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هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায়, বড় প্রিন্ট আকারে এবং অডিও টেপ আকারেও অনুরোধে পাওয়া যায়।

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

Ce document est également disponible dans d'autres langues, en gros caractères et en cassette audio sur simple demande.



The Authority is responsible for setting in place appropriate performance management and internal control systems from which the information and assessments in the Plan have been derived. The Authority is satisfied that the information and assessment included in the Plan are in all material respects accurate and complete and that the Plan is realistic and achievable.



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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority's Corporate Plan 2008/09 – 2010/11 which sets out our vision, aims and objectives for our Authority over the next three years.

The role of fire and rescue services nationally has seen unprecedented change brought about by the Government's modernisation agenda for Fire and Rescue Services. We have embraced this change with a strong commitment to reduce the risk of death or injury, damage from fire and other emergencies supporting our vision of: **'Safer People, Safer Places'**.

The development of our Community Safety Strategy has focused the prevention and protection work of the Service and is at the heart of our drive to add value to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the communities in County Durham and Darlington. We have introduced a range of initiatives and campaigns such as:

The Firebreak Scheme to expand our work in the community for 13 to 16 year old students. Firebreak provides a learning environment that combines practical drill ground and discussion workshops which are aimed at improving self esteem, self-discipline and responsibility.

The introduction of a Zero Tolerance Campaign across the district of Derwentside by the District Management Team for the area. This was conducted with support from our Police partners and has seen a successful 'Crackdown on Arson' resulting in a dramatic reduction in the number of nuisance fires by 36 percent in a period of six months.



The Community Safety Strategy also sets out the basis of our contribution to the priorities established in the Local Area Agreements (LAA) for County Durham and Darlington and we actively seek to work in Partnership to deliver our part in improving the quality of life for our residents.

Our operational response teams have had a very busy year supporting local and regional communities. An incident in Wolsingham involved a fully laden Road Tanker containing highly flammable Liquid Propane which plunged down a 50 foot ravine onto the Weardale railway track. Without the skill and expertise of the crews this incident could have escalated and had a more serious impact on the local community.

Our new High Volume Pump (HVP) vehicle was deployed through a national mutual aid agreement into Humberside during the extensive floods last summer. Crews from Peterlee responded to requests from the Fire and Rescue Service National Control Centre (NCC) to assist colleagues in Humberside at the height of the flooding.

In January 2008, the Audit Commission published their latest performance assessment for our Service which highlighted that the Service performed well in all areas of service delivery from its initial analysis of risk, through to prevention and protection activities and emergency response.

Major re-organisation of Local Government in County Durham with the creation of one new Unitary Council will see the Fire Authority welcoming 12 new members in addition to 9 existing members from the new Durham Authority and 4 members from Darlington which includes 1 new member.



The year ahead will see the Authority face many challenges and opportunities. The Authority is engaged in a range of major national, regional and local projects and programmes aimed at managing and mitigating risks. This includes the development of a new Regional Control Centre which will house the 999 call handling and mobilisation function for the four Fire and Rescue Services in the North East and will be based just outside of Durham City. Other developments include two new community fire stations for Bishop Auckland and Spennymoor to be built under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and a new Service Headquarters and training centre.

We are committed to delivering a safe and professional service for our citizens, ensuring value for money within a culture of working in partnership to make our residents and our places across the County and Borough safer.

S Johnson  
Chief Executive

Cllr C Magee  
Chairman of the Fire Authority



## ONE VISION



County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority has a statutory duty to provide a fire and rescue service for the residents of County Durham and Darlington under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Further to this, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places additional statutory responsibilities on the Authority and other agencies to ensure a coordinated and collaborative approach to emergency planning, response and recovery work in the event of major, large scale incidents.

It is important that this Service is both fit for purpose and exceeds the needs of our diverse communities. As such we are constantly aware of the changing environment in which we operate and review our strategic direction and priorities accordingly.

In 2006/07 we actively engaged our partners, private sector businesses, members of the public and staff in such a review resulting in an aspirational and focused vision:

*'Safer People, Safer Places'*



## STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Supporting the vision are our three strategic aims and seven objectives:

### Protecting and preventing

1. identify and reduce risks from fire and other hazards to achieve safer, stronger communities
2. respond effectively and competently to prevent loss of life, injury and damage, with resources targeted to risk
3. define and deliver our role in the community to improve the well-being and quality of life for our communities

### Developing motivated people to deliver effectively

4. invest in the skills and potential of all our people through continuous personal and professional development
5. optimise the contribution of all our people in a rewarding, challenging and safe environment

### Value through sustainable improvement

6. develop an organisation that is fit for purpose to meet the changing needs of our communities
7. deliver value for money with prioritisation of available resources based on risk

Annex 1 provides details of our measures and targets for these strategic objectives.



## OUR CROSS CUTTING THEMES



define the way in which we will operate to deliver our strategy. They are:

- to work in partnership, when appropriate, with all relevant local, regional and national agencies to ensure a cohesive and sustainable service to our communities
- to ensure our work reflects the diversity of the communities we serve and deliver a service that is equitable, transparent and accountable
- to engage positively with all our stakeholders using clear and relevant communication, listening and acting upon their service needs
- to achieve a strong, community led, values driven culture that is reflected in all aspects of our work

## OUR CORE VALUES

define the way in which we will behave when carrying out our day to day activities. They are:

- to value service to the community by: striving for excellence in all we do; working with all groups to reduce risk; treating everyone fairly and with respect, being answerable to those we serve and striving for excellence in all we do
- to value our employees by practising and promoting: fairness and respect; recognition of merit; honesty, integrity and mutual trust; personal development and cooperative and inclusive working
- to value diversity in the Service and Community by: treating everyone fairly and with respect; providing varying solutions to different needs and expectations; promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the Service and challenging prejudice and discrimination
- to value improvement at all levels of the Service by: accepting responsibility for our performance; being open minded; considering criticism thoughtfully; learning from our experience and consulting others

## OUR PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT MODEL

Our Planning and Performance Management Model (Figure 1) clearly sets out our 'golden thread' that links strategy to delivery and ensures that individuals across the organisation have a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities and contribution to our overall vision for the Service. For the vision to be realised, however, it is important that risk and performance management, our core values (how we behave) and our cross cutting themes (how we work) are mainstreamed throughout.

### About this Plan

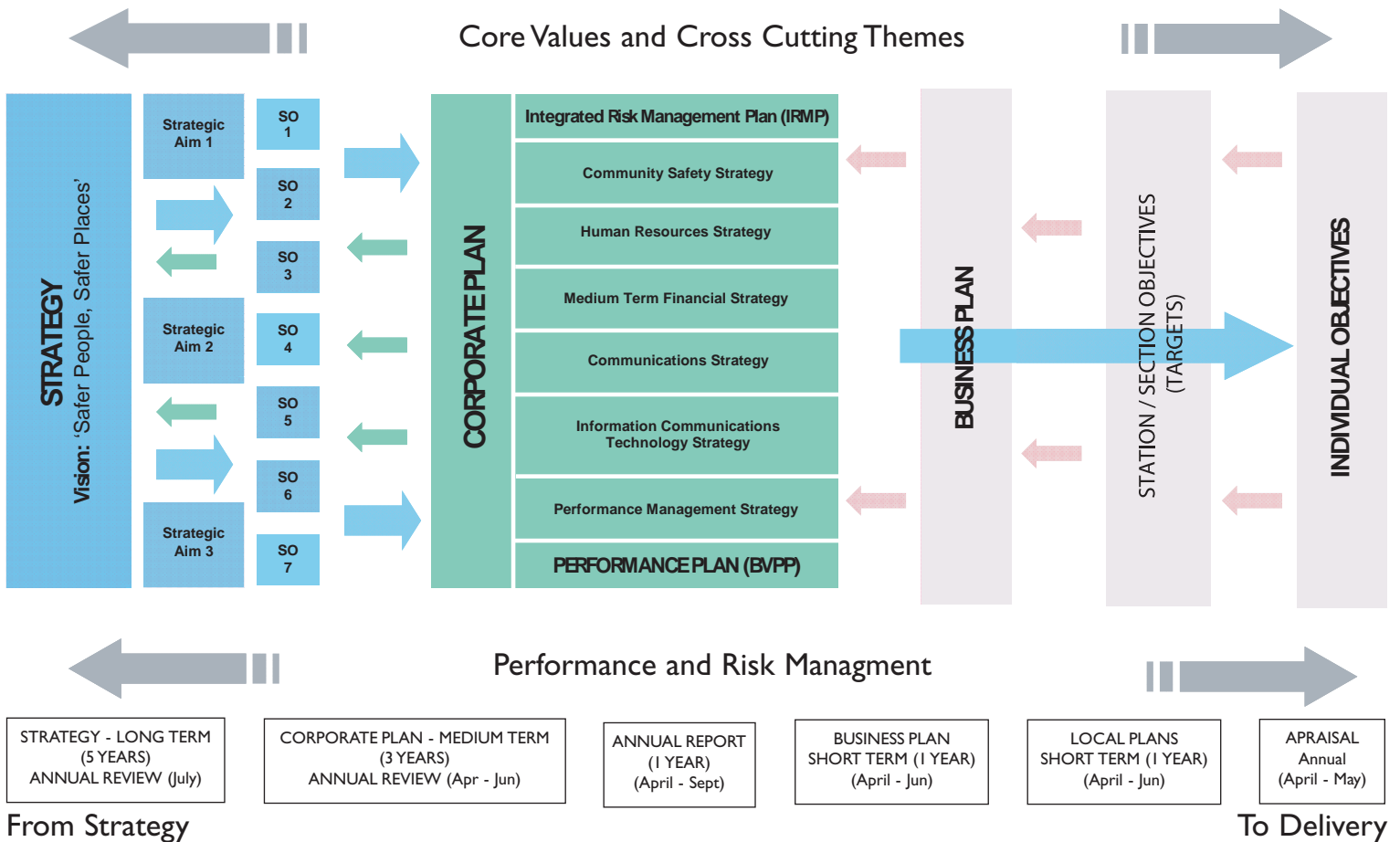
This Corporate Plan 2008/09 – 2010/11 represents our medium and short term plans and activities that will enable us to achieve our long term aims and objectives. It sets out:

- our overall **long term** Strategy (2008/09 – 2012/13) – our vision, aims and objectives and associated improvement targets;
- our performance over the last three years and our strategies and associated improvement targets for the **medium term** (2008/09 - 2010/11); and
- our **short term** business plan improvement projects for 2008/09.





Figure 1: Our Planning and Performance Management Model





## AREA PROFILE

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 providing local employment opportunities. Durham has a world class

University; the number, range and quality of graduates are a major contribution to the area.

Tourism continues to grow and plays an important part in the local economy; key attractions such as the World Heritage site of Durham Cathedral, Beamish Museum and the National Railway Museum at Shildon attract thousands of visitors each year.

Upper Teesdale in the North Pennines, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is home to England's highest waterfall, High Force. Darlington also boasts many cultural attractions such as; the Arts Centre, the Brick Train and the Civic Theatre.





## DEMOGRAPHICS

Today, approximately 600,000 people live in County Durham and Darlington and just under half of these (284,000) are economically active. These population figures, whilst remaining fairly static in recent years, have decreased since the 1970s 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 (Source: Government Census 2001).

Many parts of the area have housing stock that is sub-standard, falling below accepted decency levels and this, combined with lifestyles associated with the industrial past, has resulted in the area also having the worst health and lowest life expectancies. In addition 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 substantially to the alarming levels of social deprivation observed in our area. Significant statistics are as follows:

County Durham and Darlington has 16.4% of its Super Output Areas<sup>1</sup> (SOAs) in the top 10% most deprived; 33.2% in the top 20% most deprived; and 49.3% in the top 30% most deprived (Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004).

The District of Easington has the most significant levels of deprivation in the North East within the top 10%, 20% and 30% categories (50.8%, 71.4%; and 82.5% respectively) and has the sixth worst levels in the country.

	Number of SOAs	Number of SOAs in Top 30% Most Deprived	Percentage of SOAs in Top 30% Most Deprived
England	32,482	9,744	30.0
North East	1,656	846	51.1
County Durham and Darlington	383	189	49.3
Easington	63	52	82.5

*“A Super Output Area consists of an average of 1,500 persons”*



## FOCUSING ATTENTION WHERE IT IS MOST NEEDED

In the past we have kept records of every incident that we have attended and from these we have been able to establish where fires are most likely to occur and what are the most probable causes. For the past three years, we have also been using a computer modelling programme, known as FSEC (Fire Service Emergency Cover) to map a range of information including building location, special risks and road networks against our station locations and resources. Using historic incident data and local demographic information, FSEC calculates the level of risk in the area against current service provision. This information allows us to focus our attention to where it is needed most.

As a result we continue to deliver our front line Service via six District areas; Darlington, Derwentside, Durham, Easington, Sedgfield and Wear/Tees. This placing of our operational, community and fire safety staff in local areas enables us to provide a more integrated, cohesive and focused approach to addressing local risks, as well improving access to services and advice for local residents and members of our business community.

**Key Fact:**

Driving higher risks of injury in the home are the number of:

- lone pensioners;
- people with limiting long term illnesses;
- rented accommodation;
- social deprivation;
- people who are alcohol and drug dependent

Located at our Headquarters site at Framwellgate Moor are our support functions, emergency call centre and County Durham and Darlington's Civil Contingencies Unit.

Overall the Authority employs 685 personnel across its four Service Departments of Corporate Services, Community Safety, Operations and Organisational and People Development.

**Staff Numbers**

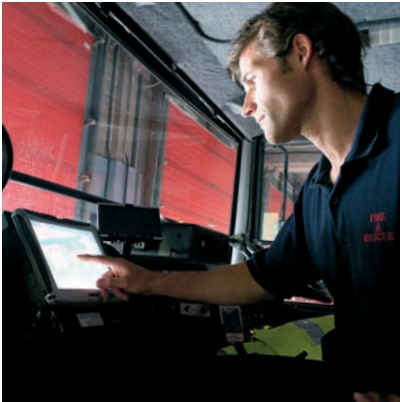
	2006/07	2007/08
Whole-time Fire-fighters	378	384
Retained Fire-fighters	168	168
Control Room Staff	26	26
Support Staff	81	96*
Civil Contingencies Staff	11	11

\*Community Safety employ 46 staff



# 'FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE IS IMPROVING'

## A LOOK BACK AT OUR IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY



In 2005 we were rated as a 'FAIR' Authority by the Audit Commission (AC) in the first ever round of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for Fire and Rescue Authorities. This assessment looked at how well we were being managed.

Since then we have been subject to two further assessments under the AC's new performance framework. In 2006/07 we were judged as Improving Well. However, in our latest performance assessment, as the Audit Commission uses performance indicators from a period in which fire deaths sadly increased from 1 to 4, this limited our overall performance to Improving Adequately.

This most recent assessment highlighted that the Service performed well in all areas of service delivery from its initial analysis of risk, through to prevention and protection activities and emergency response. The report added "its prevention and protection work is particularly good and the service has forged strong links with statutory and non-statutory partners. This is producing good results in reducing fires and fire related incidents and contributing to a safer area".

- **Service Assessment:** to evaluate how well we deliver our front line Services.

**Result:** 'Adequate Performance'

**Comparisons:** sixteen Fire and Rescue Services nationally received the same outcome.

- **Use of Resources Assessment:** to establish how well the Authority manages and uses its resources; and delivers value for money.

**Result:** 'Performing Well'

**Comparisons:** thirty seven Fire and Rescue Services<sup>1</sup> nationally received the same outcome of 'performing well'; only four received the 'performing strongly' outcome with six achieving the minimum requirement rating of 'adequate performance'.

- **Direction of Travel Assessment:** to determine the level of improvement since the original CPA assessment.

**Result:** 'Improving Adequately'

**Comparisons:** eighteen Fire and Rescue Services<sup>1</sup> nationally received the same outcome of 'improving adequately'; with five receiving the top rating of 'improving strongly' and twenty three being assessed as 'improving well'.

Full details of the outcomes of these assessments and comparisons with other Fire and Rescue Services can be found on the Audit Commission's website: [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk).

<sup>1</sup>CPA assessed 47 Fire and Rescue services nationally

Safer People, Safer Places'



## TRANSITION FROM CPA TO COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (CAA)



CPA will be replaced in April 2009 with Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) which will provide the first independent assessment of the prospects for local areas and the quality of life for people living there. It will put the experience of citizens, people who use services and local taxpayers at the centre of a new local assessment framework, with particular focus on those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

This focus on outcomes for local people requires CAA to look across councils, health bodies, police forces, fire and rescue authorities and others responsible for local public services, which are increasingly expected to work in partnership to tackle the challenges facing their communities.

In so doing, CAA will:

- act as a catalyst for improvement in the quality of life for citizens, the experience of people who use services and value for money for taxpayers;
- provide a source of independent information and assurance for citizens, users and central government; and
- help to co-ordinate, rationalise and target inspection, improvement support and intervention where they are most needed.

CAA will cover issues like reducing inequalities in health and education, increasing the availability of affordable housing, reducing the fear of crime, improving educational achievement, attracting investment and reducing each area's carbon footprint. Its focus will vary from place to place depending on local priorities.



## SUPPORTING LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS (LAA)

Local Area Agreements (LAA) set out the priorities for action in a particular area. The agreement is between Central Government and the local area. Central Government is represented by the regional Government Office and the local area by Local Authorities and other organisations, such as, health authorities, police, fire and rescue, businesses, voluntary and community groups. These stakeholders work together in an umbrella group known as a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The LSP draws up a Sustainable Community Strategy setting out the long term priorities for its area. It aims to get the whole community involved in developing and implementing the Local Area Agreement, which forms the delivery plan for the first three years of the strategy. LAA's are an important focus and challenge for Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) across the UK. County Durham and Darlington FRS is well placed to build on our strong partnership links to enable us to make a significant contribution to the County Durham and Darlington LAA's. The work and projects set out within this plan will assist the service deliver positive outcomes, tackling the causes of risk in communities rather than just their symptoms.

