

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

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Cabinet

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County Durham Partnership Update



Report of Corporate Management Team

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Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP) including the board, the five thematic partnerships and all area action partnerships (AAPs). The report also includes updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.

Summary

2. The end of 2015 saw a huge amount of partnership activity. The council's work with the armed forces community as well as the recently completed community buildings asset transfer programme, were both recognised nationally as best practice and innovative approaches in their relevant fields. The work of local organisations, community groups and individuals was also recognised at the annual Environment Awards held in November.
3. Following the report Cabinet received last autumn on the work and action plan of the Welfare Reform and Poverty Group, this report includes partnership led work at a local level delivered by AAPs and other partners. Working with, and supporting, local communities affected by welfare reform has become common practice for the AAPs and all of them have strong examples of how this applies in their areas.
4. Thematic partnerships are reviewing and refreshing their outcomes and delivery plans currently to enable new plans to be implemented from April. A number of consultation events have taken place in order to inform partners of emerging needs and issues as well as updating existing plans with outcomes that have been achieved.

5. The Children and Families Partnership commissioned a Student Voice survey which was undertaken by over 8,000 students making this a robust study which can be used across the partnership.

Key Partnership Developments and Achievements

6. It has been a very busy period across the partnership with recognition being received nationally on partnership working in County Durham. Austerity continues to affect all parts of the partnership and local communities, including welfare reform which is a theme of the report. There are also a number of positives to report on.
7. The council has been honoured for its work in supporting serving and former members of the armed forces and has been presented with a silver award by the Ministry of Defence through its Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. The scheme rewards and recognises UK employers and organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to the armed forces community. Since signing the Armed Forces Community Covenant in 2012, the council has undertaken a number of initiatives, including setting up a proactive armed forces forum which champions the help and support available to the armed forces community. The council has also developed a dedicated human resources policy to support reservists, which includes the right to up to ten days of special paid leave for training. The council's housing allocation policy has been revised to ensure there is no disadvantage to veterans and their families, extended the scope of welfare rights referral criteria and ensured that its schools admission code does not disadvantage armed forces children. There is now a dedicated page on the council's website detailing the support available to the armed forces community.
8. The recently completed community buildings asset transfer programme was one of six national winners in the Carnegie Trust's Enabling State Awards which received over 120 submissions. At the awards event in London, the project was viewed as ground-breaking and innovative. It was interesting to note that Durham was the only council to be included in the winning projects. Other winners were community organisations who had struggled to engage with their local authorities.
9. The annual Environment Awards took place in November with new categories added and increasing numbers of submissions in each category. A number of commendations as well as overall awards were given with a huge variety of groups and individuals recognised. The brochure from the event can be found [here](#).
10. As previously reported, as part of the WWI commemorations, specially commissioned memorial stones to honour winners of the Victoria Cross will be placed in different locations in County Durham as part of a national initiative to provide a lasting legacy for those who received the VC for their actions. The first, unveiled at Wheatley Hill Cemetery on Wednesday, 4 November 2015, honoured Thomas Kenny, exactly 100 years to the day of his act of heroism. Each stone bears the soldier's name, rank and regiment along with the date of the action for which they were awarded the medal. The event in East Durham was well received by all those who attended, with special praise was given to the children of St Mary's RCVA Primary School, who recited a poem written for Thomas Kenny 100 years ago by the pupils of the school.
11. The Partnership held its forum meeting in October 2015 which focused on the Director of Public Health's report: 'All the lonely people: what are we doing to tackle loneliness and isolation in County Durham?' A joint presentation from Anna Lynch, Director of Public Health, and AAP representatives highlighted the various needs of

specific groups of people across the county and gave examples of the wide range of support available to people from across the AAPs and other partners. The presentation was well received and evidenced the way all partners work together to link strategic objectives with local action.

12. Durham Humanitarian Support Partnership, led by the county council and chaired by Cllr Eddie Tomlinson, has continued to progress the county's response to the refugee crisis in Syria, seeking to ensure that support for refugees placed in the county is joined up, promoting cross-service and agency working, as well as engagement with communities. A working group, which includes council services and partner representatives, is supporting the Partnership in considering the operational aspects of accommodating refugees within County Durham.
13. At its meeting on 16 December 2015 Cabinet endorsed the work carried out by Durham Humanitarian Support Partnership and agreed to progress the proposed response to support refugees under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. The response will focus on ensuring that refugee families arriving in County Durham, many of whom will have encountered desperate situations, experience the best possible welcome and the opportunity to become part of our local communities and thrive in the County.
14. The CDP is an integral way of consulting with partners and wider communities and plays a key role in the council's annual budget consultation. 139 people participated in three public consultation events held in December 2015 which, following a presentation on the council's position and approach to date, gathered views on three key areas: the council's approach to managing the reduction to date; the proposals for 2016-17 and the potential introduction of the social care precept. The full consultation results will be presented to Cabinet in February and will take account of the broader consultation gathering individual and partner responses which closed on Tuesday 12 January.
15. A new approach is being taken to develop a web based Integrated Needs Assessment (INA) for County Durham which will assist with strategic planning across the partnership. The INA will bring together for the first time, the evidence and wide range of strategic assessments used to inform strategic planning across the council and by partnerships. The new INA will provide data, analysis, external frameworks, strategies and plans relevant to life in County Durham and will be a web-based series of fact sheets which will be updated through an iterative process. It will integrate with other strategic assessment processes and products, such as AAP profiles, Clinical Commissioning Group profiles, specific health needs, local economic and community safety assessments.

Supporting Welfare Reform

16. As reported to Cabinet in October, the Welfare Reform and Poverty Group continues to work to mitigate the impacts of changes to the welfare system that affect local people. AAPs are well placed to offer local interventions and support and have received some additional funding from the council to do specific work in their areas. This is in addition to the area and neighbourhood budgets as well as external funding that AAPs secure to support local communities.
17. Previously reported initiatives include the Welfare Champions project from the **East Durham AAP** area. The AAP has had a priority focussing on 'maintaining the social fabric of our communities' for a number of years which has led to the

development and implementation of a number of initiatives across the area. As well as the Welfare Champions they also have the East Durham Community Job Clubs which provide more accessible alternatives to centralised national programmes. In the first four months they have seen nearly 200 users access the clubs, against their annual target of 400. They offer access to IT and transport, both of which can be barrier for people. Additional benefits of this initiative can be improved mental health and wellbeing and reduced social isolation. The AAP recently launched the next stage of the Welfare Champions project, Debt First Aiders, at East Durham Trust's annual conference. This supports people who are experiencing difficulties with debt and will train local volunteers to provide initial support or signposting to specialist services. Users are also encouraged to join the local credit union.

18. Other AAPs have followed the work in East Durham, particularly supporting and enhancing partner initiatives. Working with people who are vulnerable due to debt and need help and support can often be done via a third party, particularly local foodbanks. The usage figures for foodbanks across the county has risen significantly in recent years. **Three Towns, Stanley, Durham and 4Together AAPs** all have examples of partners being able to offer broader support to those who need it, particularly if the advice they receive helps alleviate the need for foodbanks in the future. **Stanley AAP** funds the Durham Money Advice project that provides a trained debt advisor who works alongside the foodbank in Stanley. The Durham Money Advice Centre is a face to face debt advice service where staff and volunteers work with clients to manage their immediate situation, arrange a plan for paying priority debts, and implement a budget that will help the client manage their financial situation in the future.
19. **Durham AAP** has also committed its welfare reform funding to a similar partnership between Durham Christian Foodbank, Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) and MIND. This provides a service that looks into the reasons why people are attending the foodbank. The partnership was also chosen to become involved in a fuel bank pilot that operated from existing food banks. Qualifying households receiving a £49 credit to help with fuel costs and to date 42 people have received a comprehensive service. The main problem identified by those accessing the Foodbank as meeting immediate need rather than seeking to access wider providers which the joint working has been able to support. In addition to this, at the AAP's recent It's Up to You event amongst the successful projects were the Durham Money Advice project and Waddington Street.
20. The **4Together AAP** allocated their welfare reform funding to the LADDER Centre in Ferryhill and also focused on supporting foodbanks. The service provides items that more fully meet the needs of families. In order to make a more holistic offer the project also gave people the opportunity to access funding for gas and electricity. To access this provision, evidence of need is required and clients must participate in financial inclusion training. Access to healthy eating classes that teach cooking skills on a budget to support health and nutrition within families are also offered. This is to support the people accessing the food bank who do not have the skills to cook the food provided.
21. Also important is a funding pot to provide basic essentials which will include clothing and shoes as this is something that is repeatedly highlighted by One Point, the LADDER Centre and food banks. It can particularly help those people trying to gain employment by making sure they have clean, appropriate clothing and shoes for interviews etc. Similarly, **Three Towns AAP**, via its support of The Salvation Army in Crook has supported families with three day food parcels. This project also

supports the food bank to provide gas and electricity top ups and food to those in need. This enables people to cook hot meals with the food provided by the food bank. One of the biggest issues for many people during cold weather is choosing between heating, eating and finding money to cook food. The Salvation Army has been working with agencies in the area to support those in need. The budget has been used for those requiring clothes, home utensils or essentials for new mothers who cannot afford baby products.

22. Another area that AAPs have prioritised in recent years to respond to welfare reform is employability. The Employability Pit Stop project, supported by **Bishop Auckland and Shildon, East Durham Rural Corridor (EDRC) and Great Aycliffe and Middridge (GAMP)** is aimed at people of working age who are either out of work, at risk of redundancy, have poor access to formal learning opportunities or who are digitally excluded. The 'pit stop' element comes from the style of the project as it uses community venue surgeries across the AAP areas to deliver personal development support; help with job applications; support to access additional funding; digital literacy skills and help with volunteering opportunities which are often a first step towards employment.
23. Three AAPs have joined together to deliver the 'Wheels to Work' transport project pilot which looks at overcoming transport barriers that prohibit access to employment. **Mid Durham, Stanley and Chester le Street and District AAPs** have secured £50,000 of capital funding from the North East Combined Authority's Local Growth allocation which will purchase 25 scooters whilst funding from the AAPs will support the delivery of the loan scheme. The loan scheme will provide a scooter for six months with the development of a savings scheme being looked at with the community bank so that after the initial six months the person could have the ability to purchase a new bike with the existing bike being made available for another person.
24. The **Derwent Valley Partnership (DVP)** and **Mid Durham AAP** have both taken a slightly different approach and developed a School Saving and Financial Inclusion Scheme aimed at young people. Through working with Prince Bishops Community Bank (PBCB) they are helping to deliver a school savings scheme project which aims to help improve the financial capability of young people of varying ages within the area. This is achieved through engagement with schools, community groups and parents via the employment of a school development officer, to be hosted by the PBCB. The officer will support schools to introduce sound financial education into the curriculum through the engagement of partner organisations that have the capacity and skills to deliver training in schools. They will work with head teachers to raise awareness of financial issues and encourage a culture of saving. The officer will also engage parents to help them understand and make them aware of financial issues and how poor money management can affect their families' lives.
25. Rural areas can face different issues particularly linked to isolation and accessibility. **Teesdale Action Partnership** works with Citizens Advice, from their base in Barnard Castle, to offer outreach services across the area. To complement this service the AAP has funded a rural pilot to offer information, advice and guidance on issues relating to benefits and jobs. Led by YMCA Teesdale this project has established weekly sessions in Evenwood, Cockfield and Mickleton. Staffed by the YMCA team and trained volunteers the project has been helping people in rural areas who may find it difficult to access this sort of service. The type of issues include access to public transport and reliable broadband.

26. The examples given are only a small amount of the work going on across the county within communities to help people affected by welfare reform. The wider affects include social isolation and emotional wellbeing which are being addressed by partners and AAPs.

Altogether wealthier

27. The **County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP)** Board met in November 2015 and welcomed Arun Harish from the Centre for Process Innovation onto the board to further increase private sector representation. On the agenda was an annual review of the CDEP Measures of Success and an opportunity to analyse the annual State of the County Report. This was further complemented by discussion of progress being made by working groups within the partnership.
28. The Measures of Success report highlighted positive trends against the target indicators and trackers. However, it remains evident that the county has experienced a more acute impact of the recession when compared to both the national and regional picture and there is still a significant distance to travel. The key messages from performance against the current measures of success are:
- a. Since 2012 the employment rate has risen from 64.8% to 68.1% (an increase of 9,700 people). This remains low compared to the pre-recession peak. The latest male employment rate (74.2%) in particular has grown sharply and now exceeds the overall target employment rate for the county (73%) and is above the North East male employment rate (by 1.1%). The number of self-employed people rose from 16,100 to 26,400 in County Durham, an increase of 62%.
 - b. The total value of North East economy is £45.4bn (2013) and County Durham contributes 16% of this total (£7.3bn). In 2013, Gross Value Added (GVA) per head grew at 6.8% significantly above both the North East growth rate (2.8%) and the national average (2.6%).
 - c. Latest ONS estimates of the number of businesses show there were 12,370 active enterprises in County Durham in 2013. This is a net increase of 185 (+1.5%) enterprises since 2012 lower than regional (+3.4%) or national (+3.4%) changes. The total business stock remains below the national average and is dominated by smaller businesses.
 - d. Gross Disposable Household Income has increased 18.4% since 2008 more than regional (18.2%) or national (16.9%) comparisons. However, locally growth over the longer term has been relatively low.
 - e. The Indices of Deprivation (released in September 2015) revealed that 150 County Durham LSOAs are ranked in the top 20% most deprived on the Employment Domain. This is 18 fewer than in previous release but remains more than double the target of 65.
29. The board agreed that the Altogether Wealthier top priority outcome is still to improve the employment rate. This will be achieved through a combination of additional employment and self-employment opportunities located in the county, more residents being able to access employment within a broad travel to work area and additional numbers of employed people becoming resident in County Durham. It was agreed further analysis of the challenges and opportunities highlighted in the report would be fed into the current Regeneration Statement review. The

Statement underpins the 'Altogether Wealthier' theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and sets out the regeneration and economic narrative for the county. In order to build on the initial informal consultation with partners and the outlined scope and direction of the review, key milestones and timescales have been identified and agreed by the CDEP Board.

30. The County Durham Partnership Board requested an update on the County Durham Plan at its November meeting. This is a key council and document and the spatial expression of the SCS, which seeks to guide the future development of the county and to improve the lives of its existing and future residents. A planning inspector held an Examination in Public in 2014 to consider the contents of the Plan. The subsequent interim report of the inspector received in February 2015 found the Plan to be unsound and criticised its economic ambition. At this time support for the council's approach was forthcoming from across partners including the business community and local MPs. Given this support and the flaws identified in the inspector's report, the council approached the inspector to ask him to reopen the Examination. He refused to do so and therefore, following discussions with the Planning Inspectorate and after taking legal advice, the council took the difficult decision of launching a Judicial Review (JR).
31. In September DCC was informed by the Court that it had agreed a Consent Order and that there was now a resolution which quashed the inspector's interim report. As part of the agreement reached with DCLG and endorsed by the court, the County Durham Plan also had to be withdrawn to allow it to be refreshed and updated before being submitted again for Examination by a new inspector. As part of this updating and to reflect changes to Government policy, elements of the Plan's evidence base are currently being updated and refreshed.
32. In order to ensure an amended and refreshed Plan is back to Examination as soon as possible the council is hoping to have the new draft approved by cabinet and out to consultation early this year and will then look to submit the Plan for Examination in late spring/early summer. After submission a new Planning Inspector will be appointed who will then determine the timescales and the format of the Examination in Public.
33. AAPs have also significantly contributed to delivering against the altogether wealthier outcomes. Many have supported employability and apprenticeship programmes as well as helping people to return to work by building their skills and confidence. Many AAPs also support businesses in their localities in order to help boost the local economy through increased footfall, something **Spennymoor AAP's** Town Centre Group is currently looking at, to broadband and other digital services.
34. **Spennymoor** and **4Together AAPs** are both working in partnership with County Durham Furniture Help Scheme (CDFHS). Spennymoor AAP is supporting the Destination Employment Project which will offer a comprehensive programme of person centred employability support. The project team will work with clients to identify their starting point and support them into employment and each client will receive an identified project worker to support them on their journey. The project will aim to work with around 120 residents from the Spennymoor Area. It will focus primarily on people aged 25+. **4Together AAP** is funding the CDFHS to deliver advice and guidance to those residents disadvantaged by crisis, lack of food or requiring emergency furniture. Both examples show how partnering with the

voluntary and community sector to deliver in local areas can broaden the scope of AAP led projects.

35. Working with Durham County Council's ICT Service, **Stanley AAP** has set up a Smart Stanley Working Group to explore how digital technologies can support town centre businesses, along with local resident and visitor footfall in Stanley. A town centre website is the first project for the group which will allow the area to promote itself to the local and wider community. The website will help to welcome local residents and visitors and will aim to maximise the benefits associated with tourism and encourage visitors to spend some of their disposable income in the town.
36. The AAP will also work with local traders to improve their digital skills with the long-term aim of building their capacity to take on the running and management of the website. Advertising income streams will also be explored with local and national businesses and visitor attractions in the hope of securing income to pay for the ongoing costs of hosting the website after the initial three years.

Altogether better for children and young people

37. A significant piece of work commissioned by the **Children and Families Partnership** is the Student Voice survey which was undertaken from January to April 2015 by students in Years 7, 9 and 11 and where Secondary Schools have Sixth Forms. Of the 32 Secondary Schools, 25 participated with a total of 8,148 students completing the survey, making this a robust survey that can be used across the partnership.
38. The survey findings indicate that:
 - a. Over 10% of students identified themselves as a Young Carer, which reinforces the importance of the Young Carers Charter and the need for schools to safely identify and support young carers in their school.
 - b. 33% of students stated they have been bullied. The Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience includes an anti-stigma campaign as an action. Public Health and Education are also working closely on the resilience programme including work with schools to tackle bullying.
 - c. 2.6% of children identified that they eat most of their fruit and veg at school, compared to over 60% at home. The healthy weight alliance will be asked to progress work with students based on the findings of this survey.
 - d. Just over one third of children do not participate in physical activity other than School PE. There is an opportunity through the development of the County Durham Physical Activity Framework to encourage children and young people to become more physically active.
 - e. Over 50% of children responded 'Yes' to the question 'Do you find that you are often near people who are smoking'. The Tobacco Action Plan has been refreshed for 2015/16 and includes a specific theme of reducing exposure to second hand smoke.
 - f. In relation to alcohol consumption, 13.7% of students responded that they drink 'during the week', 'most weekends', 'every weekend' or 'every day'. By Year 11, this increases to 23.3%. The Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy includes a focus on the altogether better for children and young people

theme and specific actions for the Drug and Alcohol Service to support schools in tackling drug and alcohol issues.

39. The survey information has already been shared with schools, partners and through the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The survey will be shared further with relevant parties to ensure the information and evidence is captured in strategy reviews. An action plan is being developed to respond to these findings which will be reported through the Children and Families Partnership.
40. The Children and Families Partnership have reaffirmed the following three objectives in the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2016-19, as those which will remain a priority for 2016-17:
 - a. Children and young people realise and maximise their potential;
 - b. Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life;
 - c. A Think Family approach is embedded in our support for families.
41. The objectives align to the Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-30.
42. The following events, aimed at young people will inform the refresh of the plan:
 - a. A number of engagement events facilitated by Investing in Children;
 - b. Consultation with young carers through Family Action Young Carers Service family fun day;
 - c. The "Big Tent" Engagement Event included a number of workshops to look at the health and social care issues affecting children and young people.
43. A final summary report of the learning and analysis on the Phase 1 Stronger Families Programme and next steps for the roll out of the expanded Phase 2 programme was presented to the Children and Families Partnership in September 2015. Phase 2 includes much broader eligibility criteria enabling the majority of families worked with by social care services to be part of the programme and to achieve results payments. There is a very clear need to shift the focus to ensuring families are supported in such a way that results in significant and sustained change. All programmes are required to develop a local Family Outcome Framework (FOF), describing the programme's identification criteria and outcomes.
44. The key actions for phase 2 include: embedding the use of the FOF and development of outcome-focused care plans; coordination of the workforce development with the Service Transformation and Innovations Programme and Local Safeguarding Childrens Board; a range of ICT developments to help manage the information requirements of the expanded programme, including Family Progress Data and outcomes evidence collection for payment-by-results; revising the payment-by-result methodology and grant terms of reference with our Internal Audit service and carry out a 'refresh' of the cost saving calculator data once data is available and investigate the cases where there is a particular increase in the costs associated with fostering and residential care.
45. The Stronger Families programme has informed the development of the Children's Services Innovations programme. Stronger Families will cease to be identifiable as

a separate programme, and will become the core of new Families First teams. This will make best use of the learning and expertise built during the programme, but also the resources generated through the programme, in order to achieve improved outcomes for all vulnerable families in County Durham.

46. AAPs have consistently supported the work of the Children and Families Partnership and deliver outcomes at a local level with many examples directly linked to supporting families. **Stanley AAP** also supports the employment of a community engagement tutor working with the Catchgate Learning Hive, in partnership with Derwentside Homes. The Hive provides a range of learning opportunities for residents living across Stanley, particularly targeting those who face multiple barriers to making progress and improving their lives. The Hive work with families to improve their skills to support their children's development, as well as to help adults who are unemployed or unwaged, in low paid or part time employment and who wish to progress.
47. The AAP has also supported the development of Northern Writes, an educational programme and literary festival which will benefit the children, young people and families of Stanley and surrounding North Durham communities. It comprises a participatory programme for children, young people and adults, building up to a weekend literary festival that will showcase their work. Northern Writes is a grass-roots led initiative that is being driven and advocated by members of the community.
48. **3 Towns AAP** has a Training and Preparing for Employment project to train and up-skill local young people interested in the sports industry giving them the opportunity to gain experience and qualifications. The council's sport and physical activity development team has been working across the 3 Towns locality with community Sports Clubs, youth and community groups, schools and college to identify appropriate candidates to offer training and voluntary experience. This will give them a much greater opportunity of employment either full time, part time, apprenticeship or casual session work. Although this project is sport related the skills and experiences gained are transferable and would help future employability in alternative fields of work.

Altogether healthier

49. The **Health and Wellbeing Board** recently agreed the comprehensive three year County Durham Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience, which considers self-harm amongst young people. The Department of Health and NHS England published the 'Future in Mind, promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing' which makes a number of proposals the government wishes to see by 2020. These include: tackling stigma and improving attitudes to mental illness; introducing more access and waiting time standards for services; establishing 'one stop shop' support services in the community and improving access for children and young people who are particularly vulnerable. The County Durham Transformation Plan incorporates the requirements of 'Future in Mind' to achieve these aspirations. Funding for Clinical Commissioning Groups is attached to the 'Future in Mind' plans to support young people with Mental Health needs.
50. The Health and Wellbeing Board has reaffirmed the following six objectives in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-19, as those which will remain a priority for 2016-17:

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

51. The objectives align to the Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-30.
52. Over 270 people attended the Big Tent engagement event which took place in November 2015 and saw Dr William Bird MBE launch of the Physical Activity Framework delivery plan for County Durham. The event also publicised the newly launched Locate service which provides a complete directory of care and support services. The service will play a key role in providing the essential information and advice for people to make informed decisions about their care and support, enabling them to stay well and independent for longer.
53. Sandie Keene, a Local Government Association Advisor facilitated the event, which consisted of a combination of presentations and themed workshops relating to health, social care and the wider wellbeing approach, including integration, community safety, seven day services, the environment, housing and health. The event gave people an opportunity to provide their views on how services should be developed. Service users, Elected Members, members of voluntary organisations, patients, carers, GPs and AAP board members all attended. Feedback will be used to influence future services through the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Children, Young People and Families Plan, and Safe Durham Partnership Plan.
54. Addressing specific issues on rural isolation is key to the work of the **Weardale** and **Teesdale Action Partnerships**. Their 'Wheels to Meals' scheme addresses the two issues of nutrition and rural isolation in older people. Using Community Transport's fully accessible mini buses with volunteer drivers and passenger assistants, the scheme collects people from their doors and takes them to local restaurants for a two course lunch or afternoon tea, before taking them home. The scheme is widely promoted and the choice of venue is agreed from feedback and suggestions offered by the participants. Additional support is available over the phone to those members who have expressed an interest and is an important part of the project as it is designed to offer a friendly voice and a listening ear to those individuals who are isolated.
55. The **Derwent Valley AAP** is currently working with Leisureworks, Public Health, Consett Academy, community venues and a range of local sports clubs to develop a bespoke physical activity programme for 2016. The programme aims to support the development of the new County Durham Physical Activity Framework (2016-2021), engage young people and families who would otherwise not participate in physical activity and sustain physical participation in the long term.
56. The programme will commence in spring 2016 offering a range of taster sessions delivered in conjunction with Consett Academy targeted at Year 7 pupils using the

current onsite facilities. These taster sessions will provide an opportunity for young people to take part in traditional sports such as rugby, football, cricket and swimming alongside other activities including geocaching, dance, boot camps, colour run, boxercise and cheerleading.

57. As a follow on from the spring taster sessions, a Legacy Multi Sports Day Programme will be delivered in summer 2016 across various community venues (including parks, sports club grounds, community centres etc.) aimed at the wider engagement of families and youth groups. Activities offered alongside the sports listed above will also include music and art.
58. Through the programme, Sports Club Open Days will be offered aimed at encouraging residents of all ages to take up regular activity and possible volunteering opportunities to help support clubs locally. A Sports Club Voucher Booklet offering free sessions and discounts will also be provided as an incentive as part of the overall project. The Task Group leading on this project are also exploring how the programme can link to the 2016 Olympics and awareness raising linked to disability sports.
59. AAP led physical activity projects are community based ways of increasing people's participation across a range of sports. **Bishop Auckland and Shildon (BASH) and 3 Towns Partnerships** both fund the Parklife project that aims to get more people involved in sport, through the provision of a needs led programme of taster sessions delivered within local parks and facilities. The ultimate aim is to get more people participating in sport more often, with an emphasis on engaging those who currently do not take part in sport or physical activity based. This is based around three parks in the summer months and utilising indoor facilities over winter months. The project will run over three years leading to a lasting legacy of provision or exit routes into other local provision and sports clubs. Activities included football, cricket, archery, dance, spinning multisport, tennis, Go Skate, family games, boot camp and girls only sessions. Seven schools are hosting family games sessions as part of their existing after school provision as part of the project.
60. **Great Aycliffe and Middridge AAP (GAMP)** has implemented a health based project that also supports the altogether greener priority. They have created a socially inclusive, fully accessible community horticultural garden, set in the grounds of the Pioneering Care Centre. The aim of the project is to make use of the local environment by providing access to a community garden in the heart of the GAMP area that enables residents, local schools and voluntary groups to develop their 'hands on' horticultural skills and to undertake new learning.
61. Through a partnership with Bishop Auckland College (Construction & Enterprise Project) and the ESH Group, the garden was constructed to ensure that the space can be fully utilised by clients with a variety of physical abilities and needs. The project is being used to champion a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits that gardening and horticulture can have. The outcomes will include: better physical health through exercise; improved mental health through a sense of purpose and achievement; the opportunity to connect with others, reducing feelings of isolation or exclusion; acquiring new skills to improve the chances of finding employment and volunteering and intergenerational learning.
62. The project has also proved to be a catalyst for a future GAMP funded project 'Growing our Community' that will provide horticultural therapy activities in the grounds of Pioneering Care Partnership, using the new accessible garden.

Horticultural therapy is the process of using plants and gardening activities as a means to achieve goals of wellness and promotes physical, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual wellbeing.

63. A range of activities will be made available to GAMP residents aged 50+, over two days per week, including:
 - a. Planting seeds in raised boxes and borders (flowers, fruit and vegetables).
 - b. Maintenance of the garden (pruning, grass cutting, watering etc.).
 - c. Flower arranging (allow people to focus on their creativity and develop a sense of achievement by learning a new skill).
 - d. Nature trail specially designed through the garden, along which there will be marked stops next to points of interest.
64. The project will support the active participation of older adults from adult social care (e.g. Rose Lodge Care Home, which specialises in residential, dementia and respite care) and organisations providing services/support for older people (e.g. Age UK). In addition, independent groups operating across the GAMP area (e.g. Dementia group at Newton Aycliffe Youth and Community Centre) will be invited to take part in the activities. Clients engaged in the horticultural therapy activities will also be offered referral to a free monthly lunch club, developed in partnership with Woodham Community Centre. The lunch club will bring together clients from the project to enjoy a lunchtime meal as well as providing access to other health and wellbeing activities delivered in a community setting including: non-impact aerobics; dance provided by Nouveau Fitness and health promotion provided by health trainers.

Altogether safer

65. The **Safe Durham Partnership (SDP)** is making progress in terms of planning and delivering the statutory 'Prevent duty' placed on partner organisations as part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. County Durham can demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of people being drawn into terrorism in the local area through the commissioning of the Counter Terrorism Local Profile and is recognised as a low risk area but no area is risk free.
66. Each organisation specified by the act is represented at the 'County Durham and Darlington Contest Silver Group' which oversees the work of the Safe Durham Partnership priority on Counter Terrorism. Staff training is helping professionals recognise the signs that an individual may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know how to refer them for support. Durham Constabulary has trained staff across the SDP to deliver WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent); a national product developed by the Home Office. A wide range of agencies are being briefed and sign-posted to information and resources hosted on the websites of the County Durham Partnership, Local Safeguarding Children Board, Safeguarding Adults Board, Schools Extranet, Voice and County Durham's Families Information Service. This will help the private, voluntary and independent childcare sector and out-of-school activity sector meet their new duties.
67. The Government published its Counter-Extremism Strategy in October 2015 which is aimed at countering all forms of extremism: violent and non-violent. It aims to improve understanding of the causes and impacts of extremism and do more to:

counter the extremist ideology; build a partnership with all those opposed to extremism; disrupt extremists and build more cohesive communities. An Extremism Bill is scheduled to be published by the end of the year. Additional resources will be available through guidance and toolkits.

68. As previously reported the Safer Homes project received £500,000 funding from the Government's Transformation Challenge Award for 2014/15. £320,000 has been allocated towards the fitting of Fire and Crime Preventative measures in vulnerable homes across County Durham with eight of the main housing providers signed up to a partnership agreement that will see them assign £20,000 of their 2015/16 budget towards the procurement and installation of preventative measures. As a result of the project the Police and Fire Service are now both offering documented advice on both crime/ fire awareness within the home as part of their core role.
69. One of the main objectives of the project was to ensure a sustainable centralised referral process was set up in such a way that ensured the Safer Homes initiative could function as mainstream work once the project had concluded. Fire and Rescue ensure all referrals received are forwarded to the appropriate authority/ service responsible for dealing with the specific vulnerabilities identified. The level of reductions in house burglary and dwelling fires, along with savings achieved from a centralised referral process at through the Fire and Rescue Service has been achieved. The investment in sustainable home safety solutions will provide benefits for many years to come.
70. The Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2015-20 has been developed by Durham County Council Public Health team and agreed by the Safe Durham Partnership Board. In 2014 the County Durham Partnership identified alcohol as a cross cutting theme. The Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy has been reconfigured around all five of the Altogether themes and underpinned by six key objectives relating to these themes.
71. The strategic objectives in the **Safe Durham Partnership Plan (SDPP)** are the same as the thematic objectives for the Altogether Safer section of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2010-2030. The Safe Durham Partnership Board has re-affirmed the strategic objectives in the SDPP as those which will remain as a priority for 2016-19:
 - a. Reduce anti-social behaviour;
 - b. Protect Vulnerable People from Harm;
 - c. Reduce Re-offending;
 - d. Alcohol and Substance Misuse Harm Reduction;
 - e. Embed the Think Family Approach;
 - f. Counter Terrorism and prevention of violent extremism;
 - g. Road Casualty Reduction.
72. The Safe Durham Partnership Plan will be developed using the Community Safety Strategic Assessment which provides analysis of data and trends in relation crime and disorder. It also includes information from the Organised Crime Profile in County Durham.

73. A number of engagement events will be held to inform the refreshed Safe Durham Partnership Plan, including a 'Community Safety' themed workshop at the Health and Wellbeing 'Big Tent' event which was held in November 2015; consultation with AAPs through briefing notes; consultation with the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee; use of existing consultation such as the Police Confidence Survey and online community consultation through agency web-sites and social media. There may therefore be changes to the existing outcomes or additional outcomes added that support these strategic objectives following these engagement activities. A draft SDPP 2016-19 will be presented to the SDP Board in January 2016 with final sign off in March 2016.
74. The Safe Durham Partnership Plan will help inform the new Police and Crime Plan which will be developed following the PCC election in May 2016.
75. A full review of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan, looking at the strategic objectives as well as the outcomes will take place to align with the review of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This process will be undertaken during 2016-17 for implementation from April 2017.
76. Working to deliver against the Safe Durham Plan objectives takes place within a number of AAPs. **Spennymoor AAP**, through its Stronger Families Employability Fund, has worked with the local Sure Start to recruit ten learners for an 'Understanding Domestic Abuse' course with all of the learners being female survivors of domestic abuse. All ten completed a level II qualification.
77. At a local level the **Durham AAP** Mini Police are going from strength to strength with other forces up and down the country copying the model started in Durham. An additional two schools in Durham have signed up to the project which improves engagement with the Police and young people in the more problematic areas. The **Derwent Valley AAP** is one of the AAPs currently working with Durham Constabulary and Durham Agency Against Crime to develop their own Mini Police project within the locality. The project will be a fun and interactive volunteering opportunity for children aged 9-11 years which will support local priorities, deliver enriched community engagement through positive policing interaction, enabling young people to have a confident voice and an enjoyable experience.
78. The emphasis of the Mini Police project is on the initial first contact between Police and a child which is important in shaping children and young people's attitudes towards the Police because for a significant number of children and young people this experience is a negative one. The children and young people will be provided with opportunities to take part in three events per school term, one Force led; one Community led and one Reward led.
79. The project will be delivered in schools located in areas of high social deprivation, low employment, high crime and high incidence of anti-social behaviour together with areas of affluence, high employment and low levels of anti-social behaviour and crime, engagement within these communities and across somewhat different communities, will increase and barriers will be broken down.
80. **Chester-le-Street & District AAP** is working with the local neighbourhood inspector for Chester-le-Street Police and other local agencies to deliver a series of five Crime and Community Safety roadshows across five targeted communities. The events include a focus on Cyber Crime and telephone scams with Detectives from Durham Constabulary providing advice. The events follow a number of high profile national cyber-crime issues that have been widely reported in the media.

Altogether greener

81. The **Environment Partnership** continues to develop strategic links across the County Durham Partnership. Examples of thematic work being carried out to strengthen these links are: promotion and encouragement of volunteering – through the environment partnership many initiatives are taking place across the county to strengthen volunteering e.g. tree and flower bed planting, litter picking, cleaning up woodlands and riverbanks etc.; working with partners to deliver the aims and objectives of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and replication of best practice clean-up projects across County Durham via the AAPs.
82. As highlighted earlier in the report, the Environment Awards are a unique opportunity to showcase and celebrate the wide range of environmentally-based projects and activities which have taken place across all sectors of the community in County Durham. This annual programme is managed by Durham County Council on behalf of the County Durham Environment Partnership and is now in its 26th year. Over 60 applications were received in total across a range of environmental categories and the shortlisting and judging processes involved a range of specialists and sponsoring bodies such as Groundwork, the Northern Echo and Sita UK. The winners were announced at a ceremony at Durham's Radisson Hotel in November.
83. The partnership's sub groups continue to deliver a wide range of projects across the county, working with a number of partners. The Coastal, Heritage and Landscape Group is working with the Heritage Lottery Fund programme to enhance the coast which is linked to the European Protected Sites (Natura 2000 site). These sites provide a co-ordinated network of protected areas across Europe to protect threatened species and habitats.
84. The Environment in Your Communities group had a presentation on the work of the Community Action Team (CAT) on the results of each of their projects and continues to support the work of the CAT team and promote a multi disciplinary approach to environmental clean-ups across the County. The project continues to grow and engage with more agencies at each new location.
85. The Climate Change Group is dealing with building community resilience for severe weather with a wide range of activities across the county, for example, the Chester-le-Street Town Centre Emergency Plan draft has been confirmed by partners and volunteers and an information session was also held with Shildon Youth Group.
86. On sustainable travel and transition from secondary school (KS4) to further education, available transport choices can significantly affect the ability of young people to access the education and training that they need and want. Reducing the barriers to accessing education and training opportunities encourages participation and retention in education, reduces social inequalities and helps people move from welfare into work. A transition programme is being developed with older students in sixth forms and colleges to increase awareness of available travel options when they move to further education or employment. This programme will help pupils to explore and discuss their travel options, identify any barriers and make them a more independent traveller.
87. The Local Nature Partnership (LNP) has successfully applied for DEFRA pollinator grant to support mapping work to create corridors for pollinators focusing on Highways England works.

Recommendations and reasons

88. It is recommended that Members note the report.

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Appendix 1: Implications

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

Staffing - None

Risk - None

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

Accommodation - None

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

Human Rights - None

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

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications – None