



The Local Environment

The Role in Regeneration in Local Areas

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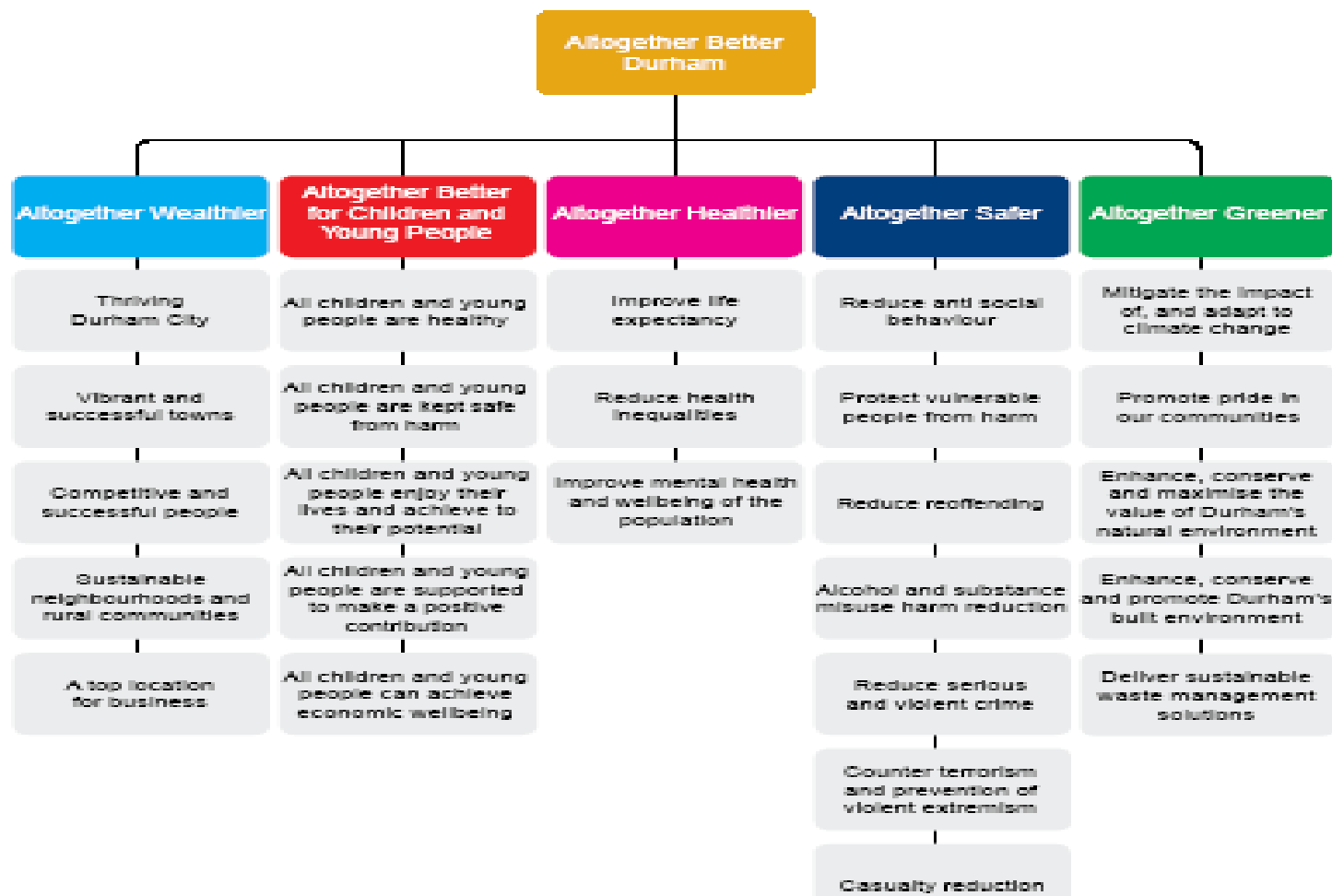
Setting the Scene

- Durham County Council
- Unitary authority created on 1st April 2009
- Brought together eight former county and district councils
- 6th largest unitary in the country
- 126 Councillors accountable to over 513,000 people in County Durham
- County covers an area of 223,260 hectares (2230 square kilometres/862 square miles) with 12 main centres with a population of over 6,000 people

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Strategic Vision for County Durham



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Making Open Spaces Work



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Enhances environmental education

Ecological – provides a habitat for nature and enables access to nature

Improves health and wellbeing

Improves mental and physical health

Feel good factor

Reduces health inequality and improves life expectancy

Does everyone accept the benefits of open spaces?

Climate change – provides shelter, reduces flood risk, urban drainage, controls water flow

Improves air quality

Encourages informal play

Local food production

Economic – attracts business and residents to the area

Looks attractive

Reduces crime and gives a sense of pride

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Quantity rather than quality

Negative effect on health and wellbeing

Complaints and frustration

Poor air quality

Unattractive

Demoralising environment

Unsustainable

What happens if we don't get this right?

Reduced physical activity

Marketing tool only

High maintenance

Dangerous habitat for nature and wildlife

Wrong location

Increased level of crime

Conservation versus development

High cost

Forgotten weed patches
and overgrowth

Disjointed approach

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Where we have done this wrong in the past ...



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What we do now ...

- Open Space Needs Assessment
- Green Infrastructure Strategy
- County Durham Plan
- Joined up approach – conservation and development in harmony
- Managing Council land differently to reflect the value and needs of local communities
- Making open spaces usable
- Adopting a sustainable and flexible approach
- Making open spaces low maintenance and economical

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Examples



NETPark – Sedgefield

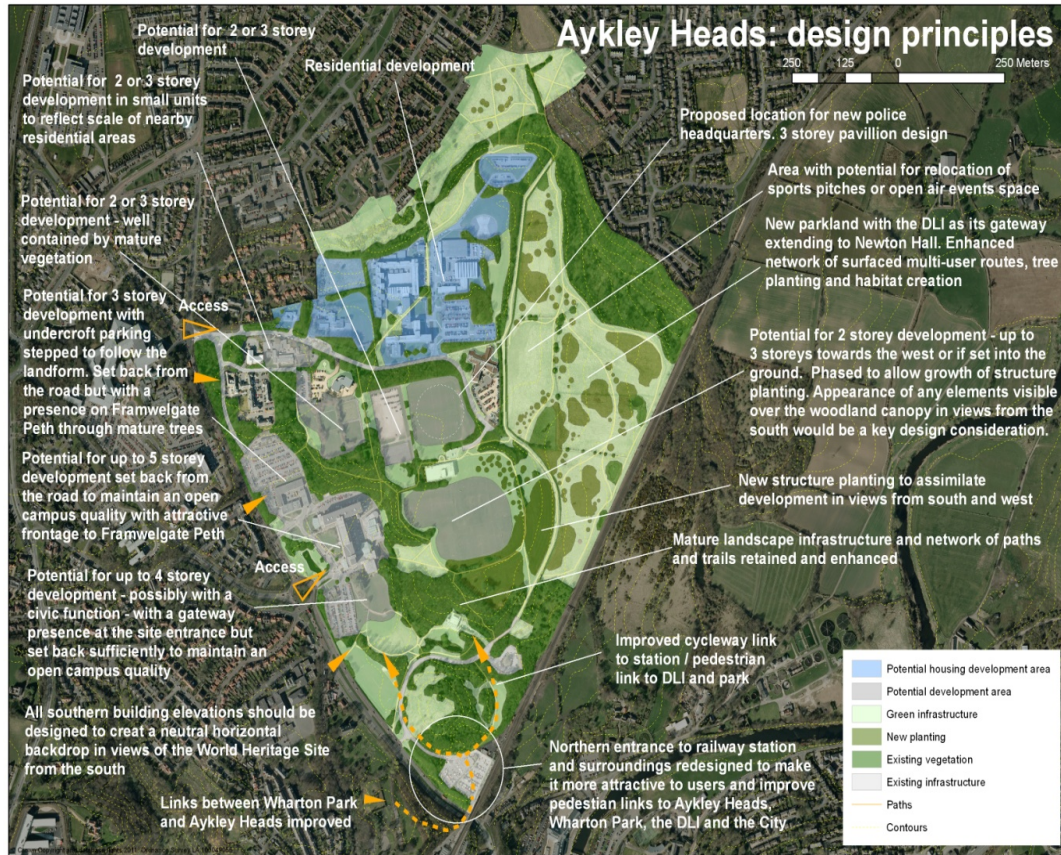
One of the fastest growing Science parks in the United Kingdom

Quality of the environment provides confidence in attracting businesses to this premium site

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Examples



Aykley Heads - Durham City

Existing landscape to be retained and a large city park created

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Examples ...



Dean Bank Housing Regeneration Scheme

Green infrastructure plan developed for a deprived area of the County to complement a regeneration initiative

Emphasis on the quality of the environment of open space and the role in addressing climate change issues



Off Street Parking and Open Space – Craghead

Green infrastructure plan developed to create off street parking and open space in a deprived area of the County

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Aligning Environmental Services with the Local Area



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Community Involvement – Key to Success

- Brings people together to share ideas and listen to the needs of others
- Reaches a consensus on solving issues and problem areas
- Enables the community be part of the process
- Creates an acceptance of the equal responsibilities between local authorities and communities to manage their surroundings
- Volunteering – increases resources and skills
- Generates a sense of pride!

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Pride in County Durham Group

- Groundwork
- CPRE
- Keep Britain Tidy
- Environment Agency
- One Voice Network
- AAPs
- Portfolio Holder
- Civic Pride Staff
- Communications
- Enforcement Staff
- Schools

“ Harness the spirit and drive of residents, community groups and businesses working with the Council to deliver a cleaner, greener County Durham.”



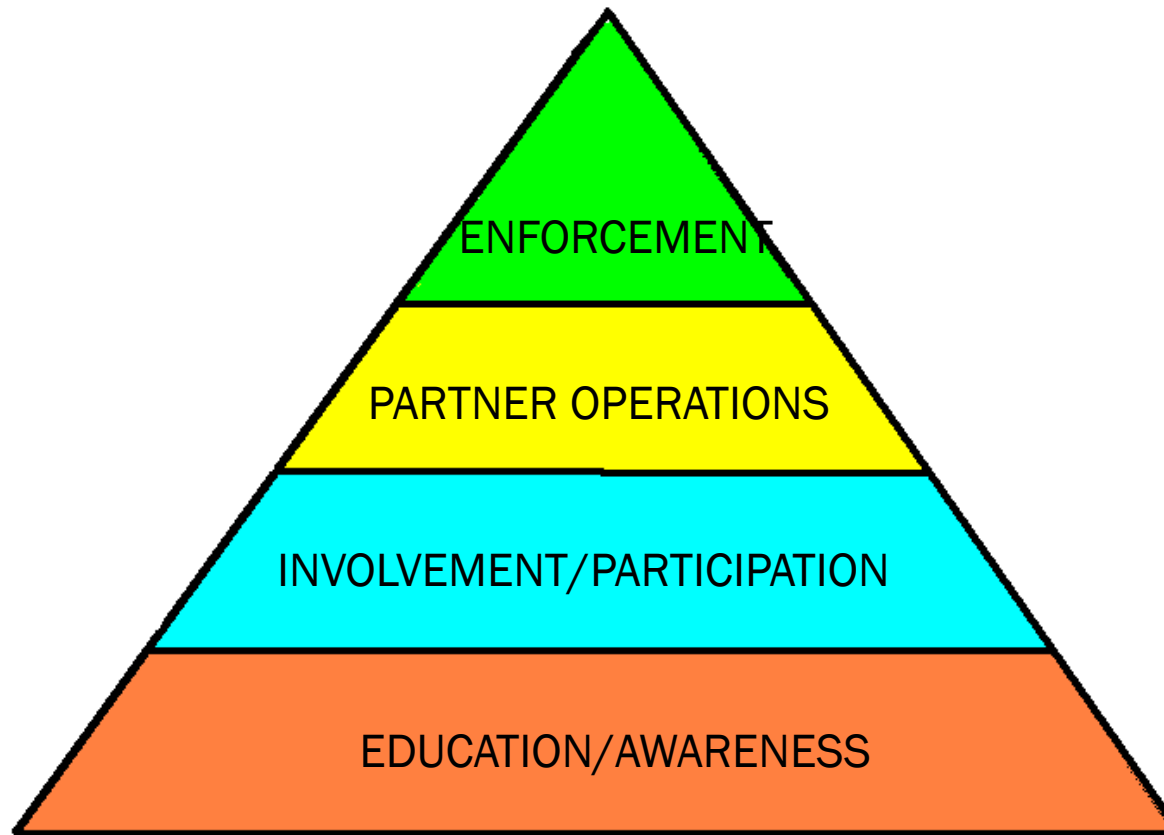
Key Objectives

- To enhance the attractiveness of our towns and villages
- To foster great community and business involvement
- To reduce envirocrime

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A simple strategy :



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Education and Awareness

- Major launch event
- Work with schools
- Anti Dog Fouling Campaign
- Food on the Go
- The Golden Ticket
- 'Open your eyes'



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Community Involvement/Participation

- Area Action Partnerships
- Campaigns
- Tidy Business Awards
- Litter Free Spring Clean
- Easier Reporting
- Volunteer Recognition



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Community Involvement/Participation



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Partner and Council Operations

- Countywide Streetscene Standards
- Green Flags
- Britain in Bloom
- Fly Tipping Partnership
- Small Change – Big Difference
- Probation and FJF Partnership



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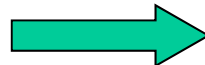
Enforcement

- New Warden service
- Bold approach
- Multi agency action
- Full use of powers to tackle eyesores



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Immediate impact



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Sustainable approach



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So how is this funded?

- Area Action Partnerships
- Member Budgets
- Town and Parish Councils
- Revenue
- Capital
- Lottery Sources
- European Grants
- Business Improvement District for Durham
- Strong Partnership Approach

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Examples of Best Practice

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Hardwick Park - Sedgfield

- Original 18th Century Parkland
- Badly neglected for many years



Original lake had been drained



Temple in disrepair

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Hardwick Park - Sedgefield

- Restoration began in 2003 with Heritage Lottery Funding
- Circuit walk created with follies
- Temple and lake restored
- Visitor centre with exhibition, shop and cafe



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Hardwick Park - Sedgefield

Now a vibrant park with Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS) accreditation providing a high quality experience for 450,000 visitors



Thriving volunteers and friends of Hardwick group



Over 6000 education visits per year

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Popular venue for community and charity events



Hardwick Park - Sedgefield

- Also a major biodiversity success
- Saved a rare butterfly, the small pearl bordered fritillary, from local extinction
- This butterfly is now thriving
- Good example of how land actively managed by local authorities provides crucial wildlife corridors



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Jubilee Woods

- Lots of previously unused Council land that didn't reflect the needs of the community
- Jubilee Woods project created as part of Queen Elizabeth's 2012 Diamond Jubilee celebrations
- 130 hectares of community woodland brought back into use across County Durham



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Lumiere

- United Kingdom's largest light festival
- 75,000 visitors to the city during the 2009 festival and 150,000 during the 2011 festival
- Needed to showcase Durham as the beautiful city that it is



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Lumiere

- Provided rubbish collections, bins and skips during and after the festival and provided street cleansing after the festival closed on each evening
- Clean up of the river and tow path and other key sites
- Carried out essential remedial work in response to any damage caused by adverse weather e.g. flooding



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Lumiere

A hugely successful event demonstrating how culture and the creative use of open space can generate income for the local economy



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Summary

- Getting it right is crucial!
- Good management – positive impact
- Poor management – negative impact
- Community involvement is key
- Maximising resources whilst giving the community a sense of pride and ownership

Remember ... a positive environment creates a positive community

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Questions

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