



## **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date**        **Friday 16 November 2018**  
**Time**        **9.30 am**  
**Venue**       **Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham**

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### **Business**

#### **Part A**

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.  
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's  
agreement.**

1. Apologies
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 and 10 October 2018 (Pages 3 - 22)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Any items from Co-opted Members or interested parties
6. Media Relations - Verbal Update from Overview and Scrutiny Officer
7. Fuel Poverty
  - a) Joint Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services (Pages 23 - 30)
  - b) Presentation by Cliff Duff, Housing Regeneration Project Manager (Pages 31 - 46)
8. Management of DCC Owned Woodland Review - Progress on Recommendations - Joint Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services (Pages 47 - 56)
9. County Durham Environment Partnership Minutes from 19 September 2018 (Pages 57 - 62)
10. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

**Helen Lynch**  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
8 November 2018

To: **The Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor E Adam (Chair)  
Councillor O Milburn (Vice-Chair)

Councillors B Avery, D Bell, L Brown, J Carr, J Clark, R Crute,  
S Dunn, A Gardner, D Hicks, P Howell, P Jopling, C Kay,  
R Manchester, C Martin, A Patterson, A Simpson, P Sexton, L Taylor  
and M Wilson

**Co-opted Members:**

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Holding

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**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 4 October 2018 at 9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor E Adam (Chair)**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors O Milburn, H Bennett, L Brown, J Clark, R Crute, S Dunn, D Hicks, P Howell, P Jopling, R Manchester, C Martin, A Patterson, A Simpson, P Sexton and M Wilson

**Co-opted Members:**

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Holding

**1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors B Avery, D Bell, J Carr, C Kay and L Taylor.

**2 Substitute Members**

Councillor H Bennett substituted for Councillor C Kay.

**3 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 13 July 2018 and 3 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**4 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Howell declared an interest in the Quarter 4 Budget Outturn 2017/18 report and the Quarter 1 2018/19 Revenue and Capital Forecast report as his brother is the Head of Culture and Sport Services.

**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 recent press articles relating to the remit of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The articles were:

- 16 ordered to pay thousands for failing to remove waste – Almost £15,000 worth of legal bills have been handed out in court to people who failed to remove waste from their garden or yard. – This also links to the fly-tipping report which will be considered by the Committee on the 10 October 2018.
- Why the plastic bag charge could rise to 10p and where the money goes – At present the charge only applies to retailers with 250 employees or more. Money raised through the scheme does not go to the Government but instead goes towards good causes chosen by businesses themselves. The Government is expected to launch a consultation which would see the cost double to 10p and would also consider making all retailers and not just larger businesses pass the existing charge on to customers.
- ‘Plastic Roads’ trialled in County Durham – Motorists on the A689 near Sedgefield in County Durham are now driving along a “plastic road”. Durham County Council is the first local authority in the North East to try out the new technology as part of the recently completed work to resurface a section of the A689 with hot rolled asphalt. The scheme used 6.5 tonnes of plastic which was the equivalent of 60,000 shopping bags. This process reduces the amount of new bitumen that is required and reduces the carbon footprint. This links into an item on Highways Maintenance that will come to a future special meeting of the Committee.
- Durham and Chester-le-Street among In Bloom trophy winners – The County won a series of awards in Northumbria in Bloom, including best overall entry and best small city for Durham and best large town for Chester-le-Street.

Councillor Hicks sought clarification on the life span of the ‘plastic road’. The Chairman responded that as it was a trial there were no statistics available, there were other authorities’ trialling ‘plastic roads’ but Durham County Council were the first. Once the statistics were available a report would be brought to a special meeting of the committee.

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

## 7 Air Quality in County Durham

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided Members with details of progress on all air quality management work projects since the previous meeting on 14 July 2017 (for copy, see file on minutes).

The Senior Air Quality Officer was in attendance to provide a presentation focusing on the following:-

- The outcome of further monitoring across both Durham City and at Chester le Street during 2017 and how this compared with the previous year.
- The action now required and being progressed on the outcome of the results of the monitoring carried out in 2017.
- A summary of the progress made on the implementation of the action measures in the Durham City Air Quality Action Plan.
- An outline of further steps and actions to be taken during the next 12 months and also over a longer time frame. The requirement to continue to submit the Annual Air Quality Status Report to DEFRA and the feedback received from this would influence further action required going forward.

The Senior Air Quality Officer advised members of the hot spot areas in Durham City but advised caution as there could be variability in the results because of metrological conditions.

Members were advised of the placement of monitors and that an analyser had been located on Hawthorne Terrace in Durham City. Members were provided with information in relation to daily monitoring for 10 September 2018, which clearly indicates peaks and troughs especially in the morning and late afternoon. The Senior Air Quality Officer suggested that an interesting comparison would be to look at the results for term time with non-term time.

Members learned that further meetings of the Air Quality and Corporate Steering Group would take place to review the implementation of the action plan measures and the outcome of monitoring for improvements in air quality.

The Chairman thanked the Senior Air Quality Officer for his very informative presentation.

Councillor Brown referred to a number of complaints she had received in relation to engines idling and she assumed the problem was county wide. She referred to legislation which made this an offence and indicated that she would like to see more done to enforce this and asked if anymore could be done.

The Strategic Traffic Manager responded that in relation to The Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) Regulations 2002 a local authority can seek powers from the Secretary of State to enforce drivers to turn off their engines. We have not got this consent because the authority would need to demonstrate via the AQMA levels in continuous excess pollution in the air, which we do not have. The hurdles to adopt this would be unsurmountable and a campaign would be much more productive. There were also a number of reasons why people could refuse the fine i.e. it was a cold day so they were sitting with the engine running to keep warm.

Councillor Brown asked if stickers could be placed in various locations to ask motorists to turn off their engine.

The Chairman responded that it was difficult to enforce so the best way forward was education.

Councillor Jopling asked if the authority intended to expand the park and ride.

The Strategic Traffic Manager indicated that they were looking at expanding two of the park and ride sites and introduce an additional site, and two potential sites had been identified. He advised that European Funding was still available and they were submitting a bid next month. Regionally, NECCA were moving to the next stage of the 'Transforming Cities Fund', there was no guarantee that the park and ride scheme would form part of this scheme but they were also submitting a bid for capital from the authority.

Councillor Jopling asked if they placed notices to remind motorists to switch off their engines, would this be legal.

The Strategic Traffic Manager indicated that they could do a campaign and ask schools to design their own notice.

Councillor Jopling then referred to taxi ranks where there can be numerous taxis with their engines idling and asked what could be done to address this. The Senior Air Quality Officer responded that taxi ranks were of concern to them and there was a taxi liaison group where this could be raised.

Councillor Sexton referred to Menceforth Cottages, Chester-le-Street which now measured below  $36 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ , however the report presented to the committee last year reported that the levels were high.

The Officer responded that AQMA was declared four years ago but the last three years the readings have measured below the annual mean objective. The 2016/17 reading showed a slight increase which was why they continued to monitor for a further six months then the reading decreased and last year was less than the 10% annual mean monitoring, so below  $36 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ .

Councillor Sexton sought clarification on why the annual mean objective had dropped so this could be applied to other areas. The Officer responded that the DEFRA guidelines indicated that if the readings had complied for three years then the Air Quality Management Plan could be revoked.

Councillor Howell highlighted that there were significant peaks shown on the chart within the presentation and asked if this measure went beyond the average mean through an average day. The Strategic Traffic Officer advised that the short-term average was one hour with a reading of  $200\text{mg/m}^3$  and nowhere in County Durham where this measurement was exceeded. In response to a further question from Councillor Howell the Strategic Traffic Manager advised that Durham City had an Air Quality Action Plan because the City was above the annual mean.

Councillor Martin in relation to engine idling suggested that it would be interesting to look at data and asked if the local authority had any powers to take air quality under their control and do something about it as they couldn't enforce people to use public transport or the park and ride or was education the only attack. The Senior Air Quality Officer advised that the local authority has powers to a certain extent and that it was difficult to get people to change their habits.

Councillor Dunn indicated that pollution and education were important and the one thing that could be done was to change people's purchasing options such as the start stop technology on vehicles that stopped the engine when the vehicle was stationary and suggested campaigning for a preference of this type of vehicle. There were electric/hybrid buses in use that used this type of technology and were much cleaner for the environment and suggested that perhaps taxis should have start/stop technology. Taxis made a huge contribution to idling but start stop technology would reduce this. He then referred to the extension of the park and ride and that the authority were looking at two other sites and did this include a site at Shincliffe which could serve the South East side of Durham. The Officer responded that the sites identified for a further Park and Ride were west of the city.

The Strategic Traffic Manager advised that the authority was looking at an additional park and ride site to the west of the city.

The Chairman indicated that there was lots that could be done by the way of education and cheaper electric cars could make a big impact.

Councillor Clark referred to the park and ride and that more was needed to be done to advertise this service in particular for people visiting the Hospital and suggested that the park and ride routes should be reviewed to look at the areas they serve and where people travel to. She would support Councillor Dunn's suggestion of a park and ride at Shincliffe.

The Officer responded that there was potential for lots of changes in Durham and if people purchased a pop card the cost of the park and ride was £1.70 as opposed to £2.00. There was also free concession travel for the elderly which included the shuttle between Sniperley and the Hospital.

Councillor Jopling indicated they could not force people to use the park and ride but people did use it. She advised that she was supportive of an expansion of the park and ride so more people could use it and found it much more cost effective than paying premium rate parking charges,

Mr R Cornwell, a member of the public asked if the authority were measuring particulates from diesel engines and if so, they did not appear in the report. As a Durham City parish Councillor he was concerned about taxis idling and would suggest that the licensing policy be revised to make it a requirement that replacement vehicles were hybrid and people would benefit from cleaner air.

The Senior Air Quality Officer responded that monitors at Gilesgate roundabout and Alexandra Crescent measured nitrogen oxide, nitrogen dioxide and PM 10, the measurements were taken continuously. He advised that the Air Quality team were doing a study of the impact of taxis with their engine idling on pollution in the city and when this work was complete and results indicate this is the case they would be putting pressure on the licensing authority.

Ms George a member of the public from Durham City referred to the student population in the city who had their own vehicles and of the impact this had on the congestion of roads and pollution as when the university is in recess there were less vehicles on the road. Ms George asked if the Council worked with the university to reduce the number of students

who brought vehicles with them and suggested that they could walk or use other means of transport so there was no requirement for a car. She also asked why the authority were encouraging more cars into narrow streets in the future and a further multi storey with 200 parking spaces at the Sands where there were already air quality hot spots.

The Strategic Traffic Manager referred to the impact of student vehicles and advised that in the summer there were a variety of reasons for less congestion such as school holidays so no school runs, which impacted on the number of vehicles been reduced and that students not being in residence had little impact on the number of vehicles on the roads. The peak periods of congestion were morning and evening commuter traffic and few students were travelling at these times therefore student vehicles had little impact on the city's congestion or pollution, however the authority would always encourage cycling and walking.

Councillor Sexton asked if there was a response in relation to more car parks.

The Strategic Traffic Manager advised that this was alluding to the proposed new DCC headquarters that would be considered by the planning committee and was subject to an open planning consultation and information on the headquarters was available on the council's website.

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

(ii) That the Committee receive a further report detailing progress on the development of air quality management within County Durham.

## **8 Winter Maintenance**

The Committee considered the joint report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided Members with information on winter maintenance (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Head of Technical Services and Strategic Highways Manager were in attendance to present the report and give a presentation that highlighted the following points:-

- Winter Facts
- Winter 2017/18
- Service Changes 2018/19
- Weather Stations
- Winter Service Policy
- Treatment Routes
- Provision of Salt and Grit Bins
- Key Facts and Figures
- Partnership Working
- The Snow Code
- Winter Service 'Go Live'

Looking back at the severe weather of 2017/18 winter members were advised that especially during the severe weather from the 'Beast from the East' highways teams had worked 24hours, 7 days a week on a two-shift system of twelve hours on and twelve hours

off and kept our roads open. Members were advised that during last winter there were increases in the number of pre salt runs; of snow salt runs and salt bin replenishments that led to 61,580 tonnes of salt being used.

Information was given about treatment of routes and detail of priority of routes. In relation to priority one carriageways, 45% were treated within a target time of two and half hours. Information is taken from Meteogroup and the data is measured and information fed through. Members were advised that if the salt is applied to the road too early there is a risk it could be washed away and if applied too late it will not have time to take effect.

During and after heavy snowfall more intensive resource is required to keep carriageways clear and resources are concentrated on the 'Resilient Network' – a smaller network of more strategic priority one routes. When these were cleared then the remainder of priority one and two routes were cleared.

In relation to footways treatment is only carried out on a designated list in prolonged severe weather. However the service works in partnership with many parish councils in the county and provide salt for them to use on footways. The Head of Technical Services highlighted that householders could help by removing snow and ice from pavements outside their homes.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their very informative presentation and indicated that this year there had been severe weather for an extended period. He wished to thank staff for all their hard work and effort in an expensive period for the authority which was managed well.

Councillor Sexton praised the work of the highways team in keeping the major routes open and asked if there were any systems that Members could use to see what roads were going to be gritted or a group of officers they could get in touch with.

The Head of Technical Services responded that they sent daily e-mails on what work they planned to do that focused on priority networks, but the plans depended on the weather conditions, the team would assist where they could but this was subject to available resources. If the weather was severe it would be difficult as they used all available resources, this did happen with the beast from the East and as it thawed quickly so they were able to look at other routes when priority routes were clear.

Councillor Sexton referred to the equipment that the team had helped his parish secure and asked if there was a list for parishes to sign up to partnership working as he had a group of people in his parish who were willing to help and any expertise or advice on gritting etc. would be welcomed.

Mr Bolton referred to the topping up of the salt bins and asked if this was monitored as some grit bins had heavy usage in bad weather and had issues with theft of salt from the bins, and how often were the salt bins topped up.

The Head of Technical Services advised Members that the salt bins were replenished on a scheduled basis but they also relied on members of the public to report if a bin required refilling in between the scheduled refill.

Councillor Dunn referred to 45% of the authorities road network required gritting which was higher than other local authorities. He commented that the gritter views were a fantastic innovation and traffic cameras were popular with motorists and helped them to make choices. The facilities allowed people to plan their route as they could see which roads had been cleared and make better choices about their journeys.

The Strategic Highways Manager advised Members that they had included the location of the weather cameras on the leaflet this year with a link to the website.

Councillor Jopling referred to the criteria for salting and asked if schools were part of the criteria.

The Head of Technical Services advised Members that they had to prioritise the strategic roads and make people aware that they could not grit some roads as they didn't have the resources or they were too narrow to get the gritters down.

Members asked if they had sufficient salt for the winter and did they have the details of the location of the bins as sometimes they were moved. Members were advised that the salt stocks were to the maximum and they would continue to be topped up.

In response to a question from Councillor Brown the Head of Technical Services confirmed that salt bins do have a number.

Councillor Milburn asked if the service knew the location of the grit bins and if they were aware when they had been moved. The Head of Technical Services advised they knew the location of the bins and they were replaced if they go missing.

Councillor Martin referred to the daily e-mail alerts and asked if these could be sent only if there was something to report.

The Head of Technical Services indicated that it was important information for some organisations and to let people know as part of the policy, the e-mail went to various stakeholders and not just members.

Councillor Patterson referred to the overspend on salt last year, and suggested that is why it was important to have monies in reserves. Councillor Patterson then asked how the plastic roads referred to in the media item would fair in the winter.

The Head of Technical Services advised that it was a partnership initiative and currently there were three trials of plastic roads. They were confident that there would be no detrimental impact on performance. The plastic used was single use plastic which substituted some of the binder which was 6% but they hoped to increase this to 15%.

Councillor Jopling asked if it was cost effective.

The Head of Technical Services advised that the costs were the same but going forward they would expect a saving which would also help with issues of disposing of plastic and reduce carbon emissions.

Councillor Hicks complemented the Highways team on their work during the bad weather to keep the roads open.

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

## **9 Quarter One 2018/2019 Performance Management Report**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Management Team which presented progress against the Council's corporate performance framework for the Altogether Greener priority theme for the first quarter of the 2018/19 financial year (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager was in attendance to present the report.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for his presentation and indicated that single use plastics was ongoing and would be brought back to the Committee in the future.

Councillor Crute commented that members had an opportunity to discuss fly tipping next week. He then referred to the 22 CCTV cameras deployed and four incidents were picked up on the cameras and asked if these were deployed in the right place. Councillor Crute then asked why the performance indicator was a tracker rather than a target and if there were any regional or national comparatives.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager indicated that they could look into obtaining some regional figures but there were no national indicators for fly tipping incidents. The increase in fly-tipping incidents could be due to better and easier reporting methods. With regard to the CCTV cameras this would depend if the culprit or vehicle could be identified.

Councillor Dunn referred to the fly-tipping cameras which he had found difficult to be located in identified areas of his division. He had reported fly-tipping on three occasions and the reports were not included in statistics. He had also made a request for a covert camera to be used but they had not been deployed in the areas identified. He advised that more modern cameras were available on the market which had a better battery lifespan and maybe the service should invest in some of these cameras.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager responded that perhaps they had to limit the number of cameras as they required staff to review the footage and that this may be something Councillor Dunn wanted to raise at the Special meeting on 10 October but in relation to reported incidents and statistical information the Performance Team would look at this to see if they could be categorised.

The Chairman commented that Members were involved in the purchasing of cameras so this needed to be looked at.

Councillor Dunn asked in relation to highway maintenance what proportion of the highway schemes were footpaths and were they prioritising smaller schemes.

The Head of Technical Services advised Members that the condition of the footpaths had improved in recent years due to extra investments in highways. There was a backlog in highways that had been reported to Cabinet and this was broken down by asset type. It was difficult to prioritise footways as there are other important structures included within highway maintenance, such as bridges too.

Councillor Dunn referred to the footpaths in his area that had been assessed and found to be acceptable but were in an appalling state.

The Head of Technical Services advised Members that if footpaths were not safe then they would carry out a proactive repair but they could not resurface all footpaths.

The Strategic Highways Manager indicated that they do closely monitor the condition of all of the highway network and they had a strategy in place to maintain to the highest standard and they continued to maintain roads. Category A roads were at a level of 3% that needed treatment so a decision was taken to use more highways resources to repair category B and C and this brought them to a similar level with the A roads. Unclassified roads were currently at 20% that required maintenance. The decision is do we allow A, B, and C road deteriorate to repair unclassified roads and footways. All footways are inspected for safety and structure but not as to whether they are aesthetically pleasing.

The Head of Technical Services advised Members that in 2014, 27% of footways required maintenance, this decreased to 21% and 24% as at 31 March 2018.

Councillor Martin asked if more money was required in Highways as the Portfolio Holder had reported that sufficient monies were going into Highways but the data says otherwise, so did they require more money. Councillor Martin suggested that the performance data for unclassified road maintenance indicated that performance was reducing.

The Head of Technical Services indicated that there was a highway maintenance backlog which had decreased slightly but was still a significant figure. They did look for capital maintenance and they relied on funding, they do have funding to make safe the backlog but this was a national issue and they were constantly putting in bids for extra funding.

The Strategic Highways Manager advised that this was a minor blip and the service followed the trend rather than a percentage change during the year. He went on that sophisticated surveys are used on A, B and C roads, footways are inspected on a four yearly cycle and unclassified roads are scanned but at a different level of survey to other road classifications. Therefore the 1% increase is viewed as a minor fluctuation and not a cause for concern.

In relation to fly tipping Councillor Clark asked if the statistics reflected incidents reported from the public, wardens or both. The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager confirmed that it was both.

Mrs Holding asked who the biggest culprits for fly-tipping were. The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager responded that the majority of fly-tipping incidents were domestic. Mrs Holding then asked if there was a reason for this to which the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager advised it could be missed collections or laziness.

Councillor Sexton referred to some of the footpaths in his area that had been treated with a scree technique but within 48 hours in some cases the weeds were through and had this technique been piloted.

The Head of Technical Services indicated that it was a technique to stop the footpath from deteriorating. There was a challenge with weeds as strong pesticides could not be used and the pesticides they were able to use were less effective, but if weed spraying had been carried out prior to screening this should address the problem.

Mr Bolton advised there had been regular problems with fly-tipping in his area but following reporting of incidents fly tip items had been removed within 24 to 48 hours which helped people's perceptions.

The Chair advised in areas of Newton Aycliffe there had been incidents where fly-tipping had been removed quickly people used the same place to dump rubbish as they thought this was a service.

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

(ii) That the following change to the Council Plan be noted:-

"The Commissioning of a leachate treatment system at Coxhoe East landfill site has been delayed. Only one compliant tender was returned and this was significantly above budget available. The service is currently reviewing the procurement approach.

## **10 Quarter 4 Budget Outturn 2017/18**

The Committee considered the Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources and Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services which set out details of the outturn budget position for the service areas within Regeneration and Local Services. The Principal Accountant, Regeneration and Local Services was in attendance to present the report and gave a presentation (for copy of report and presentation, see file of minutes).

Councillor Howell referred to the high overspend in Culture and Sport and why additional funds were required for Direct Services and commented that the committee needed a better understanding of the budget.

The Principal Accountant advised the Member that a written response would be provided to his question.

Councillor Jopling asked in relation to Culture and Sport revenue outturn figure how they had come to the stated overspend. The Principal Accountant advised that there was an overspend in relation to the Gala Theatre and Leisure Centres but this was off set by underspends at Libraries and staff vacancies giving a total overspend figure of £0.493m.

The Principal Accountant indicated that the overspend was mainly due to events, the gala theatre and leisure centres which were offset by savings on libraries and staff vacancies.

The Chairman indicated that an item on the Gala Theatre was coming to a future meeting and he understood that budget issues had been raised at another scrutiny meeting.

Councillor Crute suggested that there was a common thread through all of the Scrutiny meetings relating to how the budget is reported and in view of the problems other local authorities had experienced he had requested budget training similar to that given on the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Councillor Martin asked if future reports could show the original budget and not just a revised figure.

The Principal Accountant advised that the £11.9 million was taking out of service budgets and put into a central budget.

**Resolved:** That the final outturn position on Revenue and Capital for 2017/18 be noted.

## **11 Quarter 1 2018/2019 Revenue and Capital Forecast**

The Committee considered the Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided Members with details of the outturn budget position for the service areas within Regeneration and Local Services. The Principal Accountant, Regeneration and Local Services was in attendance to present the report and gave a presentation (for copy of report and presentation, see file of minutes).

Councillor Howell sought clarification on the changes in the VAT in Culture and Sport and why a payment was made to a third party contractor for an income shortfall.

The Chairman advised Members that the Committee had previously received an item where Peterlee Leisure Centre had been discussed.

The Principal Accountant referred to the VAT and advised Members that they had been waiting for the court outcome.

**Resolved:** That the Quarter 1 forecast outturn position on Revenue and Capital for 2018/19 be noted.

## **12 Response to Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan Consultation**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided members with a copy of their formal response to the Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2018 – 2028 (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

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

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Special Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 10 October 2018 at 9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor E Adam (Chair)**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors O Milburn, B Avery, L Brown, J Clark, S Dunn, P Howell, P Jopling, C Kay, R Manchester and A Simpson

**Co-opted Member:**

Mrs P Holding

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bell, J Carr, D Hicks, C Martin and L Taylor.

### **2 Substitute Members**

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

### **4 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

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

### **5 Environment Improvement and Fly-tipping Campaigns - Progress:**

Members considered the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided Members with a progress report on the development and implementation of environmental improvement campaigns and projects in the county (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager and Senior Civic Pride Officer were in attendance to present the report and provided Members with a presentation that provided details of:-

- The 'Durham Pride' Approach and changing attitudes and behaviours
- Partnership Working
- Environmental Quality Indicator
- Fly-tipping – A National Perspective; Operation Stop It
- Partnership Task Force
- How are we performing now?
- Mapping & PowerB1
- Enforcement Activity
- Waste of Private Property
- Volumes and Outcomes
- Responsible Dog Ownership; Stray Dogs; Dog PSPO – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017
- Big Spring Clean Aims and the Big Spring Clean 2018
- Operation Spruce Up; Surveys in each area; Success – media
- Enforcement
- Open Space Improvements
- It's Your Neighbourhood
- Volunteers
- Green Flag
- Learning New Skills
- Learning about the Environment
- Celebrating our Environment
- What can Members do?

During the presentation Members asked questions and made observations as follows:-

### **Fly-tipping**

Councillor Clark asked whether DCC kept figures in relation to the number of fly-tipping incidents reported by staff and the number reported by members of the public. She continued that education was included in the activity via Operation Spruce Up undertaken in Horden wondered whether following Operation Spruce Up there had been a spike at any point in the reporting of incidents from members of the public. She then referred to staff reporting incidents in particular refuse wagons as they have the necessary technology fitted and can see into yards to record and then report incidents of fly-tipping. In addition, she asked as to how easy it is for other DCC staff working in local communities to report incidents and whether these staff have the time and necessary technology to report incidents easily.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager responded that the figures in the presentation in relation to fly-tipping included incidents reported by DCC staff. He continued that a number of staff were reporting incidents in particular the clean and green teams which work in our local communities. The Neighbourhood Wardens also report incidents in local communities, not just fly-tipping incidents they also report street lighting issues, pot holes etc. through the CRM system with the system used to identify hotspots in the county. He confirmed that it is currently relatively easy for staff to report incidents and that DCC is in the process of using Microsoft power BI which identifies three or more incidents at a post code area providing a richer picture for use by DCC, partners and members.

The Chairman asked in relation to it being relatively easy for staff to report incidents, is it easy because they have the necessary technology to do so. The Neighbourhood Protection Manager indicated that one Neighbourhood Warden had reported 900 incidents over and above his job. He continued that Wardens have tablets and can report on the dash system and thereby have the facility to report incidents while out in the field however not all DCC staff working in local communities have this technology.

The Chairman then referred to the waste transfer stations which can be used by businesses to dispose of business waste and asked if they are open on a weekend and if not could this be looked at. In addition, what advertising/promotion has been carried out by the service to highlight the facilities/systems on offer at the transfer stations.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager advised that the advertising for this facility had been low key as the Service Grouping wanted to ensure that all systems were in place however they would shortly be carrying out some promotional activity. He advised Members that he would feed back to the service the member's suggestion in relation to the opening of the facility on a weekend.

Councillor Jopling referred to retail centres in the county where there are fast food outlets and how she had noticed the amount of rubbish from these outlets appearing at the side of the road, which has obviously been thrown out of vehicles once the meal and refreshments have been consumed. She asked if the Council liaises with shopping centre managers to see if they could coerce big fast food outlets to put something on the packaging encouraging the responsible disposal of the packaging.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager advised that DCC has done a litter from vehicle campaign and in addition has worked with companies such as McDonalds who are very supportive of any initiatives undertaken by DCC and have previously assisted DCC staff in carrying out litter picks. They have also allowed DCC to issue FPN on their sites and get involved in the Big Spring Clean.

Councillor Avery indicated that all members have problems with fly-tipping in their areas and that he had reported a lot of fly-tipping incidents. He continued that the CAT team had undertaken a lot of work in his area and had done a fantastic job however there are a lot of terraced houses in his area which are attractive to transient families which results in rubbish being left in vacant yards and in the street, drifting back to the situation before the CAT team came into the community. He continued that to the Town Council is considering the use of a private company to tidy up the area however he was not in favour of this approach and would prefer additional DCC Neighbourhood Wardens in the local community.

The Chairman indicated that at a previous meeting of the committee the question had been raised asking how long after the CAT team had been in an area, did it take, for the area to get back to the previous condition.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager indicated that the feedback from Spruce Up and surveys has been positive with more beach clean ups than ever before as communities respond to TV programmes such as the Blue Planet. The Service works closely with Town and Parish Councils with some parish councils providing funding for additional Neighbourhood Warden hours in their local area. There is a CPN team that work outside of

the CAT Team that does additional work in specific locations in the county where there is a high turnover of residents with a mix of issues. With regard to how long it takes for areas to change after the CAT team had visited he could not answer, however work undertaken by the CAT team such as the painting of street furniture and working with schools who do planting lasts longer. He highlighted that we need to focus on education as well as enforcement.

Councillor Howell referred to the map and figures contained in the presentation in relation to Detritus and commented that the data was only useful if it was used to look at targets. The Neighbourhood Protection Manager assured Members that the Service Grouping does use the data for targeting purposes.

Councillor Howell then referred to enforcement activity which showed that prosecutions were up however Stop and Checks and the deployment of CCTV was down and asked why both Stop and Checks and deployment was down.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager responded that they had a lot of CCTV cameras currently deployed but they needed to do more Stop and Checks and that they were currently training rural Special Constables in order to increase the amount of Stop and Checks.

Mrs Holding commented that where she lives there are issues with litter from fast food outlets and referred to some parts of the country offering youngsters free coffee if they return their cups and asked if this could be encouraged in County Durham.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager indicated that the authority had signed up to the National Refill Campaign and that bottles could be refilled at council buildings. Starbucks also did a discount if you took your own cup and other groups were looking at tackling issues with a move towards refillable cups/bottles etc. There was a lot of pressure on manufacturers, so a lot of research was being carried out.

Councillor Brown asked what work was being undertaken in class rooms on 'Keep Britain Tidy'. Officers responded that 'Tidy Ted' goes into classrooms and that this would be covered in detail later in the presentation. The Senior Civic Pride Officer commented that the Clean and Tidy Campaign was a national scheme however the authority had won awards for both the 'Operation Stop It' and 'Operation Spruce Up' campaigns.

Councillor Dunn referred to the DCC literature/leaflets available and suggested that we develop some clip art for use by Town and Parish Councils in their newsletters and social media. He then referred to the deployment of CCTV cameras which was 110 in 2017/18 and 33 to date in 2018/19 with 8,000 fly-tipping incidents a year. This was the ultimate action to catch repeat offenders but from experience it was difficult to get CCTV cameras deployed where there were regular problems. He commented that DCC's cameras were using older technology and were more labour intensive in the monitoring and suggested that the council look at investing in more up to date technology which would be less labour intensive.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager advised that in terms of technology, DCC keeps an eye on new products and recently had a demonstration from a company showing more up to date technology however new equipment had to be financed.

The Chairman commented that County Council members may be willing to contribute to funding the purchase of more current camera technology.

Councillor Kay asked whether vehicles carrying green waste are stopped and checked as this type of waste is often dumped illegally.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager advised that police have the powers to stop vans/lorries carrying all types of waste including green garden waste, they have powers of seizure which has a big impact.

The Chairman referred to the comments made in relation to the partnership taskforce however there was no mention of social landlords. Officers responded that they worked with a lot of landlords including Livin and the County Durham Housing Group on various projects including litter picks. Officers commented that the Clean and Green team receive a number of calls from residents reporting rubbish on social landlords land but as the rubbish is not on land in council ownership they were unable to take action.

The Chairman indicated that the Livin policy was 40 days for the removal of fly-tipping from their land and that this causes issues as residents think that DCC is responsible for the removal of the rubbish. He continued that Livin had reduced this period to 15 days however this has recently increased back to 40 days and he advised Members that he would raise this issue with Livin.

### **Responsible Dog Ownership**

Councillor Kay referred to dog walking routes and asked whether there are enough bins for residents to use to dispose of dog poo. He continued that the route he walks, he can walk for over a mile before he finds a bin which is often full or overflowing with bags of dog poo. This resulted in people leaving the poo bags on the ground or hanging in the trees in biodegradable bags. He asked whether DCC had ever looked at where residents walk their dogs to then position bins where they are most needed providing an opportunity for residents to dispose of their dog's poo responsibly.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager advised that the location of the bins was mapped on the GIS system however if they installed a bin at one mile then they would need to place a bin at two miles and so on. Maybe there is a need to change the approach to a stick and flick approach (Forestry Commissions option) on railway lines and countryside walks, flicking the poo into the undergrowth.

The Senior Civic Pride Officer indicated that the Service Grouping get a lot of requests for dog poo bins, the difficulty is often the location of the bins and getting them emptied as dog poo is very heavy and the bins are located so distance from an access point. The Clean and Green team have a responsibility to report that bins are overflowing, if a bin is overflowing then it should be reported so that the rota could be altered so that the bin is emptied more frequently.

Councillor Avery continued that he agreed that DCC needs to look at where the bins are located and he continued by highlighting that he has particular issues in his local area, suggesting that more bins are required.

Councillor Jopling agreed that there needed to be a review of the location of dog bins as people tend to walk the same route. She indicated that people don't like to place the poo in a litter bin, they prefer a dog bin.

Councillor Brown indicated that dog poo bags should be biodegradable so that the bag and the waste rotted together.

Councillor Dunn referred to the designation of play areas as dog free zones and commented that in his local area residents wanted to make a football field as a dog free zone, as they have to clear the area of poo prior to an football activity taking place. He asked if this type of area was fenced off could it be designated as a dog free zones.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager responded that they needed to go out to consultation to expand the PSPO and advised that in relation to some beaches in the county they had failed in being designated as dog free zones as a number of people wanted to be able to walk their dogs on the beach.

## **Litter**

Councillor Milburn referred to DCC's litter poster which was too polite and showed Members a litter poster from Falkirk saying 'Show A Litter Respect' take your litter with you, it's not your personal bin. Members asked that the Officer report back to the Service Grouping that the message needs to be more blunt and direct.

## **Enforcement**

Councillor Dunn referred to dash cams which were potentially a good source of evidence, even if used as a deterrent.

Officers advised Members that some council vehicles already had dash cams fitted and were used as evidence. Dash cams were going to be rolled out to more council vehicles.

Councillor Jopling asked what happened to the litter from a clean up operation.

The Senior Civic Pride Officer advised that they were currently working with the Clean and Green team to have a split bag so there was one side for plastic and one for litter allowing the waste to be separated.

In response to questions on the use of footage from dash cams owned by members of the public to record people throwing litter from vehicles the Neighbourhood Protection Manager advised that the authority is currently looking at the legal implications of asking the public to send in dash cam footage. He advised that as enforcement was now on the registered keeper of the vehicle instead of the person committing the offence, this is an important change for his team.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their very informative presentation and indicated that the presentation showed that the service was doing a lot of good work, which was recognised by other authorities and asked that the officers in attendance pass on the thanks of members to all the various teams involved.

**Resolved:** That the Committee note and comment on the wide range of environmental campaigns aimed at promoting behavioural change and greater community involvement in their local environment.

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**Environment and Sustainable  
Communities Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee**



**16 November 2018**

**Fuel Poverty**

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**Joint report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with detail of the projects and schemes available in the county to tackle fuel poverty prior to a presentation by Cliff Duff, Housing Regeneration Project Manager, Regeneration and Local Services.
2. Members have received several reports in relation to the progress together with detail of various projects in the county to tackle fuel poverty. The last progress report was provided to the committee at the meeting on the 11 December 2017 to which members of the Economy and Enterprise OSC and the Adults Wellbeing and Health OSC were invited due to the 'cross cutting' nature of fuel poverty.
3. It was agreed by members at this meeting that the committee would receive a further progress report as part of the work programme for 2018/19.
4. Arrangements have been made for Cliff Duff, Housing Regeneration Project Manager, Regeneration and Local Services to attend the meeting on the 16 November and provide a presentation that can be found at appendix two.

**Background**

5. Fuel poverty is measured using the Low Income High Cost definition and arises from a household's inability to afford the energy required to power and heat their home to a satisfactory standard necessary for good health. This standard is defined as domestic temperatures of 21°C in the primary living area (living room) and 18°C in the secondary living areas (other occupied rooms).
6. The Fuel Poverty Strategy for England 2015-2030 was released in March 2015. Those who live in property rated below band "E" level Energy Performance Certificate rating need to spend on average £1,000 a year more on energy to heat their home compared to a typical home. Through the Energy Act 2013, the government established a new duty to adopt a fuel poverty target. The new fuel poverty target for England sets out an

ambition that as many fuel poor homes as reasonably practicable achieve a Band “C” energy efficiency standard by 2030 and this became law in December 2014.

7. The best long-term solution to tackle fuel poverty is through energy efficiency measures such as home insulation, efficient heating systems, accessing competitive energy tariffs and advice on how to save energy.

### Regional and Local Overview

8. The most recent fuel poverty statistics were released by the Government in 2016 as follows:
  - Nationally 11.1% of households are fuel poor
  - North East average fuel poverty is 13.8%
  - County Durham average is 14% (approximately 31,900)

Table 1 provides an overview of fuel poverty levels in North East Local Authority areas.

**Table 1: North East Local Authorities and Rankings 2016**

Local Authority	Proportion of households fuel poor (%)	Ranking
Middlesbrough	17.0	1
Sunderland	15.3	2
Hartlepool	14.7	3
Newcastle upon Tyne	14.4	4
Redcar and Cleveland	14.3	5
<b>County Durham</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>6</b>
Darlington	13.7	7
Stockton-on-Tees	13.4	8
South Tyneside	13.2	9
Gateshead	12.8	10
Northumberland	12.8	10
North Tyneside	11.2	12
<b>Source:</b> Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)		

### Delivery and Monitoring

9. Co-ordination, promotion and delivery of fuel poverty and energy efficiency programmes to low income residents is a key corporate priority. To this end the County Durham Affordable Warmth Action Plan was agreed by Cabinet in 2015 and has seven key aims to maximise the assistance provided to fuel poor households in County Durham.
10. The action plan is co-ordinated by the County Durham Energy and Fuel Poverty partnership. This partnership brings together a wide range of external organisations (AgeUK, Citizens Advice, East Durham Trust, Fire Service etc.) to maximise awareness, credibility and uptake of the fuel poverty intervention programmes and assistance.

## **Warm Homes Campaign**

11. The Warm Homes Campaign is co-ordinated by the Housing Solutions Service. It aims to raise awareness of all energy efficiency and fuel poverty programs to residents living in County Durham and provides help and support with fuel poverty. The network has over 900 local community venues, community groups and partners who help to raise awareness and uptake of grants to assist with reducing energy bills and maximizing income.
12. In September 2018 the Warm Homes Campaign won the North East Regional energy efficiency award and was also runner up at the national energy efficiency awards for the work in the areas of domestic energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty.

## **Energy Company Obligation (ECO)**

13. Under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) all energy supply companies are required to provide grant assistance to low income and fuel poor owner occupier and private rented tenants to install domestic energy efficiency measures. The aim of ECO is to reduce energy bills and levels of fuel poverty by installing new energy efficient boilers, central heating, cavity wall insulation and loft insulation.

### **ECO Phase 1**

14. ECO phase 1 (ECO1) ended in May 2017 and a total of 2,822 households in County Durham received grants for new energy efficiency gas boilers and insulation measures. The eligibility criteria for ECO1 assistance was limited to households in receipt of qualifying benefits i.e. income support.

### **ECO Phase 2**

15. ECO phase 2 (ECO2) ran from May 2017 to the end of October 2018. Under ECO2 the eligibility criteria was extended to allow more households to be assisted. Therefore in addition to benefit recipients, other households not in receipt of benefit entitlements also qualified for ECO2 assistance including the following categories:
  - Households with a total income less than £26,000
  - Households with a cold related illness that could be made worse by living in a cold damp home
16. ECO2 provides low income households with grants to install new oil or gas heating boilers, central heating systems and cavity wall and loft insulation measures. These grants are promoted countywide by a variety of mechanisms including targeted mail outs, door to door promotions, County News, DCC's Warm Homes Campaign, partner organisations etc.
17. To date 484 households countywide have received an ECO2 grant for energy efficient gas or oil fired heating boilers along with cavity wall and loft insulation measures. This equates to £1.66m of external funding

drawn down into County Durham from the national ECO2 programme.

### **Joint Working with Clinical Commissioning Group**

18. The qualifying criteria for ECO2 includes households with a cold related illness as defined in the guidance from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).
19. Joint working has commenced with the Durham and Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group (DDES CCG) to promote ECO2 boiler grants to patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or Asthma. Training and awareness sessions take place for front line health practitioners to allow them to understand how ECO2 can assist their patients.
20. Targeted mail outs are taking place with the Durham Dales GP surgeries. Phase 1 involves GP surgeries in off gas grid areas, where the surgery writes to their patients to make them aware of the assistance available from the Housing Solutions Warm Homes Campaign.
21. To date 254 patients have returned the Warm Homes enquiry form to Housing Solutions, patients are then contacted to provide assistance. Phase 2 of the mail out will involve a further 26 GP surgeries running from September to March 2019 to assist households over the winter period.

### **ECO Phase 3**

22. ECO phase 3 commenced in November 2018 and will run for 5 years until 2022 with £640m annual funding from the energy supply companies. The exact details of ECO3 have not yet been released by the Government and is expected in November 2018.
23. It is forecast that the eligibility criteria will be further extended to include households in receipt of Child Benefits and Personal Independence Payments.
24. Planning is currently taking place to further continue countywide promotions of ECO3 grants over the winter 2018/19 period to maximise awareness, ensure credibility and assist eligible households to apply for assistance

### **Managing Money Better Service**

25. There are currently many competitive gas and electricity tariffs available on the open market which can be very confusing. Research has shown that this can result in households not accessing the cheapest energy tariffs leaving vulnerable residents paying high energy bills, suffering fuel debt and cold homes.
26. The Managing Money Better (MMB) service is funded by Durham County Council Poverty Action Steering Group. MMB provides free and impartial advice to County Durham residents in order to access competitive energy

tariffs, help switch energy provider, fuel debt write off and energy saving advice.

27. Housing Solutions co-ordinate the MMB service as part of the Warm Homes Campaign in order to raise awareness and generate referrals.
28. During the period May 2017 to September 2018 MMB received 1,013 referrals and carried out 919 home visits. This resulted in a combined saving on household energy bills, fuel debt write off and Warm Homes Discount grants of over £105,000.
29. The MMB service is currently seeing an increasing demand for assistance but is only funded up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. Discussions are due to take place with the Poverty Action Steering Group with the objective of extending the MMB service beyond 2019 to continue to provide help and support to households in County Durham. If no funding is forthcoming the service will cease on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

### **Energy Services Company**

30. An Energy Services Company (ESCo) is a business that provides a broad range of energy services. This can include the supply of electricity and gas to customers and requires an energy supply license to do this, issued by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem).
31. In April 2018 the North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO) commenced a project to assess the impact that a regional Local Authority owned Energy Services Company (ESCo) could have in reducing levels of fuel poverty in the north east region
32. The ESCo project will explore the possibility of developing an energy services company that would help to reduce fuel poverty levels in the North East region by providing a low cost energy tariff. NEPO recommendations are due by March 2019.

### **Recommendations**

33. It is recommended that the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the content of the report and comment upon the information provided within the presentation.
34. That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee include in its work programme for 2019/20 a further progress report.

### **Background Papers**

Report to Environment and Sustainable Communities on 11 December 2017 – Fuel Poverty Update

Report to the Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC on 18 November, 2016 - Fuel Poverty Update.

Report to Cabinet on 21 October 2015 - Welfare reform and poverty issues

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<b>Contact/Author: Cliff Duff</b>	<b>Tel: 03000 265262</b>
<b>Author: Diane Close</b>	<b>Tel: 03000 268141</b>

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**Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – Not Applicable

**Staffing** – Not Applicable

**Risk** –Not Applicable

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** – Not Applicable

**Accommodation** – Not Applicable

**Crime and Disorder** – Not Applicable

**Human Rights** – Not Applicable

**Consultation** – Not Applicable

**Procurement** – Not Applicable

**Disability Issues** – Not Applicable

**Legal Implications** – Not Applicable

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# Environmental and Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## Fuel Poverty Overview

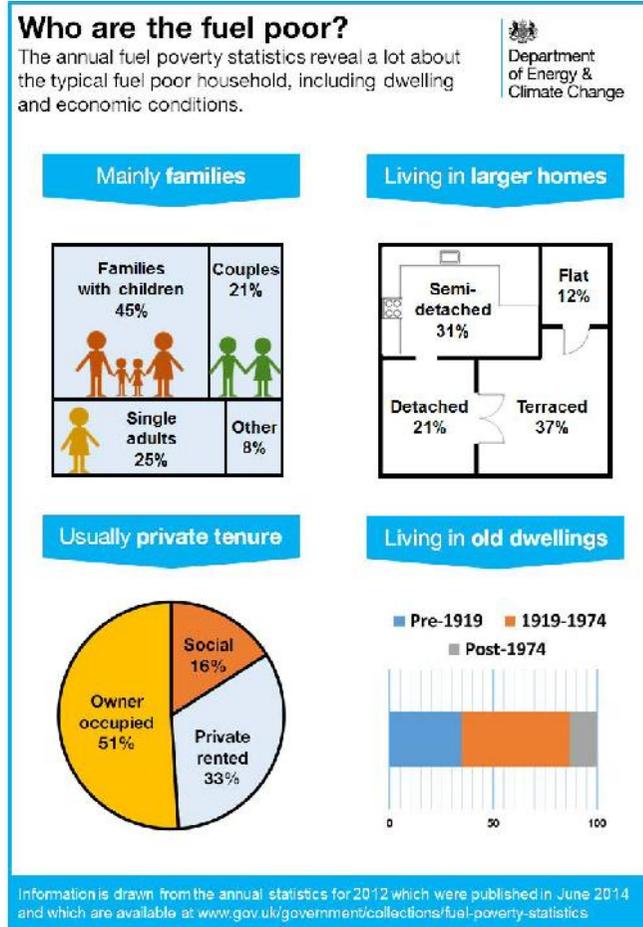
16<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Cliff Duff - Housing Project Manager

*Altogether better*



# Who are the fuel poor?



*Altogether better*



# National Context

## Fuel Poverty Strategy for England 2015-2030

- “Cutting the Cost of Keeping Warm”
- 2.5 million fuel poor households in England in properties rated below band “E”
- Spending £1,000 a year more on energy to heat their home
- Energy Act 2013 Target - All homes Band C by 2030
  - (1) Band E by 2020
  - (2) Band D by 2025

*Altogether better*



# Local Context

National	Estimated number of households	Estimated number of fuel poor households	Estimated % of households in fuel poverty
England	22,657,000	2,492,270	11.1%

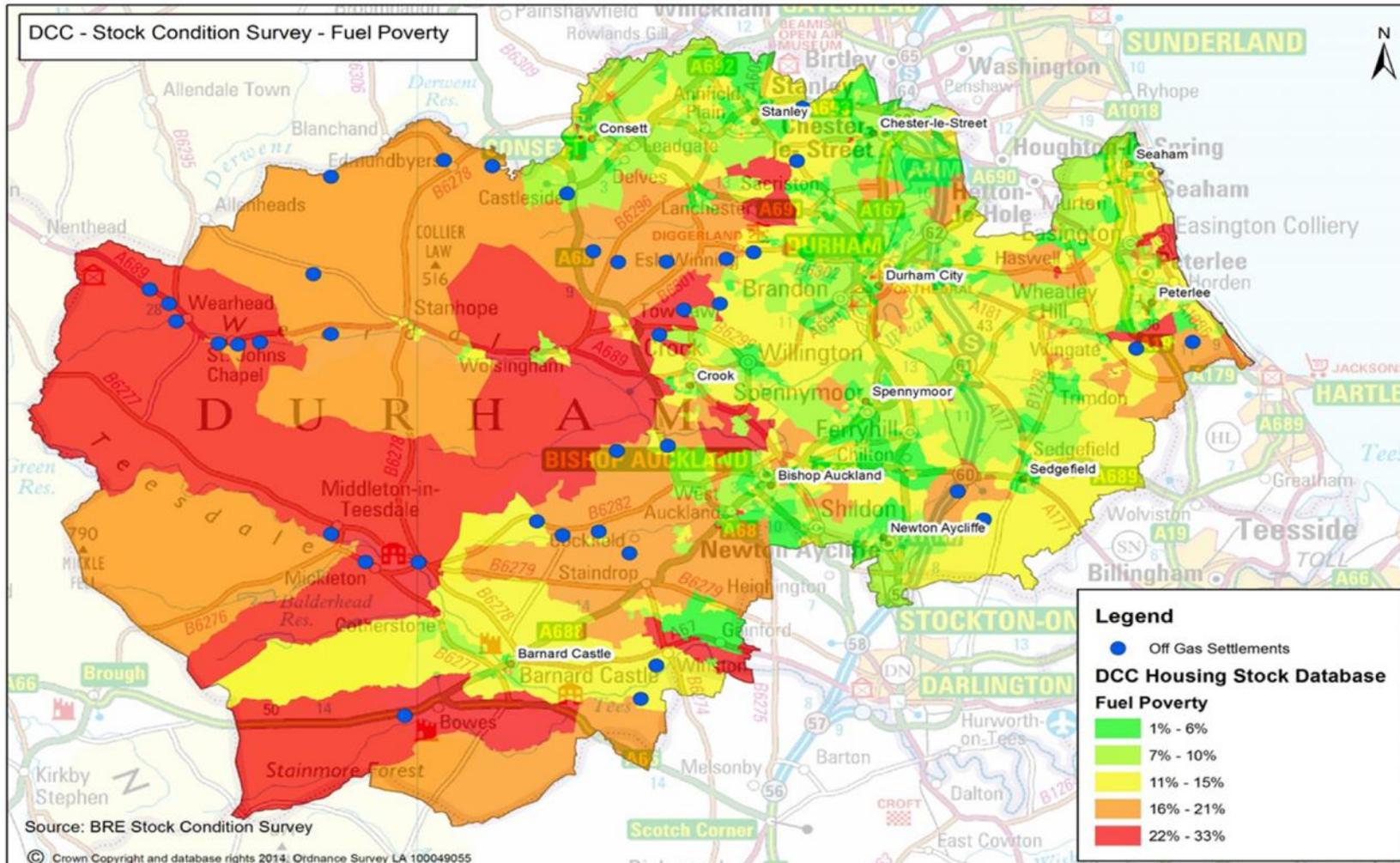
Region	Estimated number of households	Estimated number of fuel poor households	Estimated % of households in fuel poverty
North East	1,146,083	152,429	13.8%

Local Authority	Estimated number of households	Estimated number of fuel poor households	Estimated % of households in fuel poverty
County Durham	226,940	31,900	14.0%

*Altogether better*



# County Durham Fuel Poverty



*Altogether better*



# Delivery and Monitoring

- Housing Strategy
- Poverty Action Plan
- County Durham Affordable Warmth Action Plan 2015-2020
- Energy and Fuel Poverty Partnership

*Altogether better*



# Warm Homes Campaign



- Raise awareness of fuel poverty grant programs
- Engagement and confidence is key
- Countywide promotions to encourage referrals
- 900 local community venues
- National Award in “Recognition of work in the fields of tackling fuel poverty”
- Partnership working
- Referrals to DCC services and external partners eg. Welfare Rights, Age UK, CAB, Fire and Rescue Service, East Durham Trust, Managing Money Better

*Altogether better*



# What Help is Available?

- Energy Company Obligation (ECO)
- Funding from Energy Supply Companies
- £1.9b until 2022
- Levy on all electricity bills
- Fuel Poverty grant programmes
- Gas or oil boilers, cavity wall insulation & loft insulation

*Altogether better*



# Energy Company Obligation

- ECO Phase 1 - households in receipt of qualifying benefits
- 2,822 households in County Durham received grants
- ECO Phase 2 – qualifying criteria extended
- Income less than £26,000 OR ill health
- 484 households assisted with £1.66m ECO2 funding

*Altogether better*



# Health Targeting

- Joint working with CCG's
- Mail outs from GP Practices to patients
- Targeting off gas areas
- Over 250 patients contacted Warm Homes Campaign
- Referrals to others partners including Managing Money Better and Fire Service

*Altogether better*



# ECO Phase 3

- Commencing November 2018
- Exact details not yet released by Government
- Forecast eligibility criteria further extended to Child Benefits and Personal Independence Payments
- Countywide promotions planned
- ECO Phase 4 until 2022

*Altogether better*



# Managing Money Better

- Energy Market – confusing, many tariffs
- Fuel debts, fuel poverty and high bills
- MMB provides free & impartial help and advice
- MMB home visit to:
  - Find the most competitive energy tariff
  - Switch energy supplier
  - Fuel debt assistance and fuel debt write off
- Over £105,000 saved on energy bills from 919 home visits

*Altogether better*



# MMB Case Study

- MMB promoted in County News
- Very high electricity bills - £4,300 fuel debts
- MMB home visit - electric meter 126% inaccurate
- New meter installed - bill reduced to £1,300
- MMB requested reworked bill using consumption history from new meter
- Energy company wrote off the £4,300 energy debt
- Client was in credit by over £1,000 due to previous payments

*Altogether better*



# Energy Service Company

- ESCo's can supply electricity and gas
- NEPO project to assess the feasibility of a regional ESCo
- Project will explore effect an ESCo could have on reduce fuel poverty levels in the North East region
- NEPO findings due March 2019

*Altogether better*





*Altogether better*



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**Environment and Sustainable  
Communities Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee**



**16 November 2018**

**Environment and Sustainable  
Communities Overview and  
Scrutiny Review - Management of  
the Woodland Estate owned by  
Durham County Council**

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**Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation  
and Partnerships and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director,  
Regeneration and Local Services**

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**Purpose**

- 1 The attached report presents members with detail of the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained within the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review Group report on the management of the woodland estate owned by Durham County Council.

**Background**

- 2 At a meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 November 2014 members agreed the terms of reference for the review with the aim of the review to investigate how Durham County Council strategically manages its woodland estate and identify any areas for improvement. It was agreed that the review would focus on:
  - (a) Are DCCs current policies, strategies and plans effective in managing the woodland estate?
  - (b) Is partnership working robust in relation to managing the woodland estate robust?
  - (c) How will DCC fund woodland management in the future including consideration of opportunities for income generation?
  - (d) Should DCC be seeking to create new woodland that meets multiple objectives on DCC estate where appropriate?
  - (e) How DCC and partners encourage, engage with and support communities within County Durham to participate in woodland projects and initiatives?

- (f) DCC's current and future arrangements for the diversification of the woodland estate?
- (g) How DCC and partners promote biodiversity within the woodland estate?
- 3 A review group of ten members was established from the membership of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Evidence was gathered over a period of six meetings and two site visits with information provided by Durham County Council officers, the Forestry Commission, contractors, Durham Wildlife Trust (DWT) and Northwoods.
- 4 The report was considered by Cabinet at the meeting on the 16 September, 2015. At that meeting Cabinet agreed the recommendations contained within the review report which included a recommendation for a six monthly update on the progress made against the recommendations contained in the report. The report was shared with the County Durham Environment Partnership Board at the meeting on the 10 December 2015.

### **Recommendations of Review**

- 5 The review group made the following recommendations:
- (a) That Durham County Council as part of the audit of the woodland estate considers:
- The future strategic management of the woodland estate.
  - The partnership management approaches adopted by key partners within County Durham such as Durham Wildlife Trust.
  - The development and implementation of a streamlined corporate strategy/policy framework for the management and protection of woodland owned by Durham County Council.
- (b) That Durham County Council maximise the income generation and employment opportunities from timber extraction on existing and potential new sites including consideration of new management models such as those produced by the SIMWOOD project for the marketing and extraction of timber.
- (c) That Durham County Council's procurement process for the letting of timber extraction contracts ensure that:
- Contracts are advertised to target and maximise interest from the private sector.
  - That in conjunction with the Corporate Procurement Manager the required documentation and process is simplified to make contracts more attractive to private sector companies.
- (d) That Durham County Council maximises the funding opportunities available via the Common Agricultural Policy (Countryside Stewardship

Scheme for England) and the European Structural and Investment Fund (Low Carbon Economy Strand) if and when such funding becomes available for the benefit of the Durham County Council woodland estate.

- (e) That Durham County Council continues to actively encourage and promote the volunteering opportunities available within the woodland estate via the Durham Community Action's Do-it website, AAPs, Durham County News, Durham County Council Staff (current and former), Resident Organisations, Community Centres and County Council Members.
  - (f) That Durham County Council ensures that the contact details of the Countryside Service are clearly displayed on community woodland sites for use by the general public and that Durham County Council publicise via factsheets information in relation to the benefits of biodiversity; woodland management and the illegal status of fallen timber taken from the woodland estate.
  - (g) That a review of this report and progress made against the recommendations will be undertaken six months after the report is considered by Cabinet.
- 6 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received two previous updates on progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the report that were considered in October 2016 and July 2017.
- 7 Arrangements have been made for Sue Mullinger, Landscape Delivery Officer to attend the meeting on the 16 November 2018 to provide the committee with a final update on the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the review report.

### **Current position**

- 8 The attached Action Plan (Appendix 2) provides information on the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the scrutiny review report.

### **Recommendation**

- 9 Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and comment upon the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the scrutiny review report.

### **Background papers:**

Management of the woodland estate owned by DCC Scrutiny Review Report 2015.

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**Tel: 03000 268141**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – The report highlights the need for DCC to maximise the funding opportunities for woodlands available via the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and the European Structural and Investment Fund via the Low Carbon Economy Strand when funding becomes available. In addition, woodlands present an opportunity to generate income for the Authority which needs to be maximised via timber extraction from the forest estate on appropriately identified sites.

**Staffing** – Not applicable

**Risk** – Not applicable

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** – The necessary Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared concerning the review report.

**Accommodation** – Not applicable

**Crime and Disorder** – Not applicable

**Human Rights** – Not applicable

**Consultation** – Not applicable

**Procurement** – In relation to timber extraction contracts for DCC woodland estate the report identifies the need to ensure that contracts are advertised appropriately to maximise interest and target the private sector. The report also identifies the need for the required documentation and procurement process to be simplified to make the contracts more favourable to the private sector.

**Disability Issues** – DCC tries to ensure that community woodlands sites can be accessed by people with disabilities including by the use of mobility scooters. However, some sites have limited access and advice can be given by the Countryside Service as to the accessibility of individual sites.

**Legal Implications** – Not applicable

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP REPORT - MANAGEMENT OF THE WOODLAND ESTATE OWNED BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL  
REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS CONSIDERED BY CABINET ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2015.**

Review Recommendation	Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Resib'ty	Timescale
<p>1. That Durham County Council as part of the audit of the woodland estate considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The future strategic management of the woodland estate.</li> <li>• The partnership management approaches adopted by key partners within County Durham such as Durham Wildlife Trust.</li> <li>• The development and implementation of a streamlined corporate strategy/policy framework for the management and protection of woodland owned by Durham County Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Review of Durham County Council Woodland Estate produced in 2015. Number of key findings and delivery recommendations including; Consolidating woodland management and operations across the council; Scoping out outsourcing of forestry operations</li> <li>• Durham Woodland Revival HLF application successful. A grant of £59k has been awarded for the development phase, leading to a future £432,700 bid to HLF. Along with match funding from DCC, the Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission it will mean £1m investment in woodlands and the forestry sector in the County. Recruitment for a Development Manager is underway. The next 15 months will be spent working up detailed projects to stimulate management of small woodlands and provide opportunities for communities to help manage the sites. The project will deliver from early 2019 to the end of 2023 and will be managed by 3 new staff members funded through the programme.</li> <li>• A Development Manager, funded by HLF, has been in post since November 2017 to work up the detail required to submit to Stage 2 early November. This will release £432,700 and a further £400,000 form partners for a 4 year delivery programme starting summer 2019. The project aims to conserve and restore the network of woodlands and strengthen resilience</li> </ul>	<p>SM</p>	<p>2017</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

	<p>against diseases and the effects of climate change. It will reconnect communities and landowners with woodlands, providing support to manage them effectively and provide a valuable, sustainable timber resource for years to come. More details can be found at <a href="http://www.woodlandrevivalproject.info/">http://www.woodlandrevivalproject.info/</a></p>		
<p><b>2.</b> That Durham County Council maximise the income generation and employment opportunities from timber extraction on existing and potential new sites including consideration of new management models such as those produced by the SIMWOOD project for the marketing and extraction of timber.</p>	<p>Income from thinning contracts is almost £50k to date. Most of the economical woodlands have now been thinned . A new contract with Stobart Forestry is underway to thin a further 14 woodlands. These are woodlands with young trees and access/security issues where previous attempts at selling standing timber have failed. There will be no income from these sites but it does mean that the woodlands will be better managed and more resilient in the future.</p> <p>All thinning contracts will finish March 2019. There have been a few teething problems with Stobart which we have hopefully sorted prior to future opportunities. Timber markets, particularly woodchip are significantly more buoyant than when we started this process. Any new thinning agreements will allow for these changes. We also need to be more realistic about the value of the timber and factor in site security and access, which can significantly alter the level of income.</p> <p>Forestry Commission approved management plans are about to be finalised for the remaining 1000ha of DCC forest estate. This means we can start to look at further active management works in conjunction with the Durham Woodland Revival project over the next few years. Consultants have produced the plans, which cost £12,000 and have been funded through agri-environment grants.</p>	SM	Ongoing

<p><b>3.</b> That Durham County Council's procurement process for the letting of timber extraction contracts ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracts are advertised to target and maximise interest from the private sector.</li> <li>• That in conjunction with the Corporate Procurement Manager the required documentation and process is simplified to make contracts more attractive to private sector companies.</li> </ul>	<p>Sales of standing timber are now going through a timber auction company.</p>		
<p><b>4.</b> That Durham County Council maximises the funding opportunities available via the Common Agricultural Policy (Countryside Stewardship Scheme for England) and the European Structural and Investment Fund (Low Carbon Economy Strand) if and when such funding becomes available for the benefit of the Durham County Council woodland estate.</p>	<p>This is an issue for all areas not currently under management as there will be no new funding agreements issued by the Forestry Commission after the autumn statement. In order to get funding to prepare management plans and get felling licences in place, land has to be registered on the Rural Land Registry which is an extremely time consuming exercise.</p> <p>The remaining areas of woodland have been registered on the Rural Land Registry making them eligible for Forestry Commission grants. A contract is currently with procurement for consultants to produce management plans for the remainder of the forest estate. This should be complete by June 2018. It will be entirely funded through Forestry Commission grant.</p> <p>The management plans are almost complete, we are just finalising detail with the Forestry Commission. These cost £12,000 and are 100% grant aided.</p>	<p>SM</p>	<p>2017</p>





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**County Durham Environment Partnership Board  
Minutes**

**Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
The Burlison Room, Town Hall, Durham**

**Apologies**

Jamie Fletcher - Environment Agency

**Attendees:**

Oliver Sherratt (Chair) (OS) - Direct Services, DCC  
 Liz Charles (LC) - Durham Community Action  
 John Reed (JR) - Chair, Climate Change Group  
 Vicky Burrell - Strategic Waste, Durham County Council  
 Gordon Elliott - Partnerships, Durham County Council  
 Lyndsey Waters (LW) - Communications, DCC  
 Tarryn Lloyd Payne (TLP) - Secretariat, Partnerships Team, DCC  
 Steve Bhowmick (SB) - Chair, Coastal, Heritage and Landscapes Group  
 Jim Cokill - Durham Wildlife Trust  
 Glenn Robinson - Partnerships Team, DCC  
 John Mitchell - Durham County Council  
 Michael Fleming - Durham County Council  
 Gemma Wilkinson - Durham County Council  
 Angela Brown (Minutes) (AB) - Secretariat, Partnerships, DCC

Item No.	Subject	Action By
1.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> OS welcomed everyone to the meeting today and initiated round table introductions.	
2.	<b>Minutes and Matters Arising</b> LC asked if an amendment could be made to the last minutes Page 5 should read as Recovery College and not Our Community  There was concern that the 'Green Infrastructure Strategy' is part of the evidence that informs the plan yet not all members of the Board had even seen this document  All other actions were agreed as a true and accurate record	AB to amend  GR to chase

<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>County Durham Environment Partnership Priorities</b>  TLP presented on the Partnership Priorities and reminded the Board that we had produced a plan on a page and had lots of partner engagement and involvement. Comments were taken on board and necessary amendments were made. OS had taken the document to the last County Durham Partnership Forum and had a lot of engagement.</p> <p>SB mentioned that there is a massive wealth and activities for the community to be involved. We want something that can be more interactive with community engagement. We need a hub of environment and resources for the County going forward. In relation to the action plan could we assign actions to the working groups?</p> <p>Next steps  OS thanked TLP and mentioned he had a lot of feedback so overall have very strong endorsement</p> <p>What is still to do:  <b>Consider consultation responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider influence on thematic really important?</li> <li>• Stronger inclusion of food waste?</li> <li>• Sustainable Transport?</li> <li>• Intelligence and bringing information together for access by residents and visitors?</li> </ul> <p>OS asked the Board if they were happy with plan on a page subject to change? The Board endorsed this.</p> <p>OS suggested writing a note to the group chairs within the timeframe to ask the groups to suggest 3 or 4 actions that would potentially make a difference and bring something in draft to discuss at the next meeting, then maybe in the New Year possibly taking to AAP for community projects to promote good work through the partnership</p> <p>OS mentioned that the next meeting will discuss the membership. It would be useful to have a discussion around structure and membership to see if we have key people missing and try to get them involved.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Durham Insight and Environment Performance</b>  Michael Fleming did a joint presentation with John Mitchell on the Durham Insight which is a shared intelligence, research and knowledge base for Co Durham, informing strategic planning across Durham County Council and its partners and by thematic partnerships. The aim is to provide users with an easy way to access and share information, intelligence, research and knowledge for deeper insights about their local area or communities.</p>	

	<p>The main aim of this site is informing and supporting our Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and strategies managed by the authority and its partners.</p> <p>MF reminded the Board that Durham insights is for partners therefore would be useful to know what partners would like to see on there.</p> <p>The link is now live so MF will forward link to be circulated to the Board</p> <p>JM mentioned that his team had spent a lot of time on the development work to populate the site. They used 4000 indicators from lots of sources, data on this site is most up to date information available.</p> <p>There is not a lot of information on the site for Environment and there has always been a problem getting data below County level for this therefore that's where help from partners is needed to populate this information.</p> <p>If Board members could let AB know what information they have that could be used to populate insight then maybe MF could come back to the group in the New Year to update on this.</p> <p>Gemma Wilkinson discussed performance with the Board and asked what they want in relation to performance framework for the plan?</p> <p>She will come back to the Board after discussions have been had with each group to get final actions/measures.</p> <p>OS summarised by saying that we have draft measurers already in the plan with a focus around partnership. At same time as asking for key actions look for comments around proposed actions. When we meet in December we need to refine these. It was agreed to have no presentations at the December meeting so it can be used as a workshop.</p> <p>OS asked GW if information will be available on how groups are performing as it would be good to measure success. GW said she would be happy to speak to chairs individually if they require this to discuss what information they would like to see.</p> <p>GW to attend meeting in December</p>	<p>MF</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>GW</p>
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<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Vision for the County Durham Partnership</b>  GE discussed the new vision for the County Durham Partnership.  The SCS needed a refresh of what we are trying to achieve as the ‘Altogether’ have served us well but the landscape has moved on. The time is right to develop a new Vision for the County Durham Partnership, Cllr Henig and Lorraine will present this on Friday at the County Durham Partnership Board meeting what are our 3 or 4 key issues coming out. We need to be enhancing what we have.  As a Partnership we have an event planned for 10<sup>th</sup> October which you all should have had an invite for, to speak on an asset based approach. Please come along and be inspired and learn all about the new vision.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Single Use Plastic</b>  OS reminded the Board that as County Durham Partnership we have been tasked to look at reducing single use plastic consumption. As part of this a partnership cross cutting group has been established. Currently doing an audit of the County Council using single use plastics.  There have been a number of surveys carried out with suppliers of plastic bags and looking at them being reincorporated into the roads, and are working with transport to develop on the scale of that with a possibility of signing a pledge which will give the direction of travel. Hoping to bring back the report and share it with the partnership.  Durham City bid green scheme and Gala Theatre are signed up to no plastic. The canteen are now using reusable cups.  Will share with partners as soon as it is available in advance of 12<sup>th</sup> November. Happy to have extra meeting if needed.   The task group are currently looking for case studies. A lot of wider corporate organisations are waiting from information from Defra. Smaller ones have adopted making smaller changes where they can.   OS asked partners to send any examples of case studies   It was mentioned that when you buy a meal deal in the canteen you still get plastic bottle with this. OS will feed back to group regarding this.</p>	<p>ALL  OS</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Environment Awards</b>   SB gave an update on the Environment Awards. The judging starts this week. The Ceremony evening is the 8<sup>th</sup> November. The report that was circulated to the Board in</p>	

	<p>advance of the meeting is about next year as it is big 30 year. It is a flagship for the partnership. There are issues for you to think about and how it can be promoted, judging, sponsorship then the ceremony itself in November 2019. If we want key note speaker and special awards the cost will be more, we would need to fund an extra £6000 to stage all we want.</p> <p>We could have a few less categories and maybe one for a special award.</p> <p>If all partners could look at report and feedback</p>	ALL
8.	<p><b>Updates from Group Chairs</b></p> <p><u>Coastal, Heritage &amp; Landscape Group</u>  SB – The last meeting saw a discussion around VCD plan was interesting to hear of new opportunities they are pushing forward, such as Dark skies Festival. There are gaps that need to be filled. But very positive message. They are looking at something like the York Pass.  DCC Countryside – both Hardwick and Wharton Park have both been given green flag accreditation by the charity Keep Britain Tidy in recognition of the excellent standards of maintenance, management and good practice which keep them looking great.  Groundwork have talked a lot about the new visitor centre and the VIP launch for this will be next month.  Two long serving countryside volunteers Valerie Stokell and Linda Schofield received the Caring For your Environment Award</p> <p><u>Environment in Your Communities</u>  LC – The group met in September and had Ken Bradshaw give a talk around Durham Woodland Revival Project and to give an overview of what they are doing. In relation to Community Growing an article on leaf composting will be promoted throughout Autumn. Food Durham has a funding to run Durham Cities Campaign growing vegetables.  Age UK coming together to produce DVD on growing using older people in the County to help older people to be more involved in growing vegetables.</p> <p>VB – It is recycling week next week. Staff are out and about working with Northumbrian Water to encourage businesses to sign up to the refill project. Linking in communications and DCC have been supportive with refill. Various school campaigns are working with AAP's. The Environment Agency are doing inspection sites for waste a lot of businesses are compliant.</p>	

	<p><u>Climate Change &amp; Air Quality Group</u>  JR – There are lots of different initiatives happening. Have been working on bid in for Louisa Centre in Stanley for ground source heat pumps. Hopefully this will be submitted ASAP. Cliff Duff is involved in lots of work around Energy Efficiency and Social Housing. Working with schools in relation to reduction campaign been developed.</p> <p>Air Quality – Denise Holman is looking at proposals for air quality.</p> <p><u>Local Nature Partnership</u>  Have set up procurement which council are to adopt</p>		
9.	<p><b>Environment Partnership Communications</b>  LW circulated the draft Altogether Greener Newsletter. If anyone has any more information to be added. Can you do so ASAP as hope to circulate on Friday?</p>	ALL	
10.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TLP mentioned that GR will be looking after the Environment Partnership going forward. OS thanked Tarryn for has work and welcomed Glenn to the Board.</li> <li>• LC mentioned it had been brought to her attention that there was a planning application for a pig farm in Burnopfield which has 500 objections, just to make people aware of this.</li> <li>• OS – Single use plastic there is potential for special meeting. If not the next meeting will be as scheduled in December.</li> </ul>		
11.	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting:</b>  5<sup>th</sup> December, 2018, 10.00am, Town Hall, Durham</p>		