learning and development through coaching, mentoring, **e-learning**, and working in partnership with other organisations. In line with our aspiration to achieve optimum individual and organisational performance, we will improve the level and quality of employee performance appraisals undertaken across the council.
- Establishing a flexible workforce and workplace will enable us to adapt to changing business needs, and enable individuals to embrace broader roles within the council, be resilient in a consistently changing environment and be equipped with the right skills to deliver our aims and objectives. To this end, the **Office Accommodation Programme II (OAP2)** will involve linking the development of Human Resources policy and processes with future workplace accommodation plans.
- Our **Health, Safety and Wellbeing** Strategy and associated action plan identifies how we implement the Health and Safety Policy in terms of practical solutions while enabling key strategic objectives to be identified and delivered. The health and safety team work with senior officers to ensure that visible and effective leadership guidance and advice is in place to enable informed health and safety decisions.
- We will explore opportunities to improve **efficiency and effectiveness** through exploring opportunities to collaborate with other organisations in the provision of local services. We will continue to monitor our performance and tackle areas that are underperforming.

Summary

<p>Going Well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget Managers utilising 'Business Intelligence' tool to enhance access to budget information• The ongoing development and delivery of our Medium Term Financial Plan and monitoring of MTFP savings• The external audit VfM conclusion identified that we have robust arrangements in place to secure financial resilience• Our innovative triage process for handling enquiries from residents affected by the Government's welfare reforms is helping people to stay in their home, improve their financial situation and find work	<p>Look Out For:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2015 Parliamentary Elections• Improved pathways and joint working between various agencies involved in the provision of Advice Services through the Advice in County Durham Partnership• Promotion of take-up for online access to Council Tax accounts, Business Rates benefits and e-billing, e-reminder and SMS texting
<p>Cause for Concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlements for 2015/16• A reduction in organisational capacity and a potential skills gap as a consequence of down-sizing• Re-aligning systems and processes to accommodate the switch in banker in 2015/16	<p>Did you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Pension Fund has 109 employers who contribute to the fund in addition to the Council and the fund is currently valued at £2.1 billion• There are 238,000 domestic chargeable properties in County Durham, with a gross Council Tax liability of £306m and 85% of these are in Bands A to C• There are an estimated 70,000 claims for Council Tax Reduction each year, with £53m of support being provided. 54% of all claimants are of working age and of these 10,000 are in work claimants

Glossary

AAPs	Area Action Partnerships	JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Lumiere	A spectacular festival of art and light in Durham in Nov 2011
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour	MTFP	Medium Term Financial Plan
CAT	Community Action Team	NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
DCC	Durham County Council	NETPARK	The science, engineering and technology park at Sedgefield
FSM	Free School Meals	NHS	National Health Service
GeoPark	UNESCO designated area of geological importance	ONS	Office for National Statistics
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education	PV	Photovoltaic
GDHI	Gross disposable household income	SMS	Short Message Service
GVA	Gross Value Added	SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes
HMO	Houses in Multiple Occupation	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison	UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.
HWRC	Household Waste Recycling Centre	VFM	Value for Money
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies		

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Braille



Audio



Large
Print