

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 8 July 2016 at 9.30 am**

### **Present:**

**Councillor E Adam (Vice-Chairman – in the Chair)**

### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors E Adam, J Clare, J Clark, D Freeman, J Gray, G Holland, C Kay, B Kellett, A Liversidge, P May, S Morrison, P Stradling and L Taylor

### **Also Present:**

Councillor B Stephens

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors B Graham, J Armstrong, D Bell, O Milburn, T Bolton and P Spurrell.

### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute members.

### **3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 April 2016 and 3 June 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager updated Members on apprenticeships in Customer Services and indicated that the Head of Corporate Finance and HR was working on a piece of work on apprenticeships which would be brought to Cabinet for consideration. She would keep Members updated on the progress of this piece of work.

Councillor Adam sought clarification if the information on dog fouling had been provided for display on the parish notice boards. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer would follow this up and advise Members via e-mail.

Councillor May sought clarification if a letter could be sent to individuals who had thrown litter. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer would follow this up and advise Members accordingly.

#### **4 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **5 Any items from Co-opted Members or interested parties**

There were no items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties.

#### **6 Media Relations**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to the recent prominent articles and news stories relating to the remit of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for copy see file of minutes). The articles were:-

- More than 2500 volunteers clean up their communities – Durham County Council in partnership with Darlington Borough Council organised an event as part of litter free Durham big spring clean campaign. Volunteers came from schools, scouts, guides, youth groups, community groups, parish councils, Greenpeace and the Environment Agency.
- Peterlee fly-tipper caught after leaving prescription in dumped rubbish bags – A man was caught fly tipping after his address was discovered on documents found in dumped rubbish bags. The man from Peterlee was convicted and ordered to pay £800.
- County Durham's Environment Awards are open for Entries – Entries are invited from those who are working to improve, enhance and protect the environment, deadline for entries is 15 July 2016.
- Green move out scheme returns for students – Durham County Council is working with partners from the university, police and Durham furniture help scheme to support students when they move out at the end of term and encourage them to donate items for those in need in the local area.
- Five Star Durham seal their place as a sustainable fish city – Durham has become the second city in the UK to achieve sustainable fish status. Their sustainable fish city rating recognises that the city's top restaurants and workplaces, as well as the university, hospitals, council and schools have collectively pledged to serve and promote only sustainably sourced fish.

Councillor Clare referred to fly-tipping and appreciated the message given that people were being caught but they were advertising the methods used to catch offenders which in turn gave the offenders advice on how not to get caught. Councillor Stephens, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships advised that when the case goes to court all information is in the public domain.

Councillor Holland referred to the 'Green Move Out Scheme' and commended the Officers and how the people in his ward appreciated the help from the Council and asked for this to be passed onto the Officers.

#### **7 Performance Management Quarter 4 2015/16**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Management Team which presented progress against the Councils corporate basket of performance indicators for the

Altogether Greener theme and report other significant performance issues for the fourth quarter of the 2015/16 financial year (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager gave a presentation which gave a performance summary and achievements as well as an update of the performance indicators relating to:

- Refuse and Recycling
- Improved Environmental Cleanliness
- Fixed Penalty Notices
- Fly-tipping: Key Trends, Actions and Outcomes
- Condition of the Local Authority Road Network
- Reduction in Carbon Emissions
- Renewable Energy Generation

Councillor May referred to EU funding in relation to the recent referendum result to leave the European Union and asked how much the Council received and are the Council working on a plan to deal with this.

The Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager responded that the main area was around carbon reduction in particular the grants for heating schemes. An assessment was being conducted, but they needed to wait until negotiations had started.

The Chairman indicated that an item was due to come to Members of this committee today on European Structural and Investment Fund but in light of recent national events this had been delayed and would be brought to a future meeting when more information was available.

Councillor Holland referred to the reduction in performance relating to the diversion from landfill indicator and the reasons for this. The Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager responded that this was a result of the planned downtime at the energy from waste Haverton Hill site to increase the number of lines. The Customer Relations, Policy and Performance Manager advised that targets were still being met and that Suez had liability for any land tax incurred.

Councillor Holland referred to carbon reduction which resulted in energy reduction and suggested that this message should be made clear in the performance report and to residents to maximise energy reduction. The Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager responded that she would look into this to see how it can be better represented in future.

Councillor Clark referred to recycling collections and asked why bottles had to be put into a separate container from other recycling materials when they are collected as all residents saw was all of the recycling materials emptied into the same vehicle collecting the two containers and were confused and which gave a mixed message.

The Customer Relation Policy and Performance Manager advised that it may look as if all recycling materials are going in together but the vehicle was split and the materials are kept separate.

Councillor Clark also referred to the Leazes Bowl roundabout and sought clarification if this was to remain tarmacked.

The Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager and Councillor Freeman confirmed that it was to be reinstated on a smaller scale with a flower bed. The Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager would provide Members with a general update on the works.

The Chairman thanked the Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager for her very informative presentation.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

## **8 Air Quality in County Durham**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services which provided Members with an update on the development of the Air Quality Action Plan for Durham City (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Members received a presentation from the Pollution Control Manager and Senior Air Quality Officer which provided Members with an update on the progress and current position on the Durham City Air Quality Action Plan; recent changes to the Local Air Quality Management Regime; the Draft Air Quality Action Plan v Air Quality Action Plan; Public Consultation Outcome; Amendments to the Draft Air Quality Action Plan and Plan for Implementation (for copy of slides, see file of minutes).

Members were advised that the Council had consulted on the draft Air Quality Action Plan during 2015. The outcome of the consultation and the amended Air Quality Action Plan with additional actions had been reported to and approved by Cabinet in June 2016.

An Implementation Plan would be approved by the Air Quality Corporate Steering Group which would include progress on the implementation of the actions to comply with targets and monitoring of nitrogen dioxide concentrations across Durham City and also sets out key lines of communication.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has issued guidance which provides: streamlined reporting requirements to reduce the reporting burden and help local authorities focus resources on taking action. A new Annual Status Report (ASR) summarises local situations and progress on the action measures together with a technical section that provides more detailed information on modelling/monitoring of key pollutants and for removal for local authorities to report on four historic pollutants which are now under control and fast track AQMAs.

Durham County Council has a plan in place for all departments of the council to work together to address air quality in the area.

Councillor Kay asked about PM2.5s and sought clarification as to whether these were fine particles of pollutant. The Pollution Control Manager confirmed this to be the case and that they were particles with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less. Councillor Kay then referred

to cycle routes in Durham City being very narrow and how did the plan propose to get cyclists across the City as this could not currently be done safely.

Officers responded that there was nothing specific contained in the Air Quality Action Plan and that the proposals for the expansion of the cycling infrastructure would be contained in the Sustainable Transport Policy. The action measure covering the provision of cycle ways is not the responsibility of the Pollution Control Team but officers would feed this back to the team that is responsible for the implementation of this action.

The Chairman explained that the committee had received information on cycle routes at the last meeting and referred to the recent site visit by the Committee to various cycle routes in the County.

Councillor May referred to the Council trying to get investment into the City but how the Council were also trying to improve the air quality but investment would bring more traffic into the City and suggested that the geography of the city means that there are a restricted number of alternative routes through the city.

Officers responded that they had a guidance document which gave clear guidelines to developers on the air quality impact and how they would need to come up with mitigation measures but recognised investment in the area was a priority. Development could be achieved in a sustainable way through travel plans to reduce impact.

Councillor Holland referred to the measuring of the air quality in the City but there was a lot of works currently going on which would portray an artificial position. People in the City were worried about the Western bypass and are the origin of the standards in the Air Quality Action Plan from Europe. Officers confirmed that the Plan was based on complying with European Standards but they did not anticipate any changes as air quality was a matter of public health and follow World Health Organisation guidelines. Reducing air pollution can also reduce the burden on the National Health Service.

Councillor Holland referred to the Clean Air Act 1956 which had made a difference and was introduced by the UK government and not the European Union.

Councillor Kellett referred to the number of taxis in the City who would sit with their engines running and queried if there were any regulations to limit this practice.

The Pollution Control Manger indicated that diesel cars and busses were the main sources of pollution but taxis themselves were not identified but the plan would be reviewed and this could be picked up going forward.

Councillor Clare referred to Action 1 (Synchronising the sequence of traffic lights on roundabouts through the centre of Durham City) and sought clarification why this action had not been supported.

Officers indicated that the effectiveness of this action was dependent on the interaction with other actions.

Councillor Freeman indicated that the problem was the amount of traffic through the City rather than the flow of traffic. If the bypass did not happen then look at the extension of the park and ride routes together with the provision of further sites.

Officers responded that the bypass was linked to the County Plan.

**Resolved:** (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further update on the development of air quality management within County Durham.

## **9 Refresh of the Work Programme**

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided members with an updated work programme for the Environmental and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2016-17 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Chairman directed members to the work programme and indicated that this would need to be completed by March 2017 and suggested that the work programme should be agreed and for there to be an element of flexibility for any work coming forward at short notice.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer confirmed that the Community Action Team – Update was scheduled to come to the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2017 and not 2016 as stated in the report.

**Resolved:** That the new work programme for 2016-17 be agreed.

## **10 Minutes from the County Durham Environmental Partnership Board held on 9 March 2016**

The minutes of the County Durham Environmental Partnership Board held on 9 March 2016 were received for information.