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# Part 1 - Background and Information

***Welcome to County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority's Community Safety Strategy which incorporates the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).***

This strategy sets out how the Authority will work towards its vision of Safest People, Safest Places.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority has been very successful in reducing the risks that face local people and local businesses.

The Authority has worked with local people, partners and stakeholders to improve its prevention services whilst ensuring it responds to emergencies efficiently and effectively.

The next four years are likely to be the most challenging the Fire Authority has faced in recent history. Resources from Government are being reduced significantly whilst risks continue to change. This strategy sets out how County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service will respond to these challenges and how it will change the way services are delivered with the aim of ensuring that reduced financial resources do not result in increases in risk to local communities.

The Fire Authority has produced this strategy to enable local people to see how their fire and rescue service will work with them, and with partners, to ensure that local communities are safe. The strategy includes information on the Authority's vision, aims and objectives, where it needs to improve and the resources that it has available to deliver its services.

Delivering on our vision of 'Safest People, Safest Places' is the focus of this strategy. For the next four years the Authority has committed to this vision and will work with local people in County Durham and Darlington to make sure that they are safe.



**Councillor Gordon Tennant**  
Chairman  
County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue  
Authority



**Susan Johnson**  
Chief Executive  
County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue  
Service



# Introduction

County Durham and Darlington Fire Authority's vision is

## Safest People, Safest Places

The Authority is focused on managing risks and ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to reduce the number of emergency incidents and the associated risk of injury or death in the local area. This Community Safety Strategy also includes the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), which sets out details of the operational risks facing local communities and how the Authority proposes to reduce the risk of injury or harm.

## What is the Community Safety Strategy?

The Community Safety Strategy is the Authority's key strategic document that sets out how it will provide its services over the next four years.

This Strategy sets out where we want to be and

also includes our Integrated Risk Management Plan proposals for the operational elements of the Service. The Strategy is aligned to achieving our vision of Safest People, Safest Places and includes the following information:

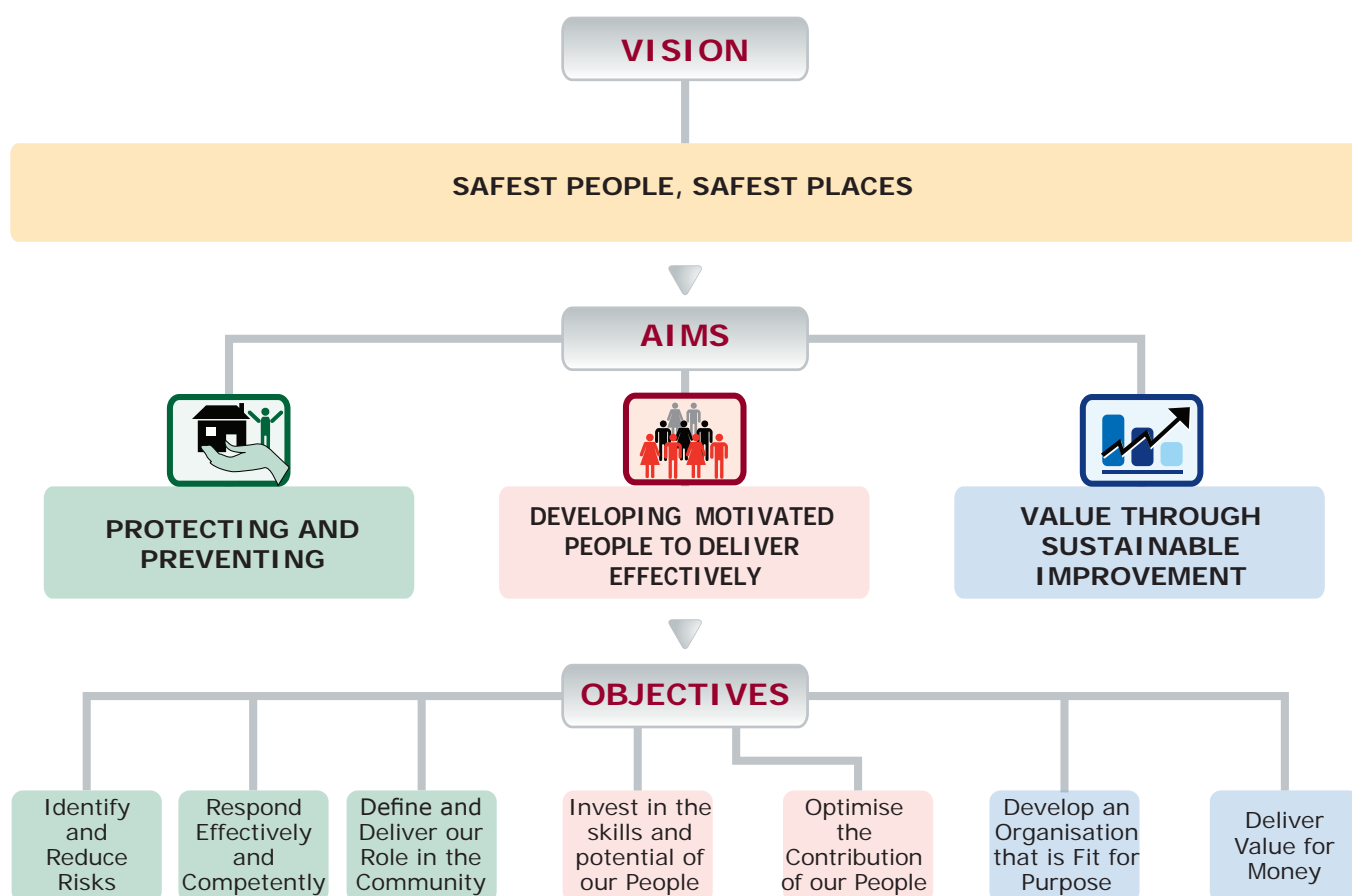
- The aims and objectives that will help to deliver the Authority's vision.
- An analysis of risks, including those in local areas and how these are being managed.
- How the Authority intends to reduce risks.
- How resources will be prioritised.
- How performance will be measured, monitored and reported.



# Vision, Aims And Objectives

## Our Strategy on One Page

To help us pursue our vision, we have three aims which are underpinned by seven objectives.



All of the work that we undertake as a Fire Authority is targeted at ensuring that our aims and objectives are achieved. Our performance is also measured against our three aims, so that we can see at a glance how well we are doing and where we need to make improvements in specific areas.

The diagram clearly demonstrates how our vision, aims and objectives link together.

Throughout the remainder of this strategy we have identified how our work links to our strategic aims by use of the three symbols. This makes it easier to see how our work is targeted at our aims and where our improvement plans are focused.



# The **Planning** and **Performance** Framework

We have a number of supporting strategies that provide details of how we will work towards meeting our aims and objectives and ultimately our vision. These strategies focus on ensuring that we have the appropriate people, skills and physical resources in the right place at the right time.

Our annual improvement plans (which are either Station plans or Section plans) provide detailed improvement actions which show exactly what we are doing to improve services on an annual basis.



**Our strategies and plans can be accessed from our website at [www.ddfire.gov.uk](http://www.ddfire.gov.uk)**

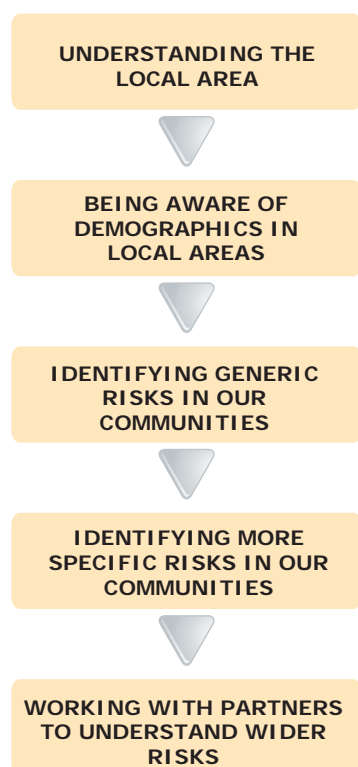


# Part 2 - Understanding and Managing the Risks in County Durham and Darlington

*This section of the Community Safety Strategy provides information on our approach to gathering information on risk. By understanding the risks in our local communities and understanding why they exist, we can allocate our resources as effectively and efficiently as possible and reduce these risks through our prevention and protection work.*

## Identifying the risks in our local communities

There are a number of factors that need to be considered in assessing risks in local areas. We try to gain as broad an understanding of risk as possible by considering those issues that are likely to have an impact on the safety and wellbeing of residents. The following diagram sets out how we build up a picture of risks in our local communities.



# Understanding the local area

County Durham and Darlington is in the North East of England and covers an area of almost 2,460 square kilometres. Durham City and the larger industrial and commercial towns are in the east of the area; in contrast the west is predominantly rural consisting of open moor land and wooded river valleys and is sparsely populated. Darlington, our largest town, lies in the South and is undergoing significant regeneration.

With good transport networks, the area is accessible by rail via the East-Coast mainline, by road via the A1 (M) and A19 and by air via Newcastle and Durham Tees Valley International Airports.

Over the last twenty-five years the traditional industries, such as coal mining and steel manufacturing, have disappeared and have been replaced by high-tech factories and modern business parks in towns such as Peterlee and Sedgefield.

Further regeneration is taking place in other local areas such as Spennymoor, Bishop Auckland and more recently with the Hitachi project in Newton Aycliffe.

Tourism plays an important part in the local economy. Key attractions such as the World Heritage site of Durham Cathedral, Beamish Museum, the North Pennines and the Durham County Cricket Ground at Chester-le-Street attract thousands of visitors each year.

The growing number of business and industrial developments such as NETPark contribute to the local economy and provide new areas of work for local people.

Durham has a world class University, and the students and graduates make a significant contribution to the local area.



# Demographics and the Effects of Deprivation

Today, 606,800\* people live in County Durham and Darlington, with just under half of these being in work. These population figures, whilst remaining fairly static in recent years, have decreased since the 1970's in line with the national trend.

The population comprises approximately 51% females and 2.2% ethnic minorities; 21.8% are under 18 and 16.6% are over 65. \*\*

Many parts of the area have housing stock that is sub-standard, falling below accepted decency levels. The area also has poor health statistics and low life expectancies. Economic activity in the area is low – almost 10% lower than the national average and, despite real improvements in recent years, educational attainment is also below the national average. Clearly these factors contribute significantly to the alarming and unacceptable levels of social deprivation observed in our area.

According to national statistics County Durham and Darlington has 12.8% of its areas in the top 10% most deprived; 29.8% in the top 20% most deprived; and 46.5% in the top 30% most deprived.

These factors impact on the risk profile for County Durham and Darlington and, therefore, help us to determine where we need to allocate resources in order to mitigate these risks.

\* ONS mid 2009 population estimates

\*\* Government Census 2001





# The Generic Risks in County Durham & Darlington

There are a number of risks that face all of our communities. Through our previous experience and our consideration of possible future events, we can build up a picture of these generic risks.

## **Risk of death, injury or loss from fire**

A risk that faces all of our communities is that related to fire. One of our main reasons for providing services to our local communities is to mitigate this risk through our prevention and protection services. The degree of risk varies depending on the local area and on the individual people and lifestyles within the local area.

## **Risk of death or injury from road traffic collisions**

We have a number of major road networks in our local area that present a risk of road traffic collisions, as well as many rural roads which also present a risk. We need to ensure that we mitigate these risks through our protection and prevention services. We have joint protocols in place with partners to deal with any major transport related incidents.

## **Risk of extreme weather**

An increasing risk relates to extreme weather. This includes risk of death, injury or loss in particular

from flooding. In recent years this risk has increased nationally. Locally we have a number of areas within County Durham and Darlington that have been subject to localised flooding. We have used our national resilience assets (see Resources section of the plan) to deal with localised flooding in the Derwentside and Durham areas.

## **Risk of Terrorist Activity**

Events over the last few years both at home and abroad have raised the risk of terrorist activity impacting on our society. The Fire and Rescue Service plays a major role in protecting the community in the event of such an incident.

## **Pandemic Flu**

Outbreaks of pandemic flu represent a national risk that will impact locally in County Durham and Darlington. High numbers of cases represent a risk to local people, businesses and the economy.

## **Industrial Incidents**

Industrial accidents pose a specific risk at individual premises and a wider risk to local communities depending on the type of accident. We provide fire safety advice to local businesses as part of our prevention and protection services and we are equipped to respond to incidents that occur.



# Specific Risks in County Durham & Darlington

We are aware that there are different risks that are specific to certain parts of our area. We manage these risks through our District structure which enables us to target our resources based on local knowledge.

## **Wear and Tees District (Bishop Auckland, Stanhope and Middleton in Teesdale Fire Stations)**

The Wear and Tees District area is located in the heart of the area covered by County Durham and Darlington. There is a mix of industrial, commercial, residential and rural areas that represent a varied range of risks that need to be managed effectively. This includes a number of large industrial estates, large scale industry, water risks relating specifically to Stanhope and Middleton, a number of important roads and a number of large social housing estates that do not meet modern standards.

## **Derwentside District (Consett and High Handenhold Fire Stations)**

The specific risks identified within the Derwentside District area relate to a significant level of low quality housing and a large number of older terraced properties. The area also includes three large hotels and sites of specific interest. Local industry consists of traditional light engineering and more modern service industry sites.

## **Darlington District (Darlington and Barnard Castle Fire Stations)**

Darlington is a large market town with a large population. The Darlington area comprises large scale industrial, commercial and residential areas resulting in a broad mix of risks. There are a large number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HiMO)

and several large housing estates. The A1M motorway passes the outskirts of Darlington and the East-Coast mainline passes through the town and serves a major rail station. Barnard Castle is predominantly rural with small scale residential areas, a hospital, a young offenders prison as well as Bowes Museum, a major heritage site housing many important works of art. The town is also home to a large scale chemical production site.

## **Easington District (Peterlee, Seaham and Wheatley Hill Fire Stations)**

The Easington District includes concentrated areas of population and industrial estates in Peterlee and Seaham. A number of industrial sites are located within the District area with their own specific risks and the busy Newcastle to Middlesbrough railway line runs through the area. The A19 road network and a number of rural roads further contribute to the diverse risks within the Easington District area.

