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## PART I - BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

### Welcome to County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority's Community Protection Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan.

This document includes the second year of the Authority's three year Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) projects that are being progressed as part of the IRMP priorities agreed in the 2009/10 – 2011/12 plan. These priorities, which remain in place for 2010/11, are outlined on page 29 of this plan.

This plan outlines how key improvements have been made to reduce risk and to make our communities and businesses safer. Performance in key areas continues to improve. This plan outlines how we plan to continue our improvement journey in 2010/11 as we work towards our vision of Safest People, Safest Places.

It is vital that our Service is fit for purpose and exceeds the needs of our diverse communities. We are aware of the changing environment in which we operate and review our strategic direction and priorities accordingly. The United Kingdom continues to face significant financial challenges which will place greater and different risks on our communities over the coming years. We are committed to making County Durham and Darlington the safest places in the UK. For further information on our work and initiatives, please visit our website at [www.ddfire.gov.uk](http://www.ddfire.gov.uk)



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Johnson'.

**Susan Johnson**  
*Chief Executive*



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Tennant'.

**Councillor Gordon Tennant**  
*Chairman of Fire and Rescue Authority*



## INTRODUCTION



This Community Protection Plan is the Combined Fire Authority's key strategic plan, outlining how it will achieve its vision of:

### *'Safest People, Safest Places'*

The publication meets the Authority's statutory duty to publish a three year Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), setting out an analysis of the risks within local communities, and how we intend to protect, prevent and respond to reduce these risks. The achievement of our vision can only become a reality if the whole organisation works effectively in partnership. This combined publication allows us to set out how the Service will work with others to reduce the risks within our communities.

We believe that having one strategic document makes it easier for our staff, partners, residents and businesses to understand exactly what we are trying to achieve in relation to:

- Our aims and objectives
- How we analyse and identify the risks within our communities
- How we plan to reduce these risks
- How we plan to prioritise our resources in accordance with this plan
- How we will monitor our performance

*"We believe that having one strategic document makes it easier for our staff, partners, residents and businesses to understand exactly what we are trying to achieve".*





## HOW WE APPROACH RISK MANAGEMENT - THE INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP)

### Operational Risks

Our approach to managing risk ensures that we take account of the complex and changing needs of our communities. We undertake an assessment of local risks in order to determine the causes and establish how we can eliminate, reduce or mitigate the impact of these risks. Our strategic aims and objectives are reviewed to ensure that the overall strategy of the Service takes account of any requirement for us to change our approach, either because of changes to the risk profile of the area or because of a change in policy at a national, regional or local level. We have outlined some of these areas later in the plan.

We assess the frequency, size and outcomes of previous operational incidents and balance this data with indicators of potential future risks. This is informed from a variety of sources such as the National Risk Register, the Community Risk Register and data gathered by our partner organisations.

### Corporate Risks

We also face a number of corporate risks that we need to manage as an organisation. This includes the availability of financial resources, the corporate governance of the organisation in accordance with statute and ensuring effective communications are in place. Whilst

the link to the impact on local communities is less direct, we must ensure that the risks are managed effectively to avoid any adverse impact on our front-line service provision and our ability to meet our overall vision.

We believe that our IRMP consolidates our approach to risk management through one strategic plan ensuring that our resources are prioritised based on the identified risks.

### IRMP priorities

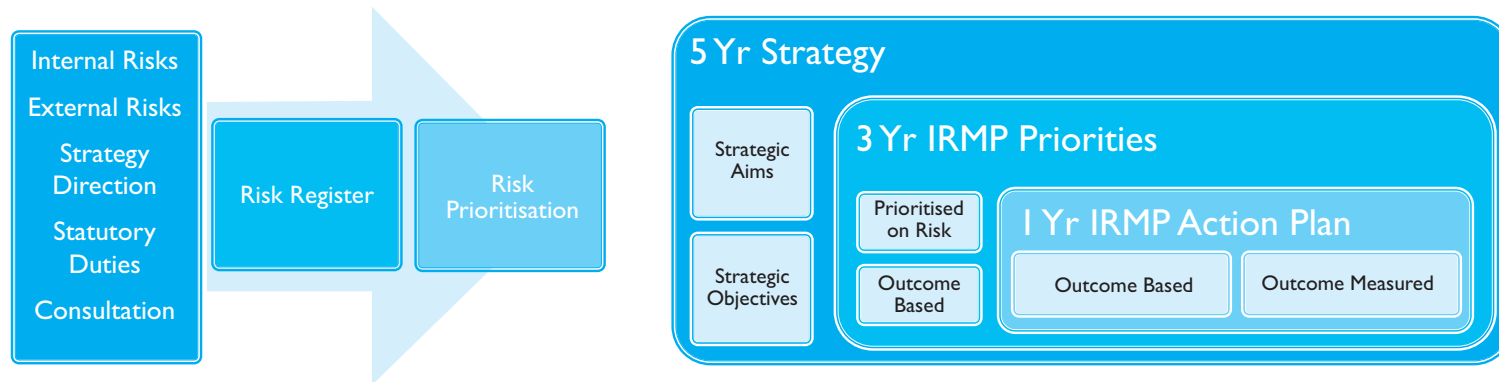
The Authority's six IRMP priorities (see page 10) were established in 2009/10 and have been reviewed as part an overall strategic review that examined the risks facing our communities and the organisation. The priorities on which the IRMP is focused remain our key areas of attention and the projects and work of the Service will deliver real benefits.

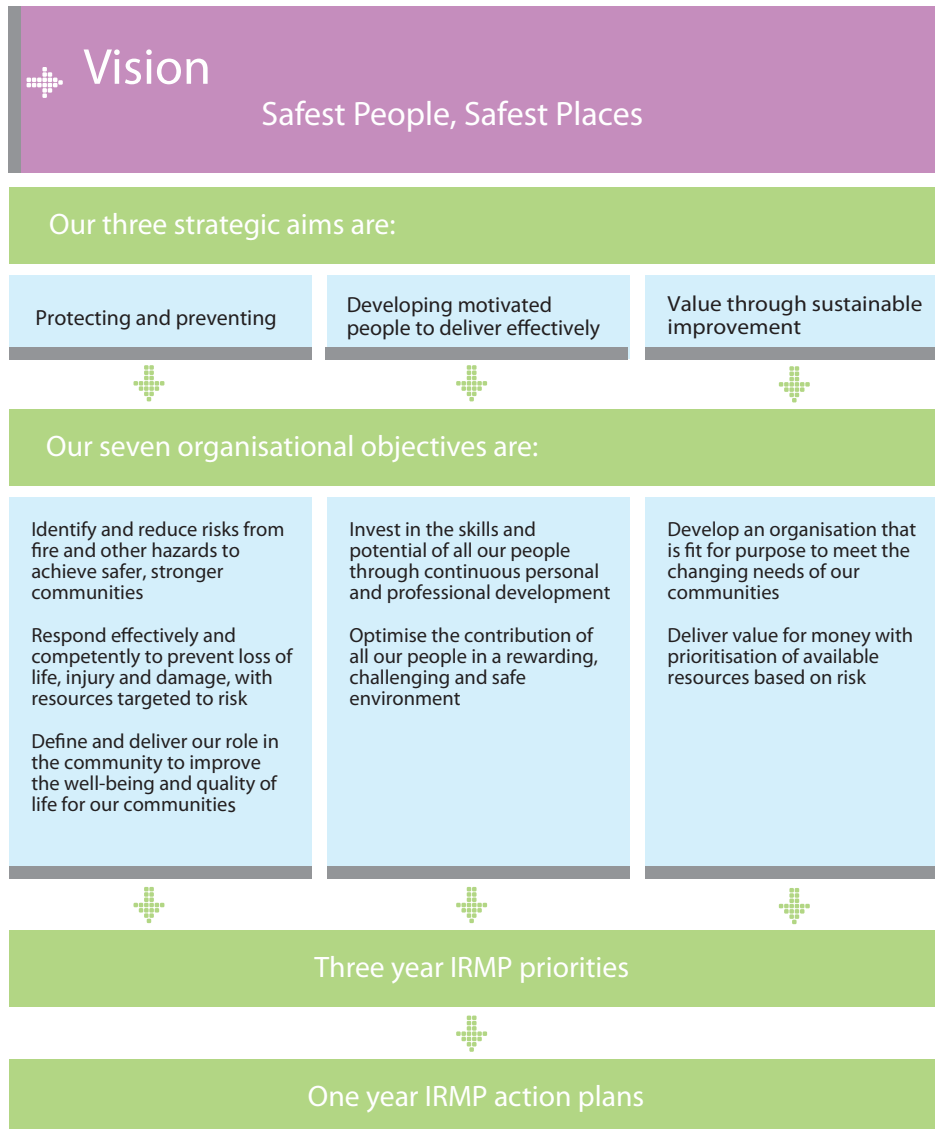
### IRMP Projects

Our IRMP projects are focused on reducing the risks we have identified. This plan outlines our main projects that we will progress in 2010/11. These projects are supplemented with other work within each Directorate of the Service to ensure risks are addressed.



# TURNING OUR VISION INTO ACTIONS

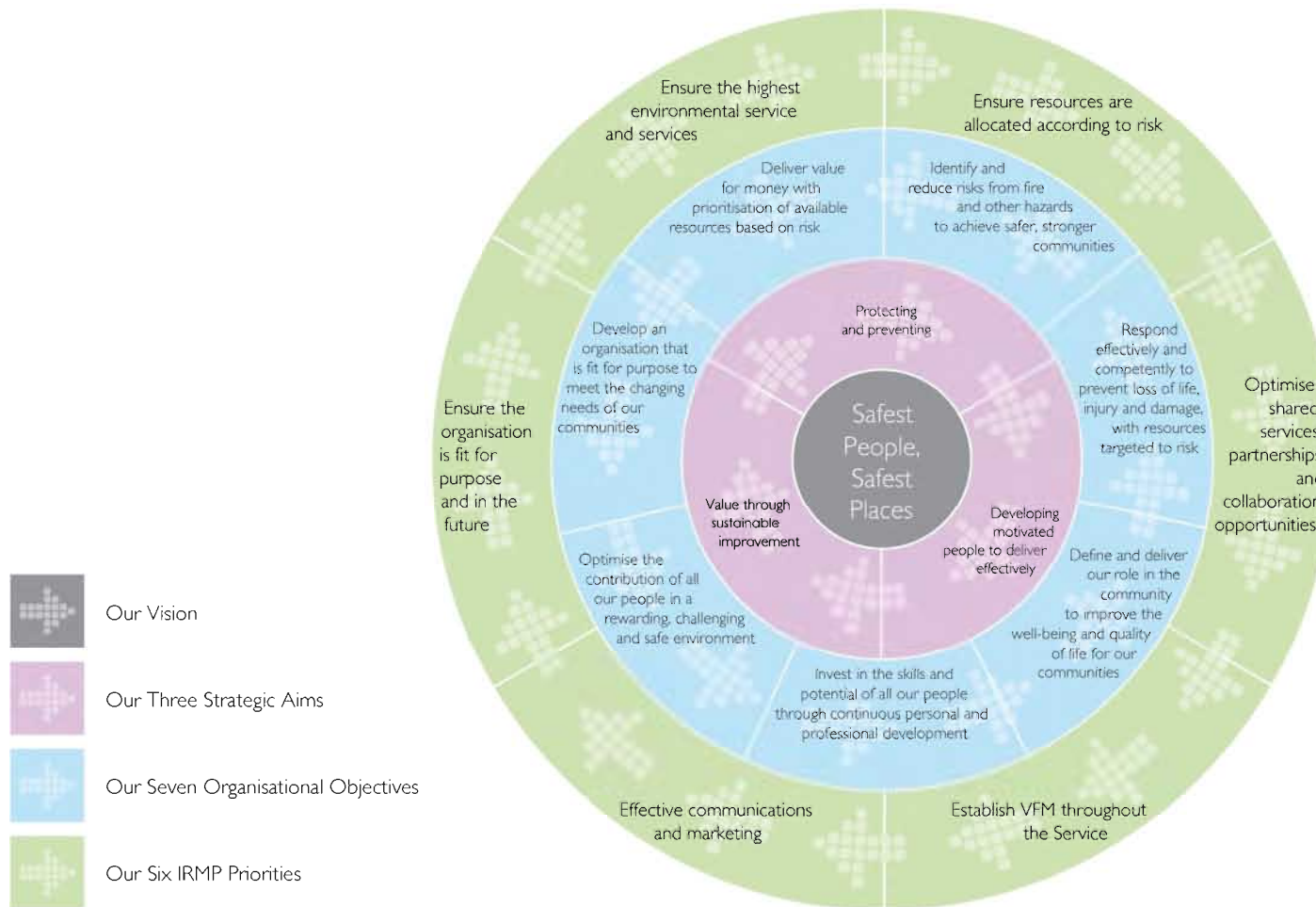




### Aims and Objectives

Our aims and objectives underpin the IRMP and set out the Service's longer term strategic approach to achieving its vision. They reflect the fact that we want to be recognised as the best Fire and Rescue Service in the United Kingdom. This will enable us to deliver on our vision and will ultimately mean that the people that live and work in, or are visitors to, County Durham and Darlington are safe.

# ALIGNING OUR VISION AND 3 YEAR PRIORITIES







## HOW WE ASSESS RISKS AND CHALLENGES

### Resources in the Right Places - How has our IRMP been developed?

Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) is about allocating resources in the most effective and dynamic way to improve public safety, reduce the number of fire incidents and save lives. It considers the hazards that have the potential to cause damage, injury and harm, as well as the lessons to be learned from the risks evident in previous fires and emergency incidents.

A key consideration when developing this plan was to ensure that addressing the needs of our community was at the heart of our planning and risk reduction processes. This document fully integrates with our other key plans, policies, procedures and all staff and key stakeholders were given the opportunity to assist with the development of this plan. We have ensured that our Corporate, Community and Section Risk Registers reflect the ever changing environment we work and live in.



• Bishop Auckland crew

## PART 2 - CHALLENGES AND RISKS

**This section of the Community Protection Plan provides information on the risks that face our communities and the Combined Fire Authority. The information in this section of the plan is considered when establishing our IRMP priorities and work plans.**

### Our 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 Sedgfield.

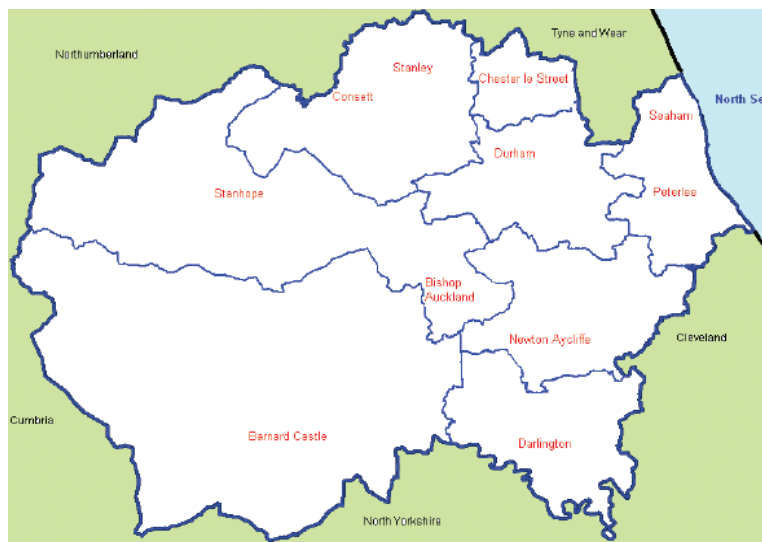
Tourism plays an important part in the local economy; key attractions such as the World Heritage site of Durham Cathedral, Beamish

Museum, the North Pennines and the County Cricket Ground attract thousands of visitors each year.

The growing number of business and industrial developments such as NETPark also contribute to the local economy by providing employment opportunities.

Durham has a world class University where the number, range and quality of graduates are a major contribution to the area.

All the above factors contribute to a diverse risk profile which needs to be considered carefully when we are allocating our resources to prevention, protection and response activities.





# COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE PROFILE

We deliver our front line Service via six District areas: Darlington, Derwentside, Durham, Easington, Sedgefield and Wear and Tees. Placing 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 as improving access to services and advice for local residents and members of our business community.

Located at our Headquarters site at Framwellgate Moor are our support functions and Command and Control Centre and an operational fire station covering Durham City area.

Overall the Authority employs 682 personnel across its four Service Directorates of Corporate Services, Community Safety, Operations and Organisational and People Development



## Staff Numbers

	2008/09	2009/10
Whole-time Fire-fighters	390	388
Part-time Fire-fighters	168	168
Control Room Staff	26	26
Support Staff	100	100



## DEMOGRAPHICS

Today, 609,000\* people live in County Durham and Darlington, with just under half of these being 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 poor health statistics and low 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 significantly to the alarming and unacceptable levels of social deprivation observed in our area.

County Durham and Darlington has 16.4% of its Super Output Areas (SOAs) in the top 10% most deprived, 33.2% in the top 20% most deprived and 49.3% in the top 30% most deprived.

The former 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.

Again 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 2008 population estimates.



	Number of SOA's	Number of SOA's in Top 30% Most deprived	Percentage of SOA's in Top 30% Most deprived
England	32,482	9744	30
North East	1,656	846	51.1
County Durham & Darlington	383	189	49.3
Easington	63	52	82.5

*“These factors impact on the risk profile for County Durham and Darlington and therefore help us to determine where we need to allocate resources.”*



## NEW AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

There are a number of national, regional and local influences that have and will continue to impact on the Authority over the life of this plan. It is important that we consider the impact of these challenges at an early stage and put strategies in place to ensure that we are well prepared to deal with them.

### The Economic Recession

One of the most significant challenges that will face our Fire Authority over the life of this plan is the impact of the economic recession on public sector spending. We are anticipating significant reductions to our funding that we need to prepare for and manage effectively. There is also evidence to suggest that as economic circumstances of citizens worsen, changes in behaviour will place an increasing demand on our services. Even in the early stages of the recession we have witnessed increased activity levels associated with changing attitudes towards burning alternative fuels and we expect the demand for our services to continue increasing over the life of this plan and potentially beyond. Balancing these significant risks is challenging for our Service and a change in thinking is required.

### Local Government

The creation of the new Unitary Authority in County Durham and continued work with Darlington Borough Council has provided a range of opportunities for the Fire Authority to improve the services we provide to our communities. Partnership working is a vital part of the way we deliver our services and provides an opportunity to lever the greatest benefit for the community from across all relevant organisations. We will continue to explore opportunities to share services, form partnerships and work in collaboration with all our partner organisations in order to provide effective and efficient services. We see both Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council as the key partners to help us achieve our objectives and help communities through the economic downturn.

### Equality and Diversity

The Fire Authority faces a significant challenge to ensure that its workforce represents the communities we serve. To achieve this we need to ensure that female and minority ethnic residents see the Fire and Rescue Service as a career opportunity. We also need to focus our activity to the specific needs of the various diverse groups that make up our communities. To do this we need to engage with and understand the needs of all groups within our communities irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

### Public Expenditure

The effects of the recession will impact on public expenditure and on our Service. We anticipate the financial settlement that we receive from the Government to worsen significantly over the next three years. This coupled with reducing incomes for local council taxpayers, places a significant challenge on the Service to meet increasing demands for services when expenditure on public services is reducing. The impact of this issue is further discussed in Part 3.

### Efficiencies

As with all public sector services, the Fire Service is expected to become more efficient and to use funds released from these efficiencies to maintain services or to reduce costs. A study into fire service efficiency "Rising to the Challenge" - identifies efficiency savings of over £200M achievable nationally if the best practice areas that have been introduced in certain services are embraced by all Fire and Rescue Services. We need to further determine how these efficiencies will be realised whilst continuing to provide a first class service to our communities. The anticipated reduction in central funding increases the importance of progressing efficiencies and savings over the life of this plan. Further information is shown on page 25.