

Durham County Council

16th March 2016

Sarah Robson

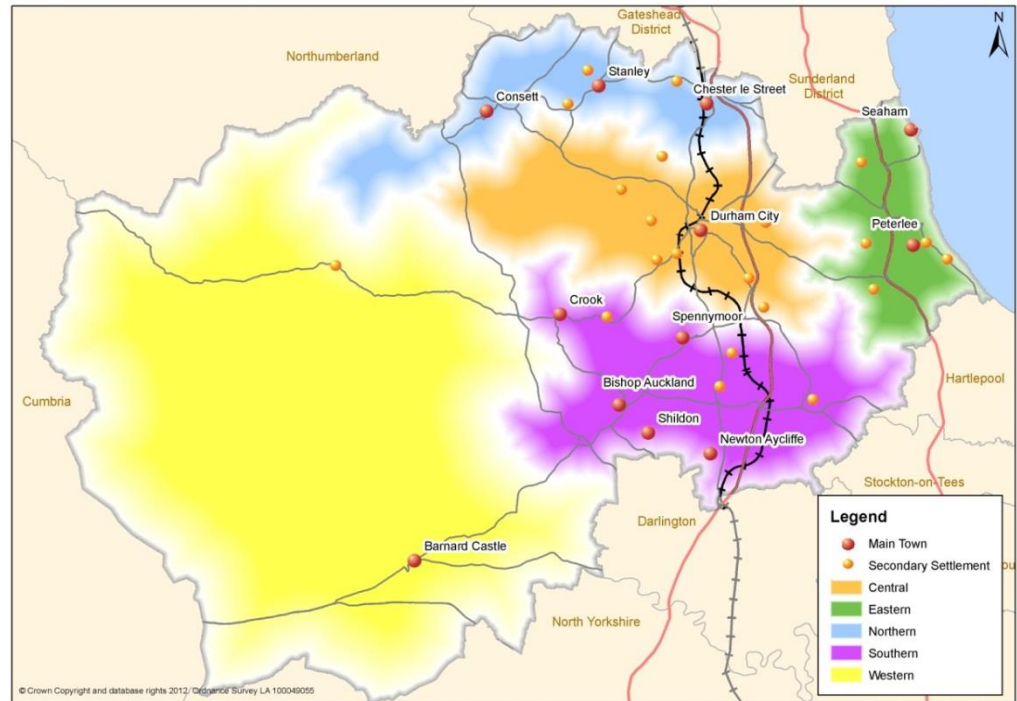
Head of Economic Development and Housing

Altogether better



About Durham:

- Unitary LA since 2009
- 5th largest Local Authority by geography
- 1051 square miles
- Population of 513,000
- Diverse rural geography: 1 city and 14 towns



Altogether better



Current position

- Current development opportunities being realised across the County, but with much more to do.
- Strong partnerships – University, business, public and private sectors
- Flexible and skilled labour force – but more to do...
- Unique high quality built and natural environment perhaps in contrast to external perception?
- Good communications A1(M), A19, ECML, links to airports and ports
- North East Combined Authority (NECA) & North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP)

Altogether better



Economic Imperative

- Economic growth top priority
- More and better jobs
- Retain more graduates
- Increase skill levels
- In context of austerity: £153m by March 2016 with a further £124m required (currently)

Altogether better



Direction of Travel

- Capitalising on potential to drive forward economic growth for County Durham and leverage investment in our main centres
- Investment in economic infrastructure
- Range of high profile strategic development opportunities
- Supporting businesses and attracting inward investment
- Public sector acting as facilitators, setting strategy and helping to create clear development opportunities

Altogether better



Direction of Travel

- Integrated approach capitalising on opportunities
- Whole town approach
- Success through the visitor economy
- Focus on key sectors
- Private sector investment
- Other bodies/partners – NECA, NELEP, etc
- Utilising new delivery models to meet market needs and expectations
- Responding to social change and protecting/supporting most vulnerable - employability

Altogether better



Housing Picture

Approximately 226,000 dwellings. Tenure profile :

65.8% Owner-Occupied

20.3% Social Rented

13.8% Private Rented

0.2% Intermediate tenure (shared ownership)

Housing stock is mainly two and three bedroomed terraced houses and is associated with relatively low price levels compared to national averages.

Median house prices across County Durham have increased from £45,450 in 2000 to £100,000 in 2012. However there is considerable variation across the County.

Higher priced areas include Durham City, Chester-le-Street and rural areas. Lower priced areas include Easington/ Peterlee (in the east of the County and Stanley in the north).

Altogether better



Social Housing

There are currently 31 RP's active in County Durham who manage just over 47,000 social rented properties countywide.



Altogether better



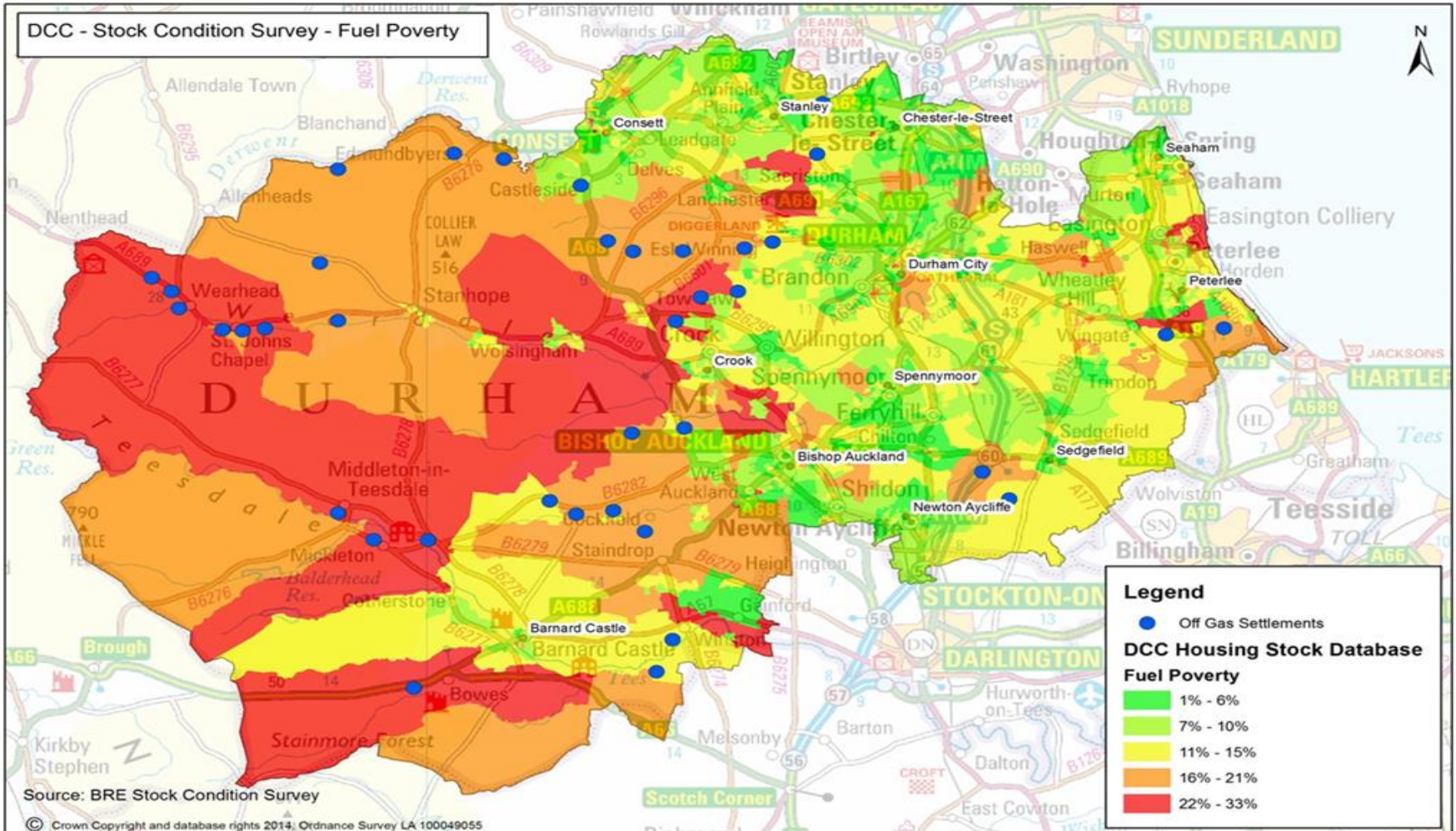
Current Fuel Poverty Challenges

Figures from DECC annual fuel poverty statistics report – published May 2015	Estimated number of households	Estimated number of fuel poor households	Estimated % of households in fuel poverty
North East	1,141,717	134,895	11.8%
County Durham	226,091	26,050	11.5%

Altogether better



Fuel Poverty



Altogether better

Energy Partnership

- Warm up North partnership comprises a total of nine local authorities including Durham County Council along with British Gas.
- Contract commenced September 2013 for a five year period, to help households improve the energy efficiency of their home, using Energy Company Obligation funding. Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government scheme which obligates larger energy suppliers to deliver energy efficiency measures to domestic premises, helping householders save on their energy bills and carbon emissions.
- Recent DECC award of £6.56m Central Heating Fund to support the nine local authorities to deliver the installation of 1,989 first time central heating systems in fuel poor households.
- Local authority endorsed scheme which enables key targeting using available data and provides resident confidence.

Altogether better



Craghead Housing Regeneration Project



Craghead Housing Regeneration Project

- 250 properties improved
- Property owners, British Gas, Northern Power Grid, DECC, DCLG have contributed over £1.5M of funding. £2.6million DCC funding
- 100 % of private property owners signed contracts for external wall insulation energy improvement works
- 20 new properties built on former school site by September 2015
- 86 properties benefitted from solar PV panels fitted at no cost to the owners or the Council
- Property energy performance levels improved from 'G' to an average 'C' rating
- Extensive public realm improvements – off street parking, hard and soft landscaping
- Long term void levels fallen from 17% in 2010 to 3%
- House values have risen from an average 30K in 2010 to 60K in 2016

Altogether better



Craghead Housing Regeneration Project



Altogether better



Financial Assistance Policy

Aims:

- To improve and maintain healthy living conditions within private sector housing, specifically helping homeowners on limited incomes to repair, improve or adapt their properties and facilitate independent living
- To contribute to the regeneration of areas suffering from market vulnerability
- To encourage owners to undertake works that will make their homes more energy efficient/reduce number of people affected by fuel poverty.

Supported through Repayment Loans (Capital and Interest), Equity Loans, Interest Free Loans and grants:

- Average loan of £14,367
- Average of 40 loans per annum
- Overall value of loans is £2.6 million
- Empty homes loans and grants circa £2m

Altogether better



Bringing empty homes back into use countywide

- £2.12m award from DCLG to bring 120 empty private sector properties back into use matched by £2,246,400 from DCC – created a self sustaining resource
- Access to a non-means tested interest free repayment loan of up to £15,000 and a grant for potential new home owners of up to £5,000.
- Originally allocated for targeting certain low demand areas, availability opened up across key town locations and to all band A and B properties across the County.
- To date we have provided empty property loans to the value of £1,480,664 and move in incentive grants of £315,000.
- Overall, nearly 200 empty homes back into use

Altogether better



Bringing empty homes back into use



Altogether better

Bringing empty homes back into use



Altogether better

Further work in the private rented sector

Established a county wide private landlord accreditation scheme in April 2015

Voluntary scheme that recognises landlords who offer good quality, well-managed accommodation and promotes the ongoing improvement of housing in the private rental sector.

Using the available carrots!

To date 1416 properties within the ownership of 70 landlords accredited.

Currently have 3 mandatory selective licensing areas in Wembley, Easington Colliery, West Chilton and Dean Bank in Ferryhill in total 95.5% of all licensable properties are licensed.

Altogether better



Poverty Approach

- Overall Council focus - Poverty Action Plan 5 themes:
 - Attitudes to poverty and raising its profile through partnerships
 - Focus on child poverty
 - Credit and Debt
 - Further welfare reform and benefit changes
 - Work, increasing employability, personal wellbeing and sense of worth
- Partnership working with social housing providers
- Triage – 5,000 clients assessed
- Discretionary Housing Payment
- Private rented sector
- Future challenges

Altogether better



What else are we doing to help shape the future?

- Durham Villages Regeneration Company – JV with Keepmoat to develop DCC owned land
- Chapter Homes – DCC owned arms-length company to deliver market housing for sale and rent
- Working with partners to deliver against local need – joining up our approach – more partnership, not less
- Collaboration with Registered Providers where feasible on estate regeneration
- Support the market to deliver
- Developing the tools in the box to suit local need – loans, accreditation, regulation, innovation
- Focus on poverty – poverty action plan produced
- Supporting both people and place

Altogether better



Challenges and moving forward

- Policy and austerity measures affecting people and place
- Austerity in local government
- Welfare Reform
- Housing and Planning Bill
- Affordable Homes Programme
- Future of Starter Homes
- Innovation in income generation
- Estate Regeneration (high value sites favoured)
- Influencing private sector partners
- Energy funding has been crucial
- Devolution and housing influence/importance

Altogether better



Thank You



sarah_robson@durham.gov.uk

03000 267332

Altogether better

