

CORPORATE PLAN 2013 TO 2017:

State of Northumberland Digest for Year Three

Introduction

This digest draws out the key findings from a detailed analysis of a suite of indicators which aim to provide, consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan, a barometer as to the prevailing quality of life across the county as compared with the regional and national average. The detailed indicator-by-indicator analysis is available [here](#).

The county's population

Within the context as to the state of Northumberland, the following points from the 2011 Census are worth noting:

- the County's population is 316,000; 154,100 males and 161,900 females – this shows that the population has grown by 8,600 in the last 10 years, rising from 307,400 in 2001, an increase of 3 per cent
- the county's population is split between the four Areas as follows:

Central Northumberland	56,130
North Northumberland	55,243
South East Northumberland	160,264
West Northumberland	44,350

- the county's population density of 63 residents per square kilometre is lower than any other local authority in the North East region and is the lowest top tier local authority in England.
- 20 per cent of the population is aged 65 and over; an increase from 18 per cent in 2001.
- Most residents belong to the white ethnic group (98 per cent, 311,100), a decrease of one percentage point since 2001 (99 per cent, 304,200).
- 138,500 of households were occupied (compared to 130,800 in 2001), with an average of 2.2 residents per household
- Most households own their own home outright (33 per cent, 46,100) or with a mortgage or loan (33 per cent, 45,100).
- The number of cars and vans available to households in the county has increased by 26,600 (19 per cent) to 169,000 since 2001.
- 78 per cent (247,400) of residents assessed their general health as either very good or good
- 11 per cent (35,700) of residents were giving care in 2011 and almost two fifths (38 per cent, 13,400) of those residents provided 20 or more hours of unpaid care per week.

Economic Growth

The Council's aim is to promote a more prosperous county through sustainable economic growth that provides residents with ready access to high wage and skilled jobs and opportunities to create thriving businesses.

Productivity

Northumberland has the lowest GVA per head of population in the North East. One of the primary reasons for this is that GVA is measured by where an individual works not where they live. Northumberland has a significant level of out-commuting to the Tyneside economy – with much of that out-commuting related to knowledge-based jobs. Equally, the county's low wage levels and worklessness rates are also contributing factors. Whilst in the last period, the county's GVA level has risen by 2.6%, this is still lower than the regional and national equivalents.

Business

The county's business base continues to grow with a 2.1% increase in the total number of VAT registered businesses but this is lower than the growth achieved in the previous year (2.7%). The number of new businesses also dropped (by 6.2%) at a rate much higher than the regional average (0.4%). In terms of industrial sectors, Northumberland has a higher proportion of jobs in manufacturing, retail, accommodation and food, and health than the England rate.

Employment

Northumberland has a higher proportion of the working age population in employment than the region which is a level consistent with the rest of the country. Currently, this equates to almost three quarters of those aged between 16 and 64 years old (73.9%) and includes an increase of 2.8% from last year. The unemployment rate for the county has also reduced (by 4.7%) but not to the same extent as the regional (by 6.3%) and national (by 13.6%) equivalents. However, it has to be recognised that the claimant count of Job Seekers Allowance ranges rises to 11% in Hirst ward. In addition, Northumberland has a higher level of part time employment and a lower rate of earnings for full-time employees (albeit wage level are growing).

Education and Skills

Qualification levels among the adult population are traditionally higher in Northumberland than in the North East and England. However, the national trend for level 4 or higher qualifications is now outstripping the county's figures. In addition, the number of adults with no qualifications is growing in the county.

There have been many changes to assessment methods in the last three years so trend data is difficult to provide. Pupils at the end of the primary phase generally attain slightly better standards than national averages. However, there is very wide variation between schools. With regard to pupils achieving 5 good GCSEs including English and maths, attainment improved between 2008/09 and 2011/12 but was broadly in line with national averages before falling in 2013/14. Over the past two years, attainment at the end of secondary school has improved in Northumberland, as it has in the North East and England. However, the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged groups and their peers' remains a key target for improvement. One again there is very wide variation between attainment levels of individual secondary schools and academies, this is a cause for concern. A detailed analysis of educational outcomes is available in the Director of Education's [annual report](#).

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Overarching Aim - To promote a more prosperous county through sustainable economic growth that provides residents with ready access to high wage and skilled jobs and opportunities to create thriving businesses

	Most recent data			Percentage change since previous period		
	N'land	Region	England	N'land	Region	England
Primary Outcome - Maintain high and stable levels of economic growth						
Gross Value Added (GVA) per head of population (2014)	£14,979	£18,216	£25,367	2.6%	2.9%	3.7%
Maintain high and stable levels of quality employment						
1 Proportion of people of working age who are in work - employment rate (2015/16)	73.9%	69.5%	73.9%	2.8%	1.3%	1.4%
2 Proportion of people of working age who work part-time (2015/16)	29.2%	27.4%	25.2%	7.0%	6.6%	-1.2%
3 Unemployment Rate (2015/16)	6.1%	7.5%	5.1%	-4.7%	-6.3%	-13.6%
4 Average annual earnings (gross) for all employees (2015)	£23,816	£25,346	£27,872	6.8%	1.9%	1.4%
Strengthen and diversify the County's business base						
5 Percentage change in the total number of VAT registered businesses (2014)	2.1%	4.4%	4.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a
6 Business Births (2014)	1,140	9,650	313,200	-6.2%	-0.4%	1.4%
7 Proportion of Business Start-ups per 10,000 resident population aged 16+ (2014)	43	45	71	-6.3%	-0.9%	-0.2%
8 Proportion of jobs by sector	*	*	*	*	*	*
Equip residents with the skills to fulfil their economic potential						
9 Percentage of people at age 19 with level 2 qualifications (e.g. 5 GCSEs at Grade C or above) (2015)	87%	86%	86%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%
10 Percentage of population aged 16-64 qualified to at least (2015):						
Level 2 or higher	76.5%	72.9%	73.4%	1.2%	1.7%	0.3%
Level 3 or higher	56.6%	54.3%	57.1%	2.7%	3.4%	1.1%
Level 4 or higher	30.9%	30.7%	36.8%	0.0%	8.1%	3.1%
11 Percentage of population aged 16-64 with no qualifications (2015)	9.0%	10.4%	8.4%	12.5%	4.0%	2.3%
12 Percentage of pupils who achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*- C including English and Maths (2014/15)	56.9%	55.4%	53.8%	8.2%	1.5%	0.8%
13 Number of new apprenticeships (2014/15)	3,850	35,220	494,200	-0.3%	15.6%	13.7%
Improve the quality and range of the County's connectivity						
14 Principal roads where maintenance should be considered (2014/15)	4%	4%	4%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
15 Percentage of people aged 16+ who have never used the internet (qtr1 2016)	20.1%	16.7%	12.1%	12.3%	1.2%	-10.2%
16 Percentage of premises with access to superfast broadband (June 2014)	81.0%	n/a	n/a	26.6%	n/a	n/a

* See full spreadsheet of data - data too large to include in table

Places and Environment

The Council's aim is to maintain and further improve the quality of our town, villages and countryside and to make it easier for residents to access services and high quality, affordable homes and to travel using different modes of transport.

Satisfaction with the Place

Northumberland residents are far more likely to speak positively rather than negatively about their local area with over three quarters satisfied (77%) with the county as a place to live - an increase of 2.7% since the last survey undertaken in 2012. However, this still does not equate to the satisfaction level recorded in the 2008 survey which stood at 81%.

It is also evident that resident's perceptions vary according to their circumstances, so: women and men are equally satisfied; satisfaction with the local area increases incrementally with age; those who have retired and those in education are more likely to be satisfied; those who are not working are less likely to be satisfied with the local area reflecting attitudes towards economic outlook; and private tenants are more likely to be satisfied with the area as a place to live.

Sustainable development

The level of greenhouse gas emissions in Northumberland has increased by a sixth which is broadly consistent with the regional and national trend over the past year.

The rate of domestic energy use remains higher in Northumberland. This is partly due to more homes not being connected to the gas or electricity supply and thereby relying on less efficient fuel; and also because there are still a number of homes (within the private rented stock in particular) where thermal warmth remains an issue.

Town centres

The relative collective strength of the county's town centres as measured by vacancy rates is broadly unchanged at a county level. However, this picture varies markedly across the county with Ashington, Bedlington and Prudhoe having fewer empty units but Alnwick, Amble, Blyth, Haltwhistle and Hexham with more vacant premises – although the actual numbers of units are relatively small.

Affordable housing

The average house price in Northumberland is £154,950 which remains significantly lower than the national average, but represents a 6.9% increase since 2010. However, across the county the variation is again quite stark with house prices varying from £61,000 in Hirst ward to £455,500 in Darras Hall, Stamfordham, and Matfen.

The total number of affordable homes delivered in Northumberland has increased between 2010 and 2015 with a 100% increase occurring in the past year. In addition, the level of homeless dropped slightly to 184 households.

PLACES & ENVIRONMENT

Overarching Aim - To maintain and further improve the quality of our towns, villages and countryside, and make it easier for residents to access services and high quality, affordable homes and to travel using different modes of transport

		Most recent data			Percentage change since previous period		
		N'land	Region	England	N'land	Region	England
Primary Outcome - Maintain and improve the quality of the county's environment							
Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (2015)		77%	n/a	n/a	2.7%	n/a	n/a
Manage the prudent use of the county's natural resources							
1	Emissions of greenhouse gases per person (tonnes of CO2 per person) (2014)	2.0	1.8	1.7	-16.7%	-14.3%	-15.0%
2	Domestic Energy use (thousand tonnes of oil equivalent per 100,000 pop) (2013)	73.7	66.8	61.1	-1.2%	-2.9%	3.3%
3	Percentage of waste recycled or composted (2014/15)	39.6%	38.0%	43.7%	-1.5%	0.3%	0.5%
Improve the vitality of the county's network of market towns							
4	High street vacancy rate (% of commercial premises vacant) (Aug 2015)						
	Northumberland	6.2	n/a	n/a	-1.0%	n/a	n/a
	Alnwick	5.0	n/a	n/a	11.7%	n/a	n/a
	Amble	1.9	n/a	n/a	26.3%	n/a	n/a
	Ashington	8.3	n/a	n/a	-10.1%	n/a	n/a
	Bedlington	4.9	n/a	n/a	-13.5%	n/a	n/a
	Berwick	7.6	n/a	n/a	12.6%	n/a	n/a
	Blyth	5.7	n/a	n/a	11.4%	n/a	n/a
	Cramlington	10.6	n/a	n/a	3.9%	n/a	n/a
	Haltwhistle	8.7	n/a	n/a	106.2%	n/a	n/a
	Hexham	8.0	n/a	n/a	13.0%	n/a	n/a
	Morpeth	4.4	n/a	n/a	-3.7%	n/a	n/a
	Ponteland	7.7	n/a	n/a	-9.0%	n/a	n/a
	Prudhoe	3.9	n/a	n/a	-10.3%	n/a	n/a
Provide residents with access to quality housing they can afford							
5	Average house price / Affordability Ratio						
	Average House Price (2015)	£154,950	£132,000	£212,000	4.0%	5.6%	7.1%
	Affordability Ratio (2015)	5.7	4.8	7.1	7.6%	2.1%	1.4%
6	Homeless Households (rate per 1,000 households) (April 2015 / March 2016)	1.33	1.15	2.52	-3.6%	-5.7%	5.0%
7	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (2014/15)	520	3,420	66,640	100.0%	24.4%	55.5%
Make it more attractive for residents to use the bus, walk or cycle.							
8	Percentage of working age people within 30 minutes by public transport / walking to an employment centre with 100 - 499 jobs (2014)	89.9%	98.2%	97.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a
9	% of children within a 15 minutes travelling time by public transport or walking (2014) of a:						
	Primary School	78.0%	93.5%	90.7%	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Secondary School	42.9%	41.4%	42.8%	n/a	n/a	n/a
10	% of residents aged 16+ who do any walking or cycling (2014/15)	87.0%	85.3%	87.1%	-3.2	-0.5	0

Stronger Communities and Families

The Council's aim is to ensure that all residents genuinely feel safe, belong, and have a say in how the county is run, and to provide a range of quality community and cultural services and facilities which inspire creativity and participation.

Community Empowerment

Almost 30% of residents definitely or tend to agree they can influence decisions which affect their local area. This is an increase of over 7% on those who felt the same in the equivalent survey carried out in 2012. However, there is a variation across the county with residents in the north and central areas (both 33%) feeling that they have more influence than their counterparts in the south east (26%) and west (28%).

Community safety

Northumberland has significantly lower total crime levels per head of population (46 offences per 1000 population) than either the North East (68) or England (67) as a whole. Although this level has increased by almost a third since the previous year.

Despite this, only 6% of residents feel that crime is a big or fairly big issue, with this rising in the towns of Ashington (12%), and Blyth (10%). Equally, more than one in ten residents feel anti-social behaviour is a very or fairly big problem, with this again rising in south east Northumberland to 17%.

Community Development

Over half of Northumberland residents agree that local people pull together to improve their area (52%) which marks a 15% increase from the previous survey in 2012. In the north, central, and west parts of the county, this figure rises to over 60% but is considerably lower at 38% in the south east of the county.

Poverty and Deprivation

8% of Northumberland's population are among the 10% most deprived in England; with more than one in five residents living in the 25% most deprived communities in the country. The vast majority of this poverty is concentrated within South East Northumberland.

13.4% of the working age population are claiming key benefits, representing a slight drop (-1.5%) over the past year, but which is still at a rate higher than the national average.

Troubled Families

15% of all children in Northumberland – over 9,400 in number – are living in poverty. Contrary to the regional and national trend, this number has grown (by 3.8%) over the past year. Whilst a growth of 16.7% has prevailed in the percentage of households who are fuel poor.

However, the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) has decreased (equating to 80 individuals) with the teenage conception rate remaining relatively static at 23%.

STRONGER COMMUNITIES & FAMILIES

Overarching Aim - To ensure that all residents genuinely feel safe, belong, and have a say in how the county is run, and to provide a range of quality community and cultural services and facilities which inspire creativity and participation

		Most recent data			Percentage change since previous period		
		N'land	Region	England	N'land	Region	England
Primary Outcome - Empower residents to have a say in their community							
% of residents who feel they can influence local decisions (2015)		29%	n/a	n/a	7.4%	n/a	n/a
Maintain low levels of crime and disorder							
1	Percentage of residents who think crime is a big problem in their area (Sept 2015-August 2016)	6%	n/a	n/a	-14.3%	n/a	n/a
2	Recorded crime for key offences (2015/16)*						
	Total Recorded Crime (excluding fraud)	14,646	178,491	3,656,956	33.9%	20.7%	6.2%
	Offences per 1,000 population	46	68	67	31.4%	10.0%	6.6%
3	Incidents of Anti-social behaviour (rate per 1,000 population) (March 2016)	37	52	31	-11.9%	-8.8%	-8.8%
Encourage residents to get involved and volunteer							
4	Percentage of residents who agree that local people pull together to improve things locally (2015)	52%	n/a	n/a	15.6%	n/a	n/a
5	% of residents involved in formal volunteering (2015)	25%	n/a	n/a	-4.0%	n/a	n/a
Reduce the prevalence of poverty and deprivation							
6	Worklessness - Percentage of the working age population who are claiming key benefits (Nov 2015)	13.4%	16.3%	11.4%	-1.5%	-2.4%	-5.8%
7	The proportion of the population who live in LSOA's in the most deprived 10% and 25% of LSOA's in the country (2015)						
	10%	7.6%	17.0%	10.0%	-7.1%	2.8%	2.0%
	25%	22.2%	37.5%	25.2%	2.6%	-2.3%	1.8%
8	Proportion of children in poverty (aged 0-18)** (May 2015)	15.0%	19.6%	14.0%	3.8%	-5.6%	-9.1%
9	Fuel Poverty (% of households fuel poor) (2015)	13.3%	12.2%	10.6%	16.7%	3.4%	1.9%
Provide targeted support to our most troubled families							
10	Percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) (End 2014)	5.0%	5.7%	4.2%	-12.3%	-18.6%	-10.6%
11	Teenage conception rate (under 18) (2014)	23.0	30.2	22.8	0.4%	-1.3%	-6.2%

* See full Stronger and Communities worksheet for full breakdown by type of offence

** For other age breakdowns see the full Stronger Communities worksheet

Health and Well Being

The Council's aim is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to lead healthy, independent lives for as long as possible and to safeguard our most vulnerable residents in a way that maintains their dignity and confidence.

Life Expectancy

Northumberland has a higher healthy life expectancy for both males and females than the North East, but the the male expectancy level remains lower than the England average.

However, healthy life expectancy at birth by ward illustrates some sharp contrasts – for men it ranges from 74.3 years in Northburn, Cramlington to 51.2 years in the Croft, Cowpen and Kitty Brewster areas of Blyth. For women it ranges from a high of 73.9 years in Stamfordham, Darras Hall, and Matfen to a lowest again in Croft, Cowpen, and Kitty Brewster at 52.3 years.

Independent Living

Northumberland has the highest proportion of people using social care services who feel they have control over their daily lives with 81.3% compared with the regional (79.1%) and national (77.3%) rates - there has been relatively little change in this over the past year. These rates are higher for women than for men and for people of working age population than for older people which are similar to the trends across the country.

Northumberland has a significantly lower proportion of older people in income deprivation (13.4%) than both the North East (20.3%) and England (16.2%) - which has seen a marked improvement since the last Indices of Deprivation were published in 2010.

Corporate parenting

The relative number of children in need compared to the England and North East equivalents remains high. However, the number has dropped by 8.6% over the past year. Whilst the rate of looked after children compares reasonably favourably with the national average and is considerably better than the regional average, the number of looked after children has risen by almost 13% - equating to 40 children. The average length of care proceedings in Northumberland has remained static at 35 weeks, and as such is still higher than the regional and national equivalents.

Preventing isolation

Northumberland, when compared to the region or the country, has the highest proportion of people using social care who receive self-directed support.

Public Health

The prevalence of child obesity in in the county (20.0%) is now higher than the national average (19.1%) and has seen a rise of 13% over the past year. The rate of hospital admissions for alcohol related harm also remains higher than the England average with an almost 17% increase in such admissions over the past year. It should also be noted that smoking prevalence remains at 16.6% - a full analysis of the county's health is available in the Director of Public Health's [annual report](#).

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Overarching Aim - To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to lead healthy, independent lives for as long as possible and to safeguard our most vulnerable residents in a way that maintains their dignity and confidence

	Most recent data			Percentage change since previous period		
	N'land	Region	England	N'land	Region	England
Primary Outcome - Improve the overall health and wellbeing of the county's population						
Healthy Life Expectancy at birth (2012-2014)						
Male	62.8	59.7	63.4	0.2%	0.7%	0.2%
Female	64.2	59.8	64.0	1.4%	0.7%	0.2%
Equip residents to live independently for as long as possible						
1 Proportion of people who use social care services who have control over their daily lives (all people) (2014/15)*	81.3	79.1	77.3	0.9%	0.6%	0.7%
2 Proportion of adults aged 18-64 with learning disabilities who live in their own home or with their family (2014/15)	78.2	78.1	73.3	-2.5%	-3.1%	-2.1%
Protect the county's children and young people from harm						
3 The average length of care proceedings (weeks) (2015/16)	35	29	30	0.0%	7.4%	0.0%
4 Number and Rate (per 10,000 children) of children in need (31 March 2015)	3,364	23,700	391,000	-8.6%	-0.8%	-1.7%
	563	451	337	-7.4%	-1.2%	-2.6%
5 Number and rate (per 10,000 children) of looked after children (31 March 2015)	370	4,290	69,540	12.1%	1.2%	1.1%
	62	82	60	12.7%	1.2%	0.0%
6 Number and Rate of permanent exclusions from school (proportion of the school population) (2014/15)	40	310	5,800	0.0%	29.2%	17.2%
	0.10%	0.08%	0.07%	25.0%	33.3%	16.7%
Promote the social inclusion of older and vulnerable people						
7 Proportion of people using social care who receive self-directed support (2014/15)	95.7	91.9	83.7	23.0%	51.7%	35.2%
8 Older people in deprivation (% of the population aged 60+ income deprived) (2015)	13.4%	20.3%	16.2%	-15.5%	-12.2%	-10.5%
Encourage residents to adopt healthy lifestyles						
9 Prevalence of breast feeding at 6-8 weeks from birth (2015/16)	35.1%	31.3%	43.5%	-7.6%	-2.5%	-0.7%
10 Obesity in primary school age children in Year 6 (2014/15)	20.0%	21.5%	19.1%	13.0%	1.9%	0.0%
11 Adult participation in sport and active recreation (Oct 14 - Oct 15)	35.8%	33.1%	35.8%	0.2%	-2.7%	-0.8%
12 Rate of hospital admissions for alcohol related harm (admissions per 100,000 population) (2014/15)	2,420	2,670	2,140	16.9%	7.7%	8.6%

* For other age and sex breakdowns see the full Health & Wellbeing Worksheet

x - Data for previous year is less than 5 so data suppressed.

