

# Local Government Reorganisation: County Durham

*Altogether better*



# Outline

- Introduction to County Durham
- Background to LGR in County Durham
- The change programme
- Reflections

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# North East



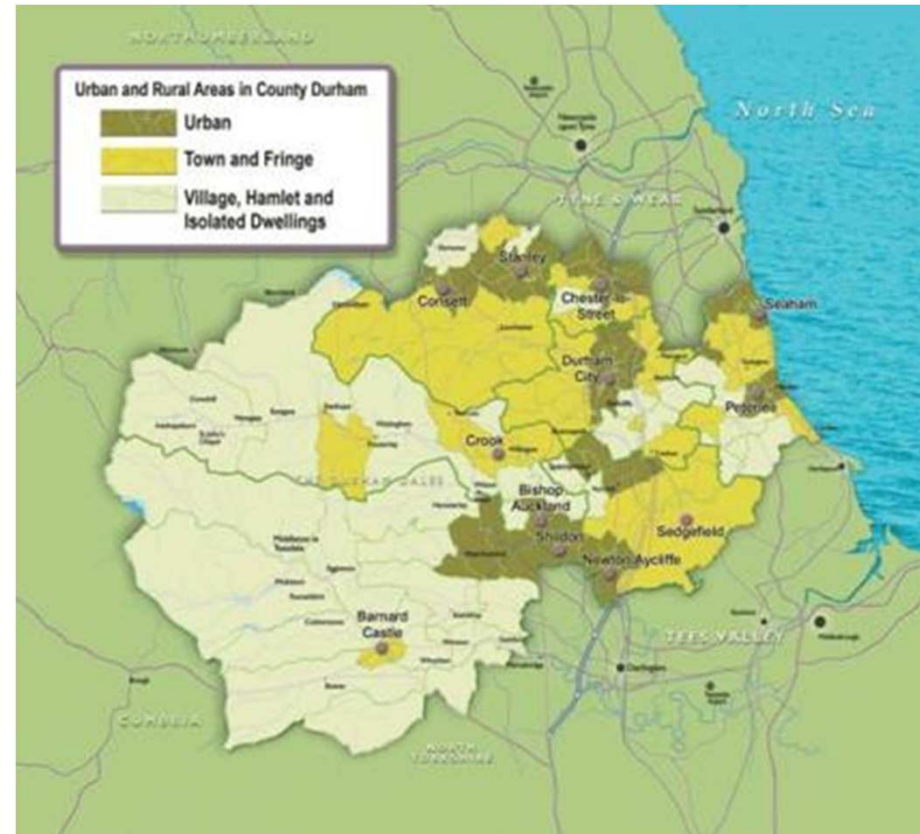
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# County Durham Profile

- 862 square miles (223,260 ha)
- 510,800 residents
- 219,000 households
- 12 major settlements
- 62<sup>nd</sup> most deprived out of 326 authorities
- 45.5% of population live in 30% most deprived areas
- 49% of working age population on JSA
- 9.1% population ESA or IB

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# Background to LGR 2009

1992-2002	Local government commission headed by Sir John Banham
1994	Government confirmed proposal for a Darlington unitary authority
1995	Structural Change Order for creation of Darlington unitary authority laid
1997	Darlington unitary authority created
2002	Soundings taken on appetite for referendum on regional assembly
2003	Local government review led by Boundary Committee
2004	North East regional assembly and contingent local government reorganisation vote
October 2006	Local Government White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'
December 2007	<b>Government confirmed their final decision on unitary proposals</b>
2007/08	<b>Legal challenges</b>
Feb 2008	<b>Parliamentary approval for new unitary authority</b>
May 2008	<b>Shadow unitary authority election</b>
Summer 2008	<b>Chief Executive recruited</b>
Autumn 2008	<b>Corporate Management Team recruited</b>
April 2009	<b>Vesting day</b>

# County Durham pre-2009

- Eight separate authorities.
- Variable service performance ranging from 'excellent' in some cases to 'poor' CPA ratings in others.
- Some services, e.g. housing in 'special measures'.
- Variable performance in terms of running costs, ranging from large economic units to some of the smallest district councils in the country.
- Large number of elected Members involved in making decisions – more executive councillors in County Durham than Ministers in central government.

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# Bid vision for the new council

“Our vision for local government in the County is of a new unitary council committed to developing a **prosperous, safe and sustainable future** for County Durham, **listening** to and **working** with **local** people, **leading** and **shaping** our communities and working in **partnership** to ensure **quality, cost effective** services.”

- However developed further after LGR

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# Key aims of the new council

- Built around citizens and communities
- Improved public services
- Stronger community leadership
- Clear accountability
- Cost effective and efficient
- Simpler system

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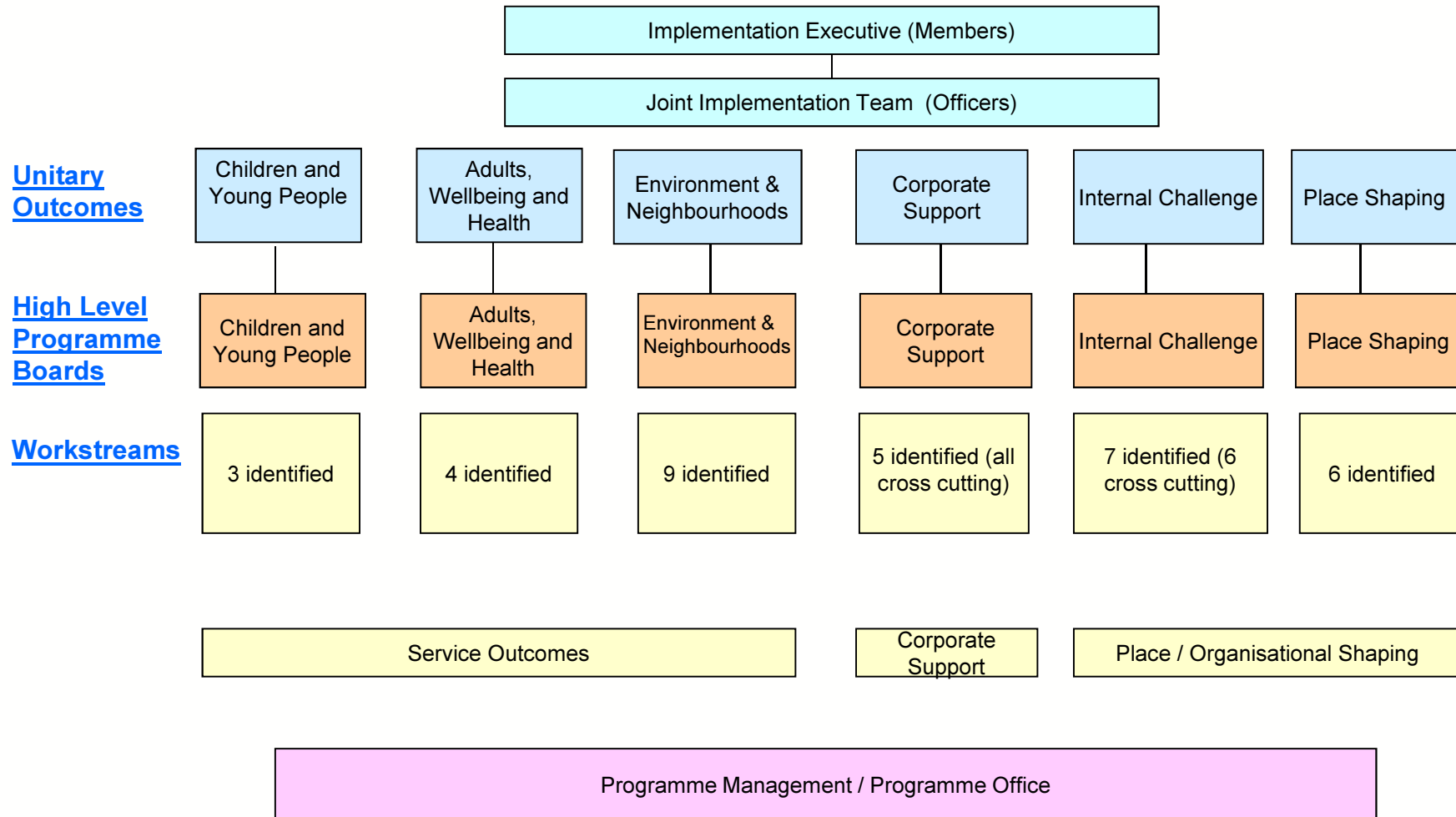


# The Change Programme

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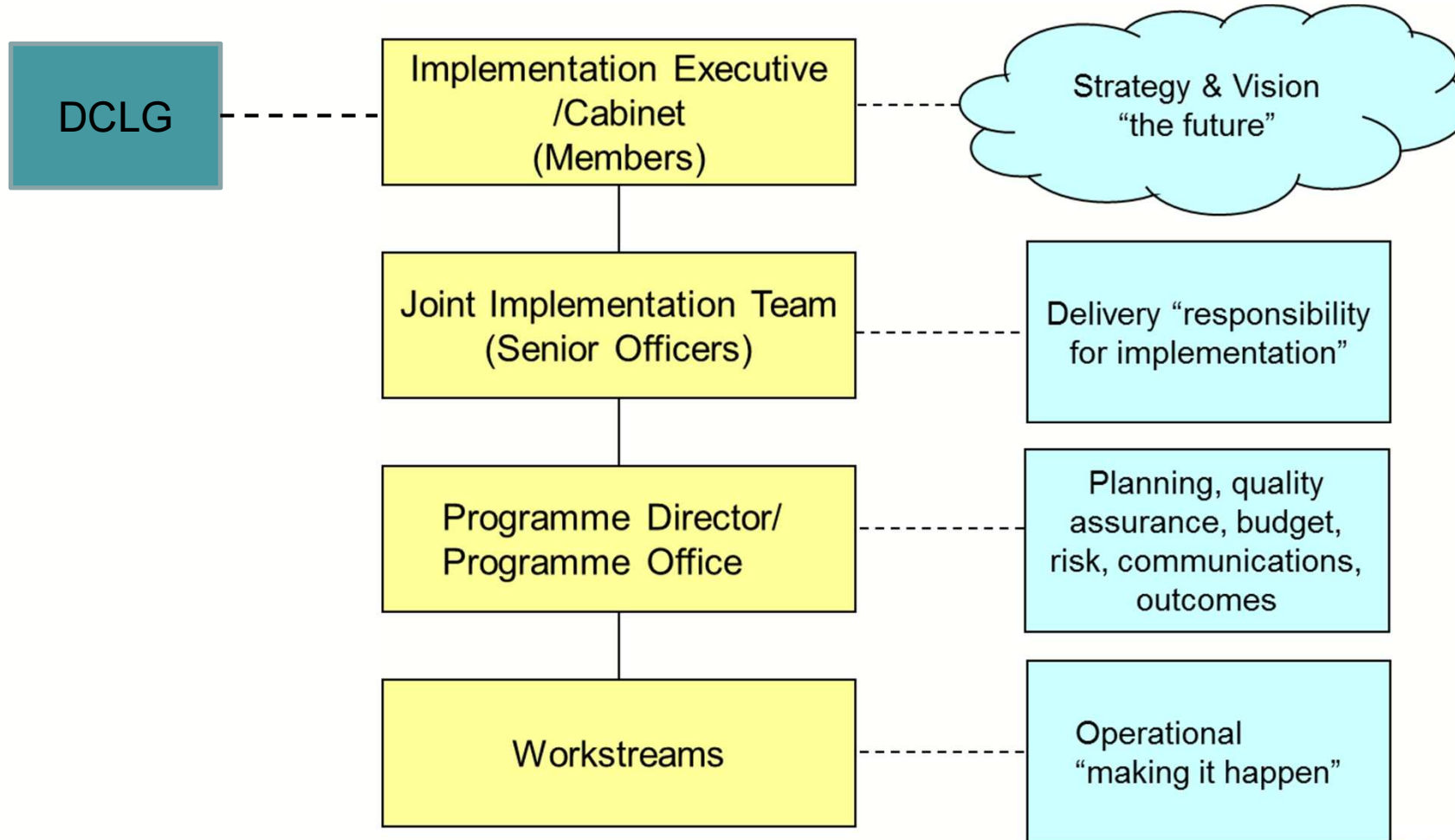
# Programme Structure



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# Programme governance structure



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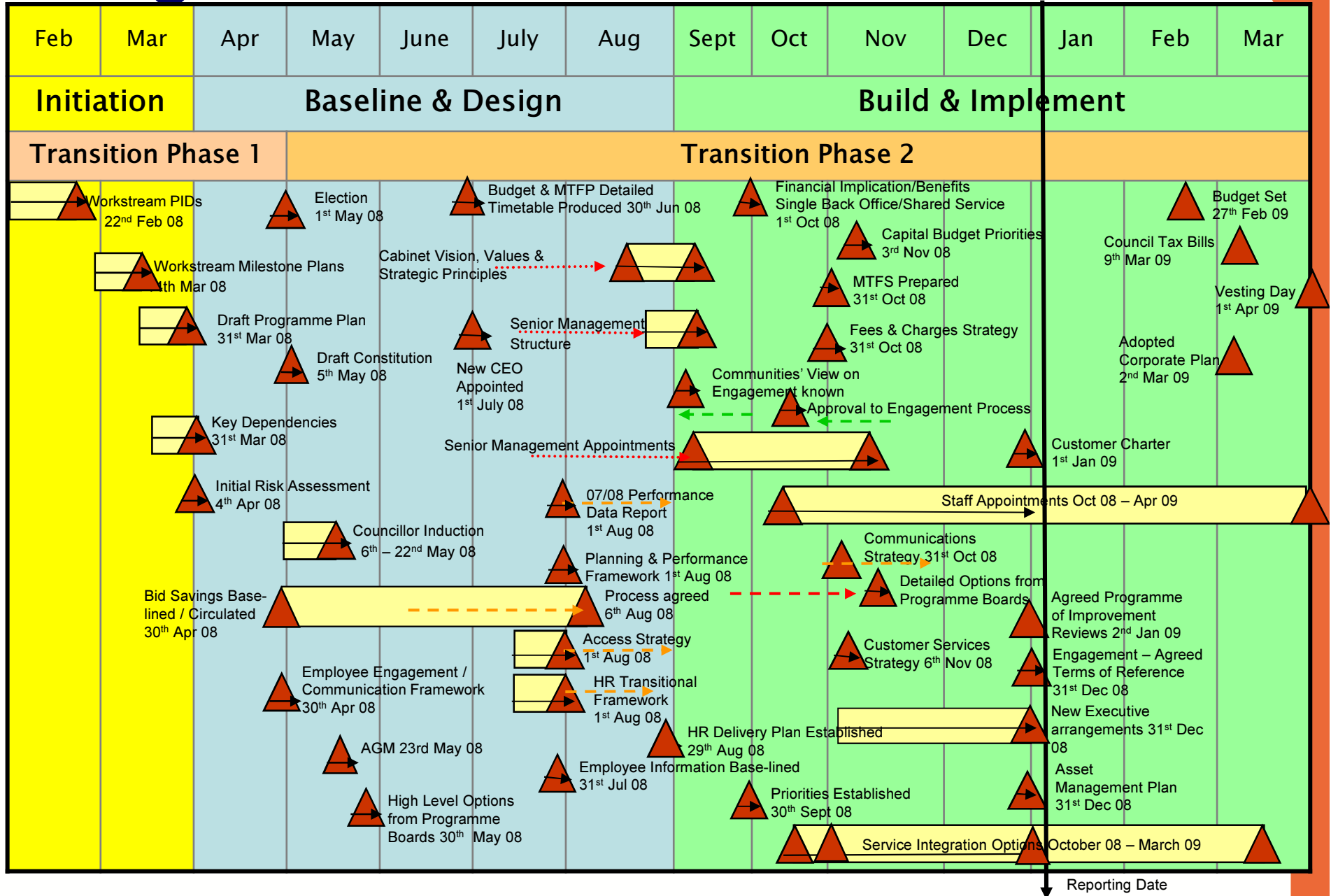
# Workstream activity

- **Initiation** – Production of PIDs identifying deliverables, milestones, risks and outlining plan of activities
- **Baselining** – Gathering key data about existing services across the County
- **High-level options for change** – Development of preferred future service delivery model, identification of business critical functions
- **Detailed options for change** – Development of detailed plans for ‘**must have**’ projects, detailed service design
- **Implementation** – Organisation structure, policies and procedures, fees and charges, ‘**must haves**’, staffing issues, service harmonisation

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# Programme milestones



# Design Responsibilities

## Challenge Programme Board

Corporate Policy and Performance Management, HR, Communications, Customer Service and Access, Equality & Diversity and Community Cohesion, Community Engagement, Capacity Building and Area Coordination

## Place Shaping Programme Board

Economic policy, Spatial Planning, Transport strategy, Strategic housing, Regeneration, Social Housing Policy, Homelessness, Asylum Seekers and Disabled Facilities Grants, Building Control

Implementation Executive

Joint Implementation Team

Policy & Partnerships, HR / OD, Communications, Equalities & Cohesion, Customers & Access, Areas & Participation Workstreams

## Adult, Well-being & Health Services Programme Board

Strategic Commissioning  
Social Care Planning  
Residential Care  
Domiciliary Care  
Carers Support  
Learning Disability  
Mental Health Support  
Substance Misuse  
Health Promotion  
Tackling Health and Social Inequalities  
Travellers' Liaison  
Welfare Rights  
Supporting People  
Adult Protection  
Adult Learning  
Culture and Arts  
Tourism  
Libraries

## Children & Young People's Services Programme Board

Strategic Commissioning  
Education Policy and Planning  
Children in Need  
Children Looked After  
Access and Inclusion  
Learning Support  
Educational Psychology  
Special Educational Needs  
Educational Welfare  
School Transport  
Admissions  
Education Standards  
School and Governor Support  
Secure Services  
Youth Engagement Service  
Sure Start/Early Years Family Learning  
Family Learning  
Connexions

## Environment & Neighbourhood Services Programme Board

Waste Disposal  
Conservation / Archaeology  
Traffic Management  
Business Regulation  
Trading Standards  
Environmental Health  
Licensing  
Neighbourhood Services  
Highway Maintenance  
Street Cleansing  
Waste Collection  
Public Realm / Maintenance  
Parking Control  
Parks, Landscape and Countryside  
Service Direct & District DSOs  
Housing landlord  
Leisure  
Emergency Planning

## Corporate Resources Programme Board

Financial Management  
Information and Communication  
Technology  
Estates and Property  
Legal  
Corporate Procurement  
Democratic Services  
Members' Services  
Overview and scrutiny  
Council Tax Collection and Housing Benefits (Revs and Bens)  
Electoral Services  
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages  
Archives and Records  
Coroners

Finance, Assets & Property, Procurement, I.T, Legal & Democracy Workstreams

Programme Office

# Key activity: May 2008 Elections

- Unprecedented number of candidates
- Female representation doubled from 15.9% to 30.2%
- New Council made up of 35 ex-County Councillors, 71 ex-District Councillors and 20 new Councillors
- 10 strong Cabinet selected following confirmation of newly elected County Councillor Simon Henig as Leader
- IDe&A commissioned to work with new Cabinet on strategy development

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# Key activity: Executive Appointments

- Appointed Chief Executive in July 2008. Took up post in September 2008
- Immediately presented proposal to Council on design of the senior team for approval
- Appointment of 5 Directors and an Assistant Chief Executive in October 2008 which completed the line up of a 7 strong Corporate Management Team

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# Key activity: HR

- Transition planning team managing restructure of staff
- Parallel ER/VR 'trawl'
- HR developments
  - Manager's handbook
  - Pay protection
  - ER/VR scheme
  - Induction- Vesting Day welcome pack for all staff
  - Member Training strategy
- Positive trade union engagement model
- Consultation with staff
- Career transition support through SOLACE

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# Consultative approach

- Pre-regulation JIT and Member group established
- Member seminars for policy development
- Cross party Constitution Working Group
- Regular meetings with trades unions
- Staff consultation on senior management structure, Heads of Service and 4<sup>th</sup> tier posts
- Extensive public consultation on area action partnerships and council name
- Stakeholder involvement through workstreams e.g. Health and Police

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# Savings

- Initial savings of £20.533m delivered
- Significant further savings made through reorganisation once new council had bedded in
- One off transition costs were £21.2m
- Senior management costs reduced £2.823m (52 senior posts reduced to 7)
- Some efficiency savings redirected e.g. into new community engagement mechanisms through Area Action Partnerships (AAPs)

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# Key successes

- Blueprint for new Council
  - Development by Members
  - 'Desired end state' design
  - Vision and Values
  - Council priorities- how we will deliver services in the future
  - Community engagement model developed with communities
- Suite of harmonised policies and strategies drawing on best practice internally and externally developed, for example
  - Licencing
  - Planning
  - Housing
  - Waste Management

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# One vision for the County

5 priorities agreed with partners since 2009:

- Altogether wealthier
- Altogether better for children and young people
- Altogether safer
- Altogether healthier
- Altogether greener

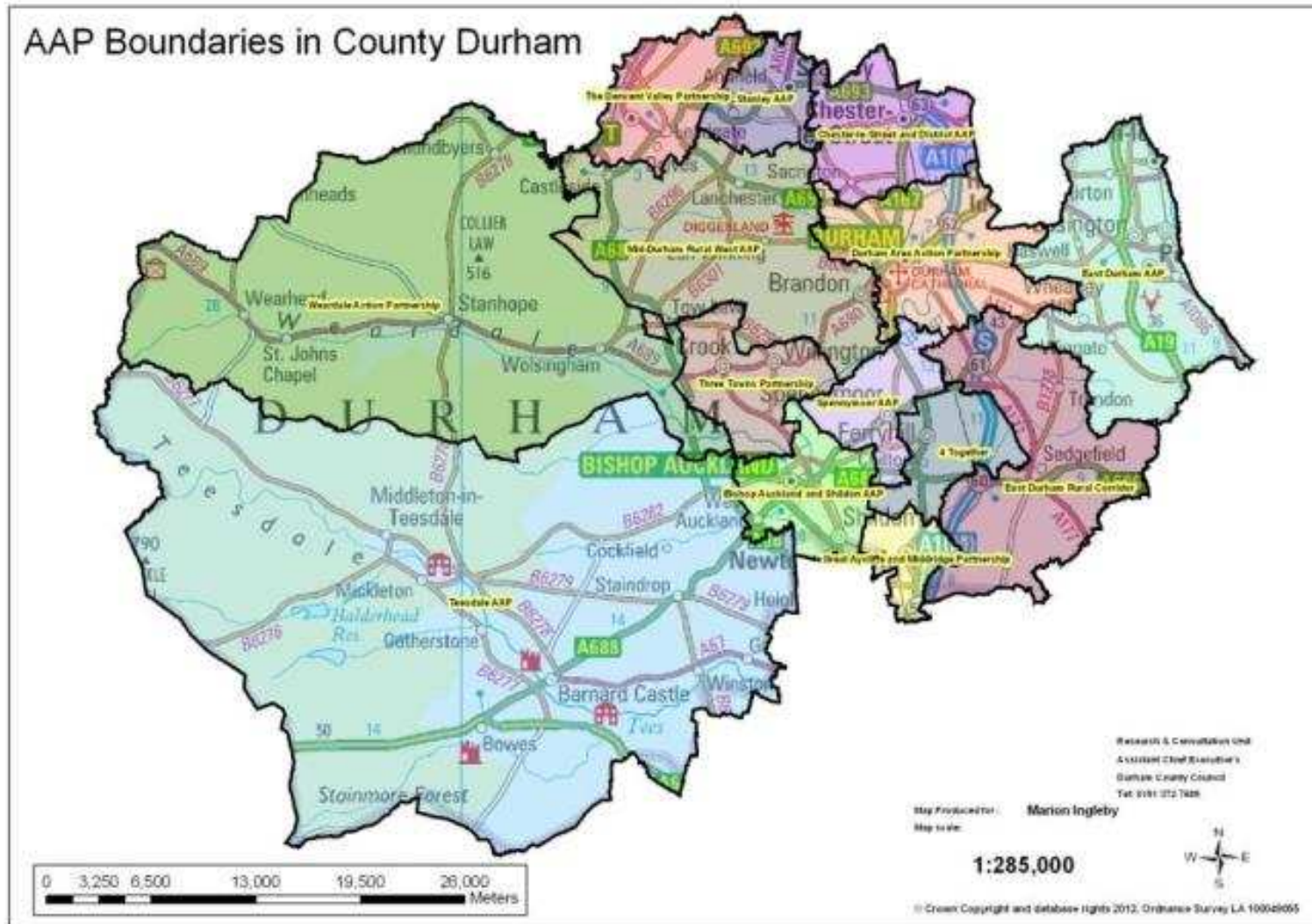
6th priority for the council:

- Altogether better council

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# New community engagement mechanisms - AAPS



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# Key successes

- Revamped strategy and performance management system focusing on regeneration
- Customer access points and co-location
- Improved access to services
  - Single telephone number
  - Single website
  - Access anywhere in the County
  - More online services via CRM
- Service improvements
  - Common allocations policy- choice Based Lettings
  - Countywide homelessness prevention
  - Expanded green waste collections
  - Assisted bin collections
  - Key fees and charges harmonised
  - Integrated planning service
  - Taxi licencing harmonised and enhanced

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# Taking everyone with us – staff morale

## Internal survey 2013:

- 98% of employees have sufficient information and resources to work effectively
- 97% know what is expected of them
- 91% felt free to express their views to managers
- 89% said that they would speak highly of the council outside of work
- 85% felt they are recognised and valued

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# Reflections

- Being clear on vision and keeping the focus on the community
- Establishing clear leadership
  - Elections and mandate
  - Chief Executive and management team
- Establishing clear internal communication channels across different organisations
  - 'New Era' website to provide open channel accessible to all
  - Joint newsletters and staff communications
  - Committing to milestones and timeframes for staff
  - Stressing continuity though the creation of a new authority

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# Reflections

- Prioritising what needs to be done for vesting day and what can happen down the line
  - ‘It is possible to eat an elephant, just not all in one go’
- Establishing clear lines of accountability for district HQs
  - Locality officers
  - Tracking and consideration of issues
- Provided the basis for strong response to austerity

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# Key achievements

- Brought eight councils together while maintaining performance across the board.
- Responded to austerity – saved £185.7m to date and on track to save nearly £209m by the end of this year.
- Created new model of community engagement.
- Award-winning community assets transfer programme helped to retain almost 100 community centres and also transferring leisure centres and a golf course.



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# Key achievements



*this is*  
**durham**  
*place of light*



*Altogether better*



# Key achievements



- Digital Durham broadband rollout



- Helped over 1,300 families

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- Housing stock transfer



- Educational attainment



# Key achievements



- Lumiere



- Bishop Auckland Food Festival



- Tour Series cycling



- Brass



- Gospels



- The Ashes

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# Key achievements

- Youth offending – rates and awards
- Customer Access Points
- Town centre regeneration
- Apprenticeship and employability programmes



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# Key achievements



**LGO Awards 2014 Council of the Year**

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# Questions



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