



Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date **Friday 8 March 2019**
Time **9.30 am**
Venue **Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham**

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 15 January 2019, 28 January 2019 and 8 February 2019 (Pages 3 - 22)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties
6. Media Relations
7. Tree Management Policy
 - a) Joint Report of the Director for Transformation and Partnerships and Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services (Pages 23 - 54)
 - b) Presentation by Steven Craig, Clean & Green Manager (North) and Simon McGinnety, Senior Tree Officer (Pages 55 - 62)
8. Community Action Team
 - a) Joint Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Adults and Health Services (Pages 63 - 72)
 - b) Presentation by Jennifer Jones, Senior Environmental Health Officer (Pages 73 - 118)
9. Environmental Partnership Minutes (Pages 119 - 126)
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
28 February 2019

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 and
M Wilson

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Holding

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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 **Tuesday 15 January 2019 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor E Adam (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors O Milburn, D Bell, L Brown, J Carr, J Clark, R Crute, D Hicks, C Kay, R Manchester, C Martin, A Patterson, A Simpson and P Sexton

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Holding

Also Present:

Councillor A Batey and J Clare

Mrs R Morris – Co-opted Member of Economy and Enterprise OSC

Mrs T Pemberton – Member of the Rail Heritage Steering Board and Chair of the Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway

The Chairman welcomed Members of the Economy Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Mrs T Pemberton to the meeting.

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Avery, A Gardner, P Howell and M Wilson.

2 Substitute Members

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

5 The Heritage Coast and the Tourism Offer - Progress Update:

Members considered the joint report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided Members with details of progress made in relation to projects on the Heritage Coast and work undertaken to promote it as a tourism destination (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Mr Benson, Principal Heritage Coast Officer and Ms Gorman, Managing Director, Visit County Durham were in attendance to present the report and deliver their presentation (for copy of slides, see file of minutes).

The Chairman thanked the Principal Heritage Coast Officer for his presentation and asked Members for questions.

Mr Bolton commented that there are a number of good projects taking place on the coast and asked if there are any further plans to increase visitor awareness of what the coast has to offer such as the wide variety of flora and fauna.

The Principal Heritage Coast Officer responded that they did not have any plans for a single large attraction such as an interpretation centre due to the costs involved however, via the Seascapes project they are looking to join existing attractions together. He continued that one aspect of the Seascapes project was interpretation through touch screen panels. In addition leaflets are available at various locations on the coast highlighting what is on offer.

Councillor Crute referred to Crimdon, a popular local attraction with a Little Tern nesting site and asked for an update in relation to the provision of a warden to patrol the site.

The Principal Heritage Coast Officer responded that they were using European funding for the little tern project and that would end in March 2019. The café proposal would look at the management of the whole site. There is the possibility of introducing car parking charges to create a revenue source or there may be other funding pots that could be accessed to fund a warden. The problem period is 2019 however, discussions are taking place with Hartlepool on the possibility of using volunteers to patrol the site.

Councillor Kay asked for clarification as to what was on offer at Crimdon.

The Principal Heritage Coast Officer responded that Crimdon has sandy beaches and dunes. It is a place of quiet recreation and a caravan site is located to the North of the beach. The café would provide toilets and detail of the history of Crimdon.

Councillor Clark referred to the visit to the Heritage Coast by the committee last year and commented that it was not well attended, but those members who did attend were very impressed by what they saw.

Councillor Batey indicated that she had attended the coastal visit last year and that Crimdon was a 'hidden gem' with a car parking facilities very close to the beach.

The Chair then invited Ms Gorman, Managing Director, Visit County Durham to deliver her presentation.

The Chairman thanked the Managing Director, Visit County Durham for her presentation and commented that there is a lot of work being undertaken to promote Durham's extensive tourism offer and that Visit County Durham are targeting the right people. The Chairman then asked Members for questions.

Mrs Morris made reference to paragraph 20 of the report and asked if the 1,638 employed in tourism, were these jobs sustainable and are new jobs on the coast continuing to be created and if so, what was the percentage.

The Managing Director, Visit County Durham responded that there had been a 3% increase in jobs on the Durham coast.

Mrs Morris then asked what was planned in terms of further marketing the coast.

The Managing Director, Visit County Durham responded that they would be targeting wildlife, flora and fauna, the unique qualities of the coast. It was highlighted that these areas of focus attracted a niche market and it was confirmed that the Visit County Durham marketing team are currently undertaking work to attract this niche market to the County. It was highlighted that a BBC journalist had recently done an article on Durham's Magnesium Landscape. Mrs Morris suggested that there was an opportunity to look at offering boat trips out into the North Sea to increase the tourism offer.

Councillor Kay referred to the water sports offer at Seaham and asked how it is currently advertised, was it marketed to attract new people or was the customer base already established. He continued that he is part of a kayak club and as far as he was aware the club had not received any promotional material in relation to the Water Sports centre.

The Managing Director, Visit County Durham responded that they did national marketing to attract people to stay overnight in the county and use the sports facilities available at Seaham.

The Head of Culture and Sports commented that for the last three years the Water Sports centre had been very much focused on establishing itself providing an opportunity for people to come and try the offer available. However, it is now moving forward and he confirmed that he would pick up the point of advertising the offer to local clubs.

Councillor Batey commented that Visit County Durham have a small number of staff to market the County as a tourism destination. She continued that at a recent Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board workshop it had been highlighted by members that there is a need to provide a map of the county showing the location of key tourist attractions in the county and traveling distances between those locations.

Councillor Clark referred to the importance of interpretation screens in making visitors aware of other attractions throughout the county. She continued that with the development of Horden Station, there are opportunities for bed and breakfast businesses to capitalise on this development. How do we ensure local businesses do capitalise.

The Managing Director, Visit County Durham responded that they have a visitor information network, which consisted of 19 businesses, spread across the County. They

also produce county maps and have branded leaflet racks filled with Durham leaflets only, that display everything on offer in the County. They also have staff in visitor locations who are provided with training. These locations are mystery shopped each year with the most recent survey showing 91% satisfaction. She noted the comments on Horden Station and would ensure that work was undertaken with local bed and breakfast establishments.

Mrs Holding indicated that not everyone wanted to stay in a hotel such as Seaham Hall and commented that there needs to be a mix of accommodation available on the coast.

The Managing Director, Visit County Durham responded that accommodation on the coast is a challenge and that further accommodation is required and that Visit County Durham is currently working with the Regeneration Team on an accommodation study which would be ready in April 2019. She continued that the study had identified gaps in accommodation at the Heritage Coast, Bishop Auckland, Seaham and Durham City.

Mr Bolton referred to the visioning and local attractions and asked as to how attractions are identified. He referred to St. Mary's Church at Seaham and St Andrew's at Dalton-le-Dale, which were beautiful but did not seem to feature very high in relation to marketing and promotion as a tourist destination.

The Managing Director, Visit County Durham responded that St Mary's Church featured on Visit County Durham's website and that they are currently working on the Northern Saint Trails which again will feature on Visit County Durham's website and will include St. Mary's church. She confirmed that Visit County Durham has a Destination Management Action Plan for 2016-2020, that sets out the vision and what was required to develop the vision. The plan covered the whole remit and was developed in consultation with industry partners and members and had been subject to extensive consultation, however they did not engage with the community on the plan but made assumptions on their behalf.

Mr Bolton indicated that people in Durham were proud of where they lived and would engage if provided with the opportunity to do so.

Councillor Clare asked for confirmation on the number of staff in Visit County Durham's marketing team.

The Managing Director, Visit County Durham indicated that they have 12 permanent staff and 2 casual and a marketing team of 4.

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

(ii) That Members be provided with a further update as part of the 2019/20 work programme.

6 Stockton and Darlington Railway Bicentenary Celebrations - Overview:

Members considered the joint report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided Members with an update of the programme of celebrations for the Stockton and Darlington Railway Bicentenary (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Mr Howell, Head of Culture and Sport was in attendance to present the report and deliver the presentation (for copy of slides, see file of minutes).

Following the presentation the Chairman commented that a lot of work has already been undertaken to develop proposals for the bicentenary celebration he then asked Members for their questions.

Councillor Kay referred to the 150th anniversary, which was celebrated in 1975 and had been held at Shildon and asked if the 200th bicentenary anniversary would be dispersed up and down the track or would the celebrations be located in one central place and venue.

The Head of Culture and Sport responded that discussions had centred around Darlington taking the role of the arrival place for the celebrations then Stockton would be the location for the engineering base and then the heritage and celebration base would be located at Locomotion however currently nothing has been finalised.

Councillor Kay then commented that in his opinion Stockton and Darlington Railway should be a World Heritage site. He then commented that there is a need to look at the cycling infrastructure, with work required on the final link from Shildon to Bishop Auckland to ensure that the celebrations are accessible to everyone including cyclists.

The Chairman commented that a previous meeting of the committee had looked at cycleways in the County and that a further progress update would be included in the committee's future work programme.

The Head of Culture and Sport responded that Durham County Council is currently undertaking work on the cycleways and walkways along the railway track. In relation to World Heritage status this has been discussed however it had been agreed that it was not the right time. It is proposed that World Heritage status will be pursued following 2025.

Councillor Milburn referred to other railway assets within the County, which could be tied into the celebration package such as the Causey Arch and asked if Visit County Durham would be looking at this.

The Head of Culture and Sport commented that other railway assets will be added into the total celebration offer.

The Chairman referred to the infrastructure and highlighted the need to ensure that there is the mix of accommodation and transport to meet the requirements of visitors attending the celebrations. The bicentenary will be a huge boost for the area however it is recognised that we are currently in the early stages of discussion.

The Head of Culture and Sport commented that the bicentenary celebrations will be an event of significance.

Councillor Batey referred to Beamish Museum and asked whether they had been approached to loan some of their artefacts to contribute to the celebration events.

The Head of Culture and Sport confirmed that discussions had taken place and that they were supporting the celebrations.

The Chair asked Mrs Pemberton as to whether she would like to make any comments to the committee. Mrs Pemberton commented that she had become involved in railway heritage when she became a Durham County Council member and that she was passionate about seeing steam restored to our railways. She continued that she is incredibly encouraged by the work undertaken by Durham County Council to date although there is more work to be undertaken.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Pemberton for all her work.

Resolved: That a further progress report be included in the 2019/20 work programme together with a tour of the Locomotion site.

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in The Studio, Gala Theatre, Durham City on **Monday 28 January 2019** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor E Adam (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors O Milburn, D Bell, R Crute, S Dunn, P Howell, P Jopling, R Manchester, C Martin and J Turnbull

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Holding

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Avery, L Brown, J Clark, D Hicks, C Kay, A Patterson, A Simpson, P Sexton and M Wilson.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor J Turnbull substituted for Councillor A Patterson.

3 Minutes

16 November 2018 – Fuel Poverty

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised Members that in relation to the Fuel Poverty item included in the minutes a letter was sent, as members had agreed, to the Action Poverty Steering Group (APSG) in support of the Managing Money Better Service and reported that the APSG had agreed to fund the service for 2019/20.

The Minutes of the meetings held on 12 and 16 November 2018 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

4 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Howell declared an interest in the Gala Theatre Overview 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 that fall within the remit of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The articles were:

- County Durham trees part of UK database to conserve the country's woodland – Seeds from some of County Durham's trees have been collected as part of a national programme to create a database of UK tree species. A team from the Royal Botanic Gardens were in County Durham to collect the seeds, which will be banked in its underground vaults, which can be used in conservation work to protect UK woodlands from pests and diseases.
- How town centre will look after £6m plus flood prevention work – The scheme at Chester-le-Street will start later this month. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have approved £2.79 million in funding from the European Regional Development Fund for the project. Durham County Council had already committed up to £1.5 million to the scheme with the remainder of cash coming from the Environment Agency which is contributing £1.9 million. The project would see the 90m stretch of the Cong Burn which runs underneath the town's Market Place open up. As well as reducing the risk of flooding it is hoped that the move would see the watercourse transformed into an attractive landscape.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

7 Gala Theatre

The Committee considered the Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services and the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided Members with background information that gave an overview of the Gala Theatre (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Mr S Howell, Head of Culture and Sport was in attendance to present the report and gave a presentation (for copy of slides, see file of minutes). Members were given information on the seating capacity for the theatre and how this impacted as a constraint on some presented work from touring theatre companies that require a seating capacity of 1000. The advantages of home productions were highlighted as 100% of the box office was retained. The theatre was hired out to the university, schools and armature dramatic companies.

The Gala operates a successful stage school that provides opportunities for children aged 5 to 19 years in all aspects of dramatic arts. The Gala's swing band plays in venues throughout the county.

The pressures on the Gala were seen as emerging competition, audience trends, investment requirements, rising base costs and the impact of austerity. Challenges to the

Gala were in both the short and medium term such as moving the café; refurbishment of the toilets and audience development work. Members were advised of the Gala Improvement Group that address operational trends in income and expenditure to reduce cost and increase secondary spend.

The focus of the Gala programme is on maximising presented productions and ensuring they work harder both through better financial deals, bigger audiences and stronger marketing support. The cinema is lucrative and considerations were being made on options regarding the cinema – for example should the cinema remain to attract a niche audience such as student population or could the cinema space be used for an alternative option for example additional rehearsal space.

Councillor Jopling asked if the theatre was constrained by its seating capacity. The Head of Culture and Sport responded that they needed to recover costs so the types of shows were mid-scale as the large touring shows required 1000 seats and to attract this type of show shows the ticket prices would need to increase to meet the costs.

Councillor Dunn asked how the cinema prices compared to other cinemas. The Officer responded that some cinemas offered an experience such as the Everyman Cinemas where ticket prices would be in the region of £20; in a cinema such as the Odeon ticket prices would be in the region of £7.00. The price of cinema tickets at the Gala were considerably cheaper but for a youth audience price is not always the key consideration. The Head of Culture and Sport gave members an example of when the Vue cinema had opened in Darlington the Odeon had reduced its prices to £1.00 but this is not sustainable in the long or medium term.

Councillor Turnbull asked if they had considered reducing to one cinema screen that could capitalise on showing Royal Shakespeare Company productions or West End shows.

The Head of Culture and Sport indicated that they had looked at this option. The biggest screen in other cinemas had a seating capacity of 120 but the Gala could offer a seating capacity of 500, so they could capitalise on the larger capacity. The Head of Culture and Sport advised that films can be shown in all of the room space in the Gala that is the theatre, cinemas and the studio.

Councillor Jopling suggested that they look at the niche market, as they could not compete with new cinemas in the city. She commented that the retro showings in the gala on an afternoon brought in an audience and they needed to speculate to accumulate and asked for the catering turnover figures. The Head of Culture and Sport advised that the other cinemas would do this too as they would not allow their premises to stand idle during the day. He advised that the Gala Improvement Group were exploring options. In relation to turnover for catering the Head of Culture and Sport advised that for the cinema this was in the region of £150 and for the theatre it was in the region of £300, however it was stressed that there was only a 15 minute interval to capitalise and make money. The Head of Culture and Sport advised he would get back to Councillor Jopling with the exact turnover figure for catering.

The Chairman asked if the Gala was in the Council's ownership or was it leased and whether ticketing packages involving free parking had been considered.

The Head of Culture and Sport confirmed that the council owned the building but there were some terms and conditions that had penalties, due to the millennium grant that was awarded for the project. However, the penalties in the grant were in place for a 20 year period and this would soon be fulfilled.

The Chairman asked if they had looked at providing offers on parking to attract more customers.

The Head of Culture and Sport indicated that they have offers for shows but Durham County Council does not own the parking facilities in the immediate proximity of the gala.

Councillor Howell enquired if in the context of losses driven by production averages if last year was considered to be good or bad.

The Head of Culture and Sport commented that the Gala have had a better year than last year and suggested if more in-house productions were produced this was better as the gala retained 100% of the box office in comparison to buying in a production.

Councillor Crute referred to the recent scrutiny work on retail support where they looked at attracting people into cities via the retail offer. Most cities were focusing on an evening economy and asked if this was a threat or an opportunity.

The Head of Culture and Sport indicated that they worked with surrounding businesses by providing offers such as a restaurant deal to coincide with gala performances. He commented that the lunch time performances were popular and provided another reason to come into the city.

Councillor Crute asked if the service had looked at how other town centres with theatres to see what works for them and how they cope with reducing audience numbers and attract customers during the daytime screenings.

The Head of Culture and Sport indicated that other similar venues had the same issues and he had not heard of anyone that had overcome the problems. He was aware of a Theatre that had purchased the public house next door which had been a success as they offered food as part of the theatre package.

Councillor Jopling referred to catering currently on offer at the Gala and that a more defined bar area was required with comfortable surroundings. The café served good quality food but also needed to move location to the front of the building and be given a snappy name.

The Head of Culture and Sport responded that a business plan and plans had been drawn up which would be submitted to Members in the future.

Councillor Jopling asked if they removed the cinema would this create more space for the theatre.

The Head of Culture and Sport advised that to create more capacity in the theatre building works would need to come back into the bar area which would be costly and would only create an additional 80 seats. The larger cinema space could provide alternative uses.

Mr Bolton reminded members that the DLI museum had an art gallery that was lost to Durham City when the museum closed and suggested that the cinema space could be used to display DCC's art collection. Mr Bolton went on explaining that in the south of the county Bowes Museum displayed art and held exhibitions that were well attended and the Gala could do similar in the north of the county.

The Head of Culture and Sport advised that they could make a gallery and there was also scope to join up with the Clayport Library underground. They were currently in talks with the University with regard to their art collection.

Councillor Dunn indicated that there was no reason why an exhibition could not be showcased at the Gala.

The Head of Culture and Sport advised Members that they had recently opened up the Burlison Gallery in the Town Hall on a Saturday for viewings. They intended to change the collections and have had a good response from the public.

Councillor Turnbull referred to the 'Journey', which was created for the Gala that had not been a success and suggested that something was needed that people would find interesting. Tourists visited the City Centre during the week too and advised of an occasion recently when he personally took a tourist into the Town Hall to view its attractions and asked if the Town Hall could be opened up during the week as well as a weekend to cater for all tourists.

The Head of Culture and Sport advised Members that during the winter months the Town Hall was open on Saturdays only and during the summer months it was intended to open the Town Hall to visitors on a Thursday too.

Mrs Holding indicated that the Tyne Theatre use an area for author talks which are well attended and suggested this could be something that could work at the Gala.

The Head of Culture and Sport responded that the Gala does hold author events and book signings outside of the book festival. The University also used the Gala for public lecture series. The Gala had put on additional performances on three separate occasions, which were free of charge as an incentive to tempt customers back for a paid performance.

The Chairman asked about time frames in relation to plans

Members were advised that a proposal on Millennium Square would be submitted to Cabinet by the end of 2019.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Culture and Sport for his informative presentation which was positive and encouraging.

Resolved: That the report and presentation be noted.

8 Budget Outturn Quarter 2 2018/19

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 report highlighted and explained any major variances in comparison with the budget. The Finance Manager, 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 Martin asked if it would be possible if the outturn reports could also show the original budget for both revenue and capital, as opposed to just the latest budget information.

The Finance Manager, Regeneration and Local Services advised that this would be included for Quarter three report.

Councillor Dunn referred to the Joint Stocks landfill site and asked for information relating to the utilisation of the landfill gas and power generation.

The Finance Manager indicated that he was unable to answer the question in relation to the long term use of the site as this was operational but he would take this back to the service for a response.

Councillor Howell sought clarification if the income figures in the Highways Services Trading at appendix 2 of the report were due to internal trading or as a result of selling the service to other authorities.

The Finance Manager responded that the figures were based on internal charges and the underspend was offset by the surplus.

Resolved: That the Quarter 2 forecast outturn position on Revenue and Capital for 2018/19 be noted.

9 Performance Management Quarter 2 2018/19

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that presented the progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the Council's corporate performance framework for the Altogether Greener priority theme (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

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

Councillor Crute advised that the fly tipping trends were positive but indicated that in the East of the county from November there had been an increase in the number of fly tipping incidents and inquired if there had been a huge reduction in other areas of the County.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager advised that it would be interesting to look at long-term trends on fly tipping on a geographical basis across the county. He agreed to look into whether this could be presented to a future committee meeting.

The Chairman referred to the pilot exercise of the members' portal, that he was part of and advised Members that the new system provided more detailed information on fly-tipping by division.

Councillor Crute suggested that Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) was an area that the committee may want to review at a future date and as part of this work the committee could take the opportunity to look at fly tipping trends.

Councillor Jopling referred to fly-tipping in her area that had not reduced and was concerned that out of 27 cameras deployed throughout the County by the County Council only one incident had been captured and asked if the cameras were in the right places as there were known hotspots.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager advised that where cameras are located the must be a notice warning the public of the cameras and this could be a deterrent to some would be fly tippers. If the fly tip was on private land then this would not be recorded by the County Council.

Councillor Jopling then asked if the Council liaised with landowners in relation to fly tipping on private land to resolve the issues.

The Chairman responded that the council were working with landowners and farmers on fly-tipping.

Councillor Jopling asked why the numbers were so low for fly-tipping enforcement.

The Chairman indicated that the evidence may not be strong enough to take the incident to court or the vehicle number plate could not be identified.

Councillor Howell referred to the CO₂ admissions and asked why the data was from 2016 as this was now out of date and the target from the original strategy was met.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager advised the Member that the target was part of the strategy. The Chairman responded that the strategy may need to be reviewed and new targets developed.

Councillor Dunn referred to the increased incidents of fly-tipping in his area that were on roads leading from the household waste recycle centre and recently 55 tyres had been dumped at St. Helen's Church at Kelloe and would be interested to see the statistics for fly tipping.

Mr Bolton suggested that it would be good to see breakdown of fly tipping in areas and if this could be further broken down into types of fly tipping as it would be interesting to see the mix giving types and indicated that in the East of the county there was the potential for fly-tipping issues from people outside of the County.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager advised Members that the fly-tipping incidents were coded but the household waste centres were for domestic waste only so this may cause an issue. Recent data indicated that it was bags of domestic waste that

was most often fly tipped but he would update the committee on the types of waste being fly tipped at a future meeting of the committee.

Councillor Turnbull referred to tyres and advised that there was criteria for tyre disposal and that garages must adhere to it.

Members asked if some of the fly-tipping was garden waste. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager confirmed that some of the fly-tipping was garden waste.

Councillor Milburn referred to the roll out of the Green Move and was astounded at the amount collected and suggested that there must be very rich students in Durham City.

Mrs Holding commented that there was a cost to collect household waste and not everyone was able to get to a household waste centre and advised that the Council charged residents to remove tree clippings and in some scenarios people in trucks will pick up garden waste and dump it rather than taking it to HWRC.

Councillor Crute referred to the recent vehicle that was seized then crushed and that people were being taken advantage of as they were paying a fee to get their rubbish removed by individuals who then fly-tipped the rubbish. He indicated that this needed to be addressed.

The Chairman advised Members that this would be followed up.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

10 Minutes from the Durham Strategic Flood Prevention Group

The Minutes of the meeting of the Durham Strategic Flood Prevention Group held on 6 December 2018 were received by the Committee for information.

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 **Friday 8 February 2019 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor E Adam (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

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

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Holding

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bell and A Simpson.

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 Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided background information on the role and responsibilities of the Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham prior to receiving a presentation on the water management policies within the emerging County Durham Plan and presentations from the Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham (for copy of report and slides of presentations, see file of minutes).

County Durham Plan – Water Management Policies

The Committee received a presentation from the Senior Policy Officer, Regeneration and Local Services that highlighted the following points:-

- County Durham Plan Timetable
- Preferred Options Consultation Summary
- Water Management Policy Changes
- Water Infrastructure
- Evidence Bases
- Consultation

The Senior Policy Officer informed the committee that 33 comments had been received in relation to the two water policies in the emerging plan. Most of the comments were supportive. Some comments related to site specific flooding issues and these were passed to the Drainage and Coastal Protection Team as they were not specifically looking to change the policy wording. One respondent was concerned about climate change and rising water levels which is picked up through more general changes as a result of an increased emphasis on climate change in the NPPF. There was some concern from developers about what we were asking them to deliver, what was considered reasonable, Developers are encouraged to explore how SuDs within a scheme can achieve reductions to wider catchment flood risk issues, where possible however this is consistent with National Policy and Planning Practice Guidance.

The new NPPF was published in July 2018 placing a greater emphasis on climate change and the management of flood risk, these changes have been picked up in the revised policies.

In relation to the main changes in the Water Management Policy they relate to making it clearer that proposals must consider flood risk and protect the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater bodies as well as seeking opportunities to improve water quality.

There are also proposed changes around who can adopt SuDS with the opportunity for water and sewerage companies to adopt SuDs in the future.

In relation to the evidence bases it was confirmed that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the Water Cycle Study (WCS) were done for the Preferred Options stage of the emerging plan and did not require further updates as the baseline information remained the same. The sequential test has been updated to reflect the changes that have been made to the allocations within the plan and in response to comments from the Environment Agency.

Councillor Dunn indicated that he was supportive of policy 36. He continued that he represents Bowburn which has grown significantly and has had a number settlements added. However, the community has an old drainage system that is not fit for purpose and as a result flooding has occurred at the community centre. He referred to new housing developments having a lot of hard standing and not many trees resulting in more surface water and asked if when considering proposals for the emerging plan, had rain water capture been considered. He suggested that rain water capture should be considered as an option.

The Senior Policy Officer responded that DCC considers a range of options on schemes including the use of SuDs schemes which can include rain water capture. The policy does not prevent the installation of rain tanks it is down to the design of the development rather than policies.

Environment Agency

The Committee received a presentation from the Team Leader Partnerships and Strategic Overview, Durham and Tees Valley Environment Agency that highlighted the following points:-

- The six year Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management North East Area
- Update on Allocations 2019-2021
- Progress with EA Flood Alleviation Schemes in 2017/18
- Investment Pipeline Development
- Asset Maintenance
- The Future
 - New FCERM Strategy
 - Demonstrating New Ways of Working
 - Contribution to Economic Regeneration/Growth
 - Integrated Management of Flood Risk
 - Preparing for the next Investment Period
 - Brexit Impacts

The Chairman thanked the Team Leader for his presentation and asked if there were any plans to mitigate coastal flood risk.

The Team Leader advised Members that there were no schemes in County Durham but there were a number of schemes in the North East included in the six-year Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Investment Programme.

Councillor Jopling asked if climate change was taken into consideration with schemes going forward.

The Team Leader advised that they do look at the potential impact of climate change and incorporated this into the business case when developing a scheme. He continued that they ensured that protection was provided throughout the life of the scheme including a margin of error. He also commented that the government had recently updated the climate change predictions which now has a further slight marginal increase for the impact of climate change and this should start being incorporated into future schemes.

Councillor Dunn referred to sea levels rising and asked what areas of the Durham coast would be a risk of coastal erosion in the future.

The Team Leader responded that they carried out mapping of the coast identifying areas at risk of coastal erosion and agreed to provide Councillor Dunn with the information.

The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager responded that County Durham generally has a high coastline. Crimdon Dene is the only area at risk of flooding from coastal erosion

due to the sea level rising. Some works had been carried out on Seaham north pier to defend the harbour. There was no active intervention for the South pier as there was a big buffer area and no developments or settlements that would be affected so coastal erosion was allowed to occur.

Councillor Patterson commented that there were some impressive schemes and asked if there were any schemes which focused on rivers and the amount of water they can take.

The Team Leader indicated that they did monitor gravel build up in rivers, however they have to be careful and considerate when removing gravel as it has an environmental impact. Funding from the Coal Authority is allowing them to look to deliver some schemes in the upper catchment to reduce the sediment entering rivers from mine workings. He continued that natural flood management looked at reducing sediment into rivers and that the natural flood management work in Upper Weardale will help to reduce the sediment from fields going into rivers.

Mr Bolton referred to coastal erosion issues and that communities seemed reasonably well protected. He continued that the railway line viability had been previously raised and asked whether the railway line was in danger from coastal erosion as at some points it is close to the cliff edge.

The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager responded that the railway line was part of the Seashore Management process and that currently there was very little risk to the line.

Drainage and Coastal Team Update

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Technical Services and the Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager that highlighted the following points:-

- Review for 2018/19
- Grant Funded Schemes for 2017/18
- Schemes Going forward
- Medium Term Investment Plan 2018-2027
- Working Groups
- Schemes – Lanchester and Chester-le-Street
- Joint Studies with Northumbrian Water
- Flooding Examples

Councillor Patterson referred to the slide stating that 3 kms of highway ditches had been cleansed and commented that the contents removed from the ditches is left on the bankside and when it rains the contents are washed back into the ditch or in some cases cover the ditch. This has resulted in people assuming that they are parking on the verge when they are actually parking in a ditch. She asked what was the criteria to be followed in relation to the disposal of the waste collected from ditches.

The Head of Technical Services responded that there was a budget of £25,000 per annum for preventative inspections and maintenance and that the service has to be reactive and target those areas at highest risk. When cleansing ditches it is accepted practise that the contents would be left at the side, to ensure that it does not fall back into the ditch. He continued that the contents from the ditches are rich in nutrients and environmentally

sustainable however the waste from ditches is classed as active waste and incurs high disposal costs. It was confirmed that the waste removed should be spread flat on the bankside.

The Head of Technical Services indicated that they would make sure the contents removed are spread out flat in the future.

Councillor Jopling commented that the contents of potholes when washed away in heavy rainfall must go into the drainage system.

The Head of Technical Services responded that where possible they carried out a permanent repair and avoided temporary measures that did not last so this should not be an issue.

The Chairman referred to the tremendous work being undertaken by the Risk Management Authorities working in partnership and that flood prevention was an expensive process however the devastation it causes to families and communities is huge. He highlighted that EU funding was a major funding source and had resulted in many of the schemes being delivered in the county.

Northumbrian Water

The Committee received a presentation from the Sustainable Sewerage Manager that highlighted the following points:-

- Interactive portal – www.nwlcommunityportal.co.uk
- Update on Completed Sewer Network Schemes within County Durham
- Update on Current Sewer Network Schemes within County Durham
- Update on Planned Sewer Network Schemes within County Durham
- Sewage Treatment Works Investment
- Rainwise Projects in County Durham
- Joint Working
- Strategic Area Studies
- Joint Working
- Adoption of SuDS – Update
- Engagement with Landowners

Councillor Kay sought clarification on what was 'rainwise'. The Sustainable Sewerage Manager explained that the project looks at reducing surface water from rain by using a number of interventions. It looks at current issues but is also pro-active identifying interventions to build resilience to those properties that may be at risk of flooding in the future. The Sustainable Sewerage Manager then gave Members details of the strategy and advised of the 'rainwise' website.

Following the presentations, the Chairman commented that the committee appreciated the work being undertaken in the county to mitigate flood risk. He advised Members that there was going to be a site visit on 4 April 2019 to look at various flood mitigation schemes in the county.

Resolved: (i) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham note the information contained in the report and presentations.

(ii) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham receives further presentations from the Risk Management Authorities at a future special meeting of the committee arranged for February 2020.

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

8 March 2019



Tree Management Policy

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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with background information relating to a presentation at appendix two on the Tree Management Policy. The presentation will be provided by Steven Craig, Clean & Green Manager with Simon McGinnety, Senior Tree Officer in Regeneration and Local Services.

Executive summary

- 2 At Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meeting on 12 October 2018, members requested more information on the Council's Tree Policy. As the Tree Management Policy falls within the remit of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ESCOSC) members were advised that the Tree Management Policy would be added to the work programme of the ESCOSC and come to a future meeting.
- 3 Arrangements were made with officers from Regeneration & Local Services for a presentation to come to the ESCOSC meeting on 8 March, 2019, that would cover the Tree Management Policy including information on pruning. A copy of the Tree Management Policy can be found at appendix 2 of this report.
- 4 Following a public consultation the tree management policy was adopted in July 2014 which brought together a number of tree management policies and practices from former district councils. In July 2017 the policy was reviewed to consider any changes in legislation. The review made no substantial changes to the policy and has

subsequently been adopted by several Town and Parish Councils and County Durham Housing Group.

- 5 The majority of Durham County Council's tree stock is both safe and healthy. Tree maintenance is mostly reactive to reports received concerning specific trees.

Recommendations

- 6 Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to receive this report and consider and comment on the presentation at appendix two.

Background

- 7 At Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meeting on 12 October 2018, members requested more information on the Council's Tree Policy. Members specifically asked for information on pruning of trees following a number of complaints from members of the public.
- 8 As the Tree Management Policy falls within the remit of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ESCOSC) members were advised that the Tree Policy would be added to the work programme of the ESCOSC and come to a future meeting.
- 9 Trees are a highly valued feature of County Durham; they make an enormous contribution to the character and beauty of our landscape and create /maintain environments rich in biodiversity. Durham County Council values its trees and recognises both the human and environmental benefits of having a healthy and sustainable tree population.
- 10 We also recognise that although trees are a positive feature, they can cause of a range of problems, from being a nuisance or inconvenience to potentially causing serious injury or even death. As a tree owner we have a direct responsibility for ensuring our trees do not pose a danger to the public or property and are managed appropriately.
- 11 We also have a duty under the Highway Act to ensure that those trees in private ownership adjacent to the highway do not pose a danger to its users. We seek to ensure that all roads are inspected at reasonable intervals, defective trees are noted, tree owners are identified and contacted and the appropriate work is undertaken to remove identified hazards.

- 12 The Tree Management Policy came into effect in July 2014. It brought together a number of tree management policies and practices inherited from former district councils and was subject to wide stakeholder consultation in its development. Public consultation revealed an overall endorsement of the policy.
- 13 The Tree Management Policy was reviewed in July 2017 to take into account any subsequent changes to legislation / codes of practice. This review did not substantially alter the policy document or its application.
- 14 A number of Town & Parish Councils and the County Durham Housing Group have subsequently adopted the policy for use on their own areas. This ensures a greater consistency of approach to tree management across the county as a whole.
- 15 The Tree Management Policy is governed by arboriculture best practice and guided by recommendations within British Standards for tree works (BS3998 (2010)).

Tree Maintenance

- 16 It is important to note that the majority of our tree stock is safe and healthy. Trees are naturally growing / evolving organisms that do not need active management / attention. Lots of regular pruning / maintenance work to trees is neither needed nor feasible; even if we had the necessary resources to do this. We generally try to avoid 'active' work and only intervene when we have to.
- 17 Tree maintenance is currently mostly 'reactive' in nature and is conducted in response to reports received by the Council concerning specific trees. Some cyclical inspections / maintenance is carried out with some countryside sites having specific inspection / maintenance plans.
- 18 The Tree Management Policy informs what we will / will not do and helps to prioritise works / resources. For example severe crown reduction / topping will be carried out in only exceptional circumstances as it can severely affect tree health and may lead to the death or decline of the tree or encourage a flush of weak re-growth that can represent a danger and also exacerbate existing problems.

Dealing with Tree Care - Guidance

- 19 We do recognise that removal of trees is sometimes justified for sound arboricultural reasons and that pruning works are sometimes necessary to ensure that trees are in a safe and healthy condition.
- 20 We receive many requests and complaints regarding trees. The Tree Management Policy ensures that service requests are consistently responded to and provide a clear basis for decision making.

- Obstructing / Overhanging Tree Branches – we will prune trees to eliminate hazards caused by obstructive branches. However we will not normally prune trees that overhang neighbouring properties unless the tree is dangerous or causing an actionable nuisance.
- Shading and Loss of Light – we will not normally consider pruning to improve light levels. However this will be looked at on a case by case basis taking into account the proximity and size of the tree to the nearest habitable room or where elderly, infirm or disabled persons who spend a significant amount of time within their home.
- Loss of Views – trees will only be pruned or removed to restore views when necessary to retain important public viewpoints or significant public benefit.
- Trees affecting reception (Television / Satellite / Solar Panels) – removal or pruning of trees to enable clear television reception will only be considered in exceptional circumstances as other technical solutions are generally more effective in such cases. We will not normally prune or fell a tree to improve natural light to a solar panel.
- Overhead Cables / Telephone Wires – we will not normally prune or fell a tree to prevent or reduce interference with telephone wires. We will recommend contacting the telephone service provider in such circumstances.
- General / Minor Nuisances – we will not normally prune or fell trees solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and / or seasonal phenomena e.g. falling leaves, sap, blossoms, fruit, nuts, bird and insect droppings.
- Poisonous fruit / foliage – we will not normally prune or fell a tree that bears poisonous fruit / foliage. However, where it is known that unsupervised young children are likely to be exposed to berries or foliage that will make them ill if eaten, we will investigate and take action, where appropriate.
- Trees considered too big / too tall – we will not prune or fell a tree because it is considered to be ‘too big’ or ‘too tall’ for its surroundings.
- Personal Medical Complaint – we will not normally prune or fell a tree where a request is made in under such circumstances. However, where it can be firmly established that the presence of a tree is causing a detriment to the health of residents further consideration will be given.

21 The Tree Management Policy should be seen as a guide and circumstances on the ground may involve a combination of factors identified therefore some element of discretion is required. The policy document highlights that the Council reserves the right to exercise discretion in the application of the policy when to do so would be in the best interests of the Council and its residents.

Conclusion

- 22 Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive information on the Council's Tree Management Policy and have an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

Background papers

- Durham County Council Tree Management Policy, July 2017.

Contact: Tom Gorman Tel: 03000 268027

Ann Whitton Tel: 03000 268143

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable, this report is for information only

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable



Durham County Council

Tree Management Policy

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1. Summary

- 1.1 Trees are a highly valued feature of County Durham; they make an enormous contribution to the character and beauty of our landscape and create /maintain environments rich in biodiversity. Durham County Council values its trees and recognises both the human and environmental benefits of having a healthy and sustainable tree population.
- 1.2 We also recognise that although trees are a positive feature, they can cause of a range of problems, from being a nuisance or inconvenience to potentially causing serious injury or even death. As a tree owner we have a direct responsibility for ensuring our trees do not pose a danger to the public or property and are managed appropriately. This policy sets out our approach to tree management.
- 1.3 We aim to inspect our tree stock at an appropriate frequency, depending upon number of pedestrians, vehicles and other targets either passing beneath or within falling distance of the tree, to ensure continued public safety.
- 1.4 We also have a duty under the Highway Act to ensure that those trees in private ownership adjacent to the highway do not pose a danger to its users. We seek to ensure that all roads are inspected at reasonable intervals, defective trees are noted, tree owners are identified and contacted and the appropriate work is undertaken to remove identified hazards.
- 1.5 We aim to provide high standards of tree management based on the latest arboricultural research and promote such standards with other parties, (e.g. private tree owners).

2. Policy Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all trees under our ownership / management, regardless of their location, and to those trees in private ownership which pose a safety risk to the public.
- 2.2 Although, we believe this policy to be as comprehensive as possible, we acknowledge it does not cover every situation. We reserve the right to exercise discretion in application of this policy when to do so would be in the best interests of the Council and its residents.

3. The Importance of Trees in The Urban And Rural Landscape

3.1 Trees are important features in the landscape. They help to create an attractive environment, making the County a better place to live, work, study and visit. They bring colour and contrast, screen unsightly structures, give privacy, soften the hard lines of and contribute to the setting of the County's magnificent buildings, streets and landscapes. Not only do trees have a visual quality, but they also enhance the environment in less obvious ways:

- they improve air quality by filtering airborne dust, smoke and fumes;
- they absorb traffic noise in built-up areas and can help limit noise pollution;
- they reduce temperature extremes by providing shelter in hot weather and insulation in cold weather; trees adjacent to buildings can reduce air conditioning and heating costs;
- they act as a screen, increasing privacy in residential roads and gardens;
- they convert carbon dioxide to oxygen, increasing the quality of the air locally and helping to reduce the 'greenhouse effect';
- they provide food and habitat for birds and other wildlife, thus supporting nature conservation value and biodiversity;
- research has shown that trees provide many psychological and health benefits and have been shown to reduce stress significantly.

4. Legislation

There is a range of legislation which has been considered during the development of this policy, for example:

- 4.1 The Forestry Act (1967) requires certain permissions and licences to be granted where felling of trees is proposed within a woodland setting. Durham County Council will ensure that any proposed felling is fully compliant with the requirements of the Forestry Act.
- 4.2 We, as the Local Planning Authority are able to create Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), in respect of trees or woodland, which is considered to have a significant impact on the amenity of a local area.
- 4.3 In addition to those trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order, the Town & Country Planning Act (1990) also makes special provision for trees in conservation areas.
- 4.4 The Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981, as amended CROW Act 2000) states that it is illegal to intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. For Schedule 1 (Wildlife and Countryside

Act) bird species it is also an offence to disturb birds whilst they are building or using a nest.

- 4.5 Many bat species use holes, cracks and crevices in trees as roosts. Bats are a European Protected Species and are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Causing damage to or destroying a roost site, preventing access to a roost site and killing bats are all criminal offences which can lead to imprisonment or a fine. A roost cavity is considered to be a roost even if bats are not currently using it. Felling trees with bat roosts for health & safety reasons without first consulting Natural England may still be an offence under the Regulations.
- 4.6 The Hedgerow Regulations (1997) introduced powers allowing important rural hedgerows to be protected.
- 4.7 We have no authority to intervene in a dispute between neighbours regarding trees; Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Order Act (2003) gives Local Authorities the powers to deal with complaints or disputes about high hedges affecting residential properties.

5. Trees On Durham County Council Owned / Managed Land

- 5.1 We have a responsibility to maintain trees within our ownership / management to ensure they are in a safe condition and not causing an unreasonable danger or actionable nuisance. All enquiries regarding trees on County Council land be directed to our **Customer Services** on 03000 26 1000.
- 5.2 Where development or maintenance works on council land have the potential to conflict with adjacent trees, the relevant department responsible for the work will liaise with arboricultural professionals in advance of any work commencing and will adhere to sound arboricultural practice and guidelines within the NJUG volume 4 and British Standards (BS5837 (2012)) where practicable.

6. Inspection Of Trees

- 6.1 We work to a risk-based approach to tree management: a programme of inspection identifying and prioritising potential hazards. The cycle of inspection for trees will be set according to their location and area of risk.
- 6.2 Highways trees are considered to be a high priority. They include both trees on land owned by the Council and trees on land owned by other parties. Roads are inspected on a regular basis. The inspection cycle is determined by a number of factors including road category, traffic use, incident history, local knowledge and the presence and frequency of trees. Tree defects likely to cause a hazard are identified. In the case of trees on land owned or adopted by the Council the

appropriate work is undertaken to remove the hazard. In the case of trees on land owned by other parties, the land owner is contacted and requested to remedy the situation (see 11.0 below).

7. Tree Maintenance

7.1 Tree maintenance is currently mostly 'reactive' in nature and conducted in response to reports received by the council concerning specific trees. In future, a greater level of tree maintenance work will be conducted as a result of information gathered during proactive inspections.

Some cyclical maintenance is already carried out with some countryside sites having site specific inspection / maintenance plans. However, reactionary tree maintenance will always form a key element of overall tree maintenance operations and normally originates from the following:

- programmed and routine inspections by the Tree Officer;
- ad-hoc inspections by the Tree Officer following enquiries, reports and service requests;
- reports from Customers;
- enquires from County and Parish Councillors;
- reports from utility companies;
- cyclic maintenance;
- emergency works (e.g. resulting from high winds).

7.2 The following categories will be used when prioritising tree works:

Priority	Response
Priority 1: Urgent Public Safety	From within 24 hours to one week depending upon the risk
Priority 2: Non-urgent but essential work	Between 1 to 6 months depending upon risk and time of year
Priority 3: Desirable	12 months where possible
Non-priority	No action proposed

7.3 Priority 1 - A tree could warrant immediate attention if, for example

- it has snapped or blown over;
- it is rocking (roots are damaged);

- it is uprooted but held up by another tree or building;
- a large branch has broken off or is hanging off the tree;
- it or its branch is blocking the road or footway / public right of way;
- it or its branch is blocking access to property;
- it has fallen on to a structure, such as a building or car.

7.4 Priority 2 - A tree may be a risk to people or property but does not require immediate attention if: for example

- it is dead;
- it is dying (few leaves in summer or dieback in the crown);
- its bark is loose and falling off;
- mushrooms or fungi are growing on or near the tree;
- old splits and cracks are in the trunk or large branches;
- smaller branches are falling from the tree.

7.5 Trees will be made safe via pruning or felling and we would use the most cost effective approach. However, for certain high value trees such as ancient and veteran trees, we would consider other options to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. This would include options to reduce the likelihood of the tree failing or the likelihood of persons being close to the tree if it did fail.

8. Publicising Tree Felling / Pruning

- 8.1 Minor works involving pruning or removing smaller trees will not be publicised.
- 8.2 Where works are more impacting, for example, felling larger trees, carrying out works to a veteran tree or a tree with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), we will inform adjacent properties, the relevant Town or Parish Council and relevant County councillors.
- 8.3 If a tree scheme (felling, pruning or planting) is judged to be more impacting on the local area we will consider more publicity as appropriate.
- 8.4 Where a competent officer has determined that the tree should be felled on public safety grounds there will be no public consultation and no right of objection

9. Dealing With Tree Care

- 9.1 While we recognise the need to conserve the present tree cover, we also recognise that removal of trees is sometimes justified for sound arboricultural

reasons and that pruning works are sometimes necessary to ensure that trees are in a safe and healthy condition.

- 9.2 We receive many requests and complaints regarding trees. It is important that individual issues are dealt with consistently and that decisions are balanced against the positive contribution that trees make to the environment and enjoyment of the County by local residents and visitors. Many of the complaints received involve minor or seasonal issues that are generally considered to be foreseeable or social problems associated with living near trees, which can often be minimised through careful pruning and careful species selection when planting.
- 9.3 In all cases, consideration will be given as to whether the tree in question is worthy of retention and protection. Particular care will be given to proposals affecting ancient or veteran trees.
- 9.4 To ensure that requests for works to trees are dealt with efficiently, consistently and fairly, our policy in relation to the more common types of request is outlined below.

9.5 Obstructing / Overhanging Tree Branches

- 9.5.1 Tree branches can cause obstructions to roads, footways, public rights of ways, signs, streetlights and open spaces. Appropriate pruning to eliminate hazards caused by obstructive branches will normally be acceptable, providing efforts are made to retain the shape of the tree.
- 9.5.2 We will undertake work to trees in council ownership / management to maintain a minimum 5 metres clearance over roads, 2.4 metres over footpaths / public rights of way and 3 metres over railway paths.
- 9.5.3 We will not prune trees that overhang neighbouring properties unless the trees are dangerous or causing an actionable nuisance by creating a risk of damage to the neighbour's property or his enjoyment of the property (e.g. touching the walls, roofs, windows, gutters, garage etc.)
- 9.5.4 Adjacent Landowners do have a common law right to prune back tree branches to their boundary, providing that the tree in question is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or situated within a Conservation Area. The works should be carried out in accordance with good arboricultural practice.

9.6 Shading and Loss of Light

- 9.6.1 Trees are often perceived to block light to nearby properties. However, pruning or removal of trees will often have a negligible impact on the amount of light reaching a house or garden. Therefore, tree works to

improve light levels will not normally be considered. However we will consider taking action (pruning or felling) in the following circumstances:

- if the height of the tree is more than 12metres and the distance between the base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than 5metres;
- if the height of the tree if less than 12 metres and the distance between the base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than half the height of the tree (where the separation between the edge of the tree canopy and a vertical line through that window is less than 2metres).

9.6.2 A 'habitable room' is a dining room, lounge, kitchen, study or bedroom but not a WC, bathrooms, utility room, landing or and hallway.

9.6.3 Where elderly, infirm or disabled persons who spend a significant amount of time within their home are affected there will be flexibility to look at some intervention. Where it can be established that the presence of trees is detrimental to the health of such residents, further consideration will be given to the management approach to trees. This consideration will also take into account the quality and importance of the tree in question, as well as the benefits to the wider community.

9.6.4 If natural light is being blocked by the growth of a high hedge then action may be taken under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (see Anti-social Behaviour – High Hedges).

9.7 Loss of View

9.7.1 Trees will only be pruned or removed to restore views when necessary to retain important public viewpoints or there is potential to bring about significant public benefit and/or enhance the local landscape or townscape. Historical records may be used to determine the level of management required. Pruning of trees for highway sight-line requirements will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

9.8 Trees affecting reception (Television / Satellite / Solar Panels)

9.8.1 Pruning in the short term may help improve television reception. However in the long term the flush of quick, extra growth associated with pruning can exacerbate the problem. In most cases the problem can be resolved by relocating the aerial or satellite dish, or alternatively using a Booster. Residents are advised to contact their satellite or TV

provider for specialist advice. Removal or pruning of trees to enable a clear television reception would only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

- 9.8.2 Similarly we will not prune or fell a tree in our ownership / management to improve natural light to a solar panel. Whilst we recognise the need for renewable energy sources, trees are also important in tackling climate change.

9.9 Overhead Cables / Telephone Wires

- 9.9.1 Utility companies have certain legal rights to carry out works to public or privately owned trees to address health and safety problems and to maintain a clearance between trees and their apparatus to ensure continuity of supply. This may sometimes involve the loss of trees. Where works to trees are necessary as a result of proximity or conflict, we will encourage utility operators to adopt the most appropriate long term solution, giving consideration to tree health, local tree cover and visual amenity.
- 9.9.2 We will not normally prune or fell a tree in our ownership / management to prevent or reduce interference with telephone wires. We would recommend contacting the telecom service provider in such circumstances for them to arrange appropriate pruning works.
- 9.9.3 Problems caused by branches interfering with privately owned telephone wires can usually be eliminated through appropriate pruning and tree removal would not usually be considered.

9.10 General / Minor Nuisances

- 9.10.1 We will not fell or prune trees solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena, which are largely outside of our control. There are a variety of potential nuisances associated with trees, most of which are minor or seasonal and considered to be normal and acceptable consequences of living near trees. Examples of such problems are:
- falling leaves, twigs, sap, blossom, fruit, nuts, bird and insect droppings;
 - insects associated with trees (spiders, wasps, flies etc);
 - reduction or increase of moisture to gardens;
 - suckers or germinating seedlings in gardens;
 - leaves falling into gutters, drains or onto flat roofs;
 - the build-up of algae on fences, paths or other structures.

- 9.10.2 Clearing of leaves from gutters and pathways and weeding of set seeds are considered to be normal routine seasonal maintenance which property owners are expected to carry out.
- 9.10.3 Falling leaves, sap, blossom, fruit, nuts, bird and insect droppings are not readily controllable by pruning and cleaning of affected surfaces can be considered to be routine maintenance. Pruning will not normally be considered solely as a way of alleviating problems with these issues alone.
- 9.10.4 We would not normally prune or fell a tree under our ownership / management that bears poisonous fruit / foliage (such as laburnum or yew). However, where it is known that unsupervised young children are likely to be exposed to berries or foliage that will make them ill if eaten, we will investigate on a case by case basis and take action, where appropriate.

9.11 Trees considered too big / too tall

- 9.11.1 We will not prune or fell a tree under council ownership / management because it is considered to be 'too big' or 'too tall' for its surroundings.

9.12 Personal Medical Complaint

- 9.12.1 We will normally not prune or fell a tree under our ownership / management where a request has been made to do so because of a personal medical complaint. However, where it can be established that the presence of a tree is causing a detriment to the health of residents further consideration will be given to the management approach of trees.

10. Damage And Tree Roots

- 10.1 Many tree conflicts arise on account of the presence of tree roots and the perception that they are causing damage. Where damage is alleged, each complaint will be investigated on an individual basis. The following guidance will be used in assessing levels of nuisance and identifying appropriate action.

10.2 Root invasion in gardens

- 10.2.1 Tree roots in gardens are a natural occurrence and root presence is unlikely to be affected by tree pruning or removal. Landowners do

have a common law right to prune back tree roots to their boundary, providing that the tree in question is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or situated within a Conservation Area.

10.2.2 Most species of deciduous tree will re-sprout from the stump when cut down. Many species will produce a new growth shoot from a root if it becomes exposed to sunlight through ground erosion. Some species readily produce shoots from their buried roots as a way to regenerate and this is often stimulated by stresses, such as heavy pruning or felling. Numerous tree species (including Cherry and Poplar) are therefore likely to produce vigorous root suckers as a response to being felled. Poisoning a stump to prevent such suckering is not always successful since application of herbicide onto a stump face often only affects the stump and the upper roots.

10.2.3 Tree felling or branch pruning in response to root invasion in gardens would not normally be appropriate, as such works are likely to worsen existing problems. The pure encroachment of roots into adjoining land is not considered to amount to actionable nuisance.

10.3 Damage to walls and fences

If a tree on County Council owned land is found to be causing damage to a neighbouring property we will investigate and take action as appropriate. It is often possible to rebuild or repair garden walls and fences to take account of adjacent trees. This can be achieved in a number of ways (for example installing a section of railing or bridging foundations around the base of a tree).

Therefore where trees are considered to be causing damage to walls or fences, we will normally only consider tree removal if the walls or fence is irreplaceable and of exceptional importance e.g. a retaining wall or of historical interest, or if there is a risk to public health in leaving the tree which cannot otherwise be mitigated.

10.4 Damage to paths

It is often possible to repair paths to take account of adjacent trees and tree roots. Where roots protrude they can be root pruned, or the path re-laid around the tree with flexible materials such as asphalt to provide a smooth surface. Where trees are considered to be causing damage to paths or footpaths, we will not normally consider tree removal except where there is a risk to public health which cannot otherwise be mitigated.

10.5 Damage to drains or water pipes

If a tree on County Council owned land is found to be causing damage to an existing pipe or drain on a neighbouring property we will investigate and take any reasonable action as appropriate.

10.6 Trip Hazards

We will make safe an unacceptable trip hazard in a street, road or highway which is caused by a tree in our ownership / management.

10.7 Installation of drop kerbs

We will consider felling or pruning the roots of a tree under our ownership / management to allow the installation of a drop kerb. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

10.8 Subsidence

- 10.8.1 Where an allegation is made that a tree in our ownership / management has caused, or is likely to cause damage to a third party structure through subsidence or other mechanisms, council officers will initially visit the site and make a general assessment of any damage or the foreseeability of damage occurring and take any reasonable action.
- 10.8.2 Where there is insufficient evidence of damage, or no clear and unambiguous correlation between the alleged damage and the effects of the tree(s), we would expect evidence in support of a request to remove a tree(s) or any claim for damages/repairs. This evidence will normally include:
- Root analysis (presence, condition and identification)
 - Crack/level monitoring (showing greater than expected seasonal movement)
 - Details of the nature, extent and type of damage
 - Two trial pits (one remote one at point of damage)
 - Soil analysis (soil type, moisture level)

- Depth of foundations

10.8.3 We will not normally subject our trees to regular heavy pruning to deal with suspected damage. Instead we will where feasible opt for removal and replacement planting with an alternative species that is less likely to cause future problems.

10.9 Heave

10.9.1 When a tree is removed in a clay sub-soil, the soil will rehydrate and swell in volume. The expansion may lift the foundations and cause cracking to the property. This is known as 'heave'. This is more likely to occur if the removed tree was mature and had a high water demand such as an oak tree.

11. Trees On Private Land Causing A Danger / Obstruction To The Public Highway

If a privately owned tree is causing

- i) a danger to the highway including public rights of way
- ii) an obstruction to a highway including a Public Right of Way
- iii) impairing visibility at a road junction, to a traffic signal, street light or street sign, or
- iv) damage to a pavement

we will use powers which exist under the Highways Act to request the owner makes safe / removes the obstruction. If they do not, we will undertake the work and recharge the owner.

12. Trees On Private Land Causing A Danger (Other Than To The Public Highway)

12.1 We have discretionary powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Section 23, to deal with trees in private ownership that are dangerous. This legislation only allows the County Council to become involved when trees pose an imminent threat to people or property.

12.2 We can serve notice on a tree owner to carry out specified safety works within a period of not less than 21 days. Where the specified safety works are not carried out, we do have powers to enter the land, carry out the works and reclaim from the land owner any reasonable costs incurred.

12.3 Where trees on privately owned land represent an immediate threat to people or property we will undertake one of the following actions, dependant on the severity of the risk and the site location and conditions:

- secure the affected area to prevent public access and notify the tree owner of the risk posed and action to be taken;
- undertake work from a position within council owned / managed land (only if safe to do so);
- as a last resort, enter the property and carry out remedial works to remove the risk.

12.4 In such cases, we will seek to recover the cost of these works from the owner of the tree.

12.5 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 does not enable us to become involved with private trees causing a nuisance to a neighbouring property by causing shade, blocking views or dropping leaves, flowers or fruit etc. unless the trees are imminently dangerous.

13. Anti-Social Behaviour

13.1 Trees

If a county council owned tree is the focus of a nuisance leading to anti-social behaviour we will take measures to reduce the problem. These measures will be determined on a site by site basis.

13.2 High Hedges

13.2.1 Once all avenues for resolving a hedge dispute have been tried and exhausted, a complaint about a neighbour's evergreen hedge can be made to the Council's Planning Enforcement Team. A fee is payable for this service.

13.2.2 Our role is not to mediate or negotiate between the complainant and the hedge owner but to adjudicate on whether, in the words of the The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (High Hedges), the hedge is

adversely affecting the complainant's reasonable enjoyment of their property.

- 13.2.3 In doing so, we must take account of all relevant factors and must strike a balance between the competing interests of the complainant and hedge owner, as well as the interests of the wider community.
- 13.2.4 If we consider that the circumstances justify it, a formal notice will be issued to the hedge owner, which will set out what they must do to the hedge to remedy the problem, and when by. Failure to carry out the works required is an offence which could lead to a fine.
- 13.2.5 More details can be found on Durham County Council's website.

14. Protected Trees

14.1 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's)

- 14.1.1 A TPO is a legal document made, administered and enforced by the local planning authority, to protect specified trees and woodlands with public amenity value.
- 14.1.2 A TPO prevents cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or destruction of trees (including cutting roots) without our permission.

[Works on Protected Trees](#)

- 14.1.3 If you intend to carry out any works to protected trees, you must apply for consent from the council first.
- 14.1.4 If you do not own the tree you must obtain the owner's permission before carrying out the works.
- 14.1.5 You may also need to submit supporting technical information if the reason for your application relates to the condition of the tree - for example due to the presence of pests, diseases, fungi, or structural defects affecting the safety of the tree. Written evidence from an appropriate arboricultural professional may be required to support your application. For a list of arboriculturalists who are members of the Arboricultural Association, visit their website for details.
- 14.1.6 If the reason for your application relates to suspected structural damage caused by the tree, please submit a report from a structural engineer/surveyor together with technical advice to support your application.

14.1.7 Once an application has been submitted, we may either grant or withhold consent for works on a tree with a TPO or we may give a conditional consent. In determining whether to grant consent the Council will have regard to the amenity value of the tree and the considerations set out in sections 9 and 10 above. Permission to fell a preserved tree usually carries a condition to plant a replacement, which will automatically become the subject of the TPO.

14.1.8 If there are trees which you think should be protected or if you have seen work being carried out on a protected tree and want to know if the owner has permission, please contact one of our tree officers (see Further Information section below)

Penalties

14.1.9 Section 210(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides that anyone found guilty of offences relating to protected trees is liable, if convicted in the magistrates' court, to a fine of up to £20,000. In serious cases a person may be committed for trial in the Crown Court and, if convicted, is liable to an unlimited fine.

Rights to appeal

14.1.9 You have a right to object to the making of a TPO or any refusal of consent to do works to the tree.

Which trees are covered by a TPO?

14.1.10 Any tree, group of trees or woodland may be protected. There are currently around 700 TPOs in County Durham and whilst many are on individual trees there are some groups of trees. You can find out if your tree is covered by a Tree Preservation Order by contacting one of our tree officers (see 'Further Information' section below).

14.1.11 When you are buying a property, the presence of a TPO should be revealed by the search of the local land charges register.

14.1.12 The Council will make new TPOs where appropriate. In deciding whether or not to make an order we will take into account the amenity value of trees, their potential life expectancy, and the level of threat posed to them.

14.1.13 The Council may at any time review an existing TPO to assess whether it is still appropriate to provide protection in circumstances which may be different to those when the Order was made. When it is considered necessary to make changes we will either revoke the order, revoke the order and make a new order, or vary the order in some detail.

14.1.14 Further information

More details can be found on our web-site:

www.durham.gov.uk

or contact **Customer Services** on 03000 26 1000

or Email: treeofficers@durham.gov.uk

14.2 Trees in Conservation Areas

14.2.1 It is an offence to cut down, prune, lop, top, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a tree in a conservation area without giving us prior written notice.

Work on trees with in a Conservation Area

14.2.2 If a tree has a stem diameter greater than 75mm (3") measured 1.5m from the ground level, you are required to give us six weeks notice of any tree works that you are proposing. This enables us to assess the proposed works and if necessary serve a Tree Preservation Order. If no decision is received within six weeks then consent is gained by default.

14.2.3 Please notify us by using the standard application form, available upon request.

Contact **Customer Services** on 03000 26 1000

or Email: treeofficers@durham.gov.uk

Penalties

14.2.4 The penalties for failing to notify us are similar to an offence affecting a tree under a TPO.

14.2.5 Is my Tree in a Conservation Area?

More details can be found on our web-site:

www.durham.gov.uk

or contact **Customer Services** on 03000 26 1000

or Email: treeofficers@durham.gov.uk

14.3 Forestry Commission (FC) Felling Licences

14.3.1 A felling licence from the Forestry Commission may be required in some circumstances i.e. for example if you wish to fell more than five cubic metres of timber per calendar quarter. More details can be found on the Forestry Commission web-site:

www.forestry.gov.uk

or contact the North England office on 01434 220242

or email: enquiries.northengland@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

15. Other Factors Constraining Work To Trees

15.1 Birds

Under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended CROW Act 2000) it is an offence to kill, injure or take wild birds, their young, their eggs or nests. For Schedule 1 birds (Wildlife & Countryside Act) it is an offence to disturb them whilst building or using a nest (see www.legislation.gov.uk for list of species). Tree work involving tree removal / reduction and hedge cutting operations should not normally be undertaken during the bird nesting season without a nest survey carried out by a competent person.

15.2 Bats

Bats are a European Protected Species and are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (also known as the Habitat Regulations) and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Causing damage to or destroying a roost site is a criminal offence which can lead to imprisonment or fine. Trees with suitable features such as holes, cracks, crevices and dense ivy should be

risk assessed for their ability to support bats, prior to any works commencing on the tree. Trees, in DCC ownership, displaying signs of roosting bats will be referred to our Ecology team before any work commences. Any trees supporting roosting bats will not be worked on until due process has been followed and a license acquired if necessary.

For further information and advice regarding trees and wildlife contact should be made with the Council's Ecology Team on 03000 267 134 or email: ecology@durham.gov.uk.

15.3 Planning Permission

Where planning permission has been granted, trees may be protected as a condition of that permission. Any works to such trees will require consent from the council and an application for a variation of the planning condition may be required.

15.4 Restrictive Covenants

Occasionally, restrictive covenants attached to the deeds for a property may restrict what work can be undertaken to trees.

16. Replacement Tree Planting

16.1 Appropriate replacement tree planting will be encouraged whenever trees are removed from private land. Where a tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order and it is dead or unsafe, a tree replacement will normally be required.

16.2 Where trees are removed from land owned / managed by us, replacement planting will be carried out if appropriate.

- 16.3 To help maintain a continuity of tree cover across the county we will undertake the planting of new trees on our land when suitable opportunities arise. Having too many of the same type of tree in a locality is a concern because of the increased risk of a devastating loss of one or more species of tree due to pests / diseases or other environmental factors. We will increase the resilience of our trees by planting species mixes rather than monocultures and avenues.

17. Trees and Development

- 17.1 We are committed to continuously improving the way that trees are considered in relation to planning applications for new development. We will ensure that full consideration is given to both the retention of existing trees and the planting of new ones. We will take into account the ultimate mature size of the tree, available space and the relationship to buildings when designing layouts to avoid causing future relationship issues.
- 17.2 Once the trees to be retained have been identified, their removal can be prohibited by a Tree Preservation Order, planning conditions or a planning agreement. The aim of this policy is to ensure that trees are not unnecessarily lost and that the most suitable ones are retained.

18. Vandalism And Damage To Council Owned / Managed Trees

- 18.1 Vandalism is an increasing pressure on trees. Usually it is young newly planted trees that are damaged; however, mature trees are often damaged too. There are various ways in which vandalism can be counteracted, but none of these is 100% effective against determined attack.
- 18.2 There are cases where trees we own / manage have been irrevocably damaged or removed without permission. This is criminal damage. We will investigate any reports of vandalism / damage to trees in our ownership / management, and try to repair any damage where we can. Where possible, we will take legal action against the person(s) causing the damage.
- 18.3 We will remove rope swings from trees in our ownership / management where we are aware of them.

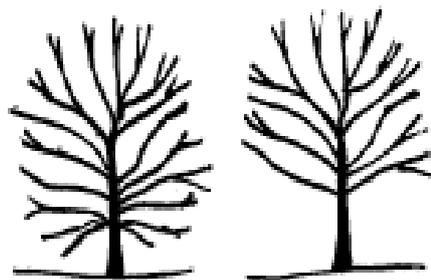
19. Biosecurity / Pest and Epidemic Management

- 19.1 Biosecurity is a set of precautions that aim to prevent the spread of pests, pathogens or invasive species. The threat to trees from these has never been greater and as a large landowner we undertake to follow best practice and specific advice which is regularly published by the Forestry Commission. Attendances to high risk sites are subject to risk assessment and we employ measures to minimise pest or disease spread.

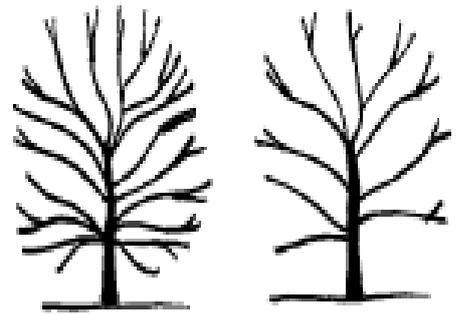
20. Tree Pruning Techniques

- 20.1 We will seek to ensure that all works to council owned trees, or those that the council is responsible for (including work carried out by third parties), are in accordance with arboricultural best practice and guided by recommendations within British Standards for tree works (BS3998 (2010) or subsequent updates.
- 20.2 Particular pruning specifications may or may not be appropriate for trees of different ages, species, health and condition, or even between trees of the same species depending on their condition, age and environment.
- 20.3 Clear and acceptable pruning objectives are necessary in advance of approval of a pruning specification. The pruning objectives may require implementation of one or more of the following operations:

- **Crown lifting** –The removal of the lowest branches of a tree so that the remaining lowest branches are at a specified height, usually 2.4m over a footpath and 5m over a road. This operation is undertaken for a number of reasons, such as to allow access under a tree; to clear branches from low structures; or to allow light under the canopy.

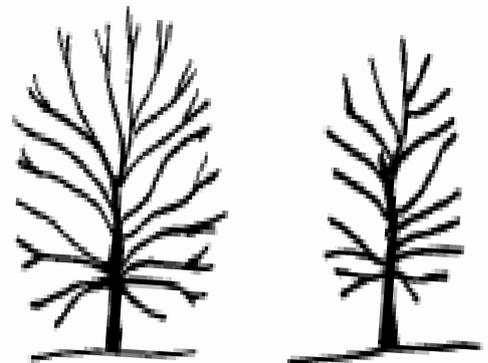


- **Crown thinning** – The removal of a specified proportion of branch material from the interior of the crown without affecting the shape of the tree. This operation is usually undertaken to reduce crown density; form a healthy branch structure by removing dead; diseased, damaged, crossing and rubbing branches, and allow more light through the canopy. Many tree species evolve a canopy density for adaptive reasons and crown-thinning can increase turbulence and cause drought stress and branch failures.



For this reason, crown thinning is usually only acceptable when carried out as part of crown cleaning or balancing works.

- **Crown Reduction** – Reducing the overall size of the crown area by a specified percentage by pruning back the leaders and branch terminals to lateral branches that are large enough to assume the terminal roles (at least one third the diameter of the cut stem).

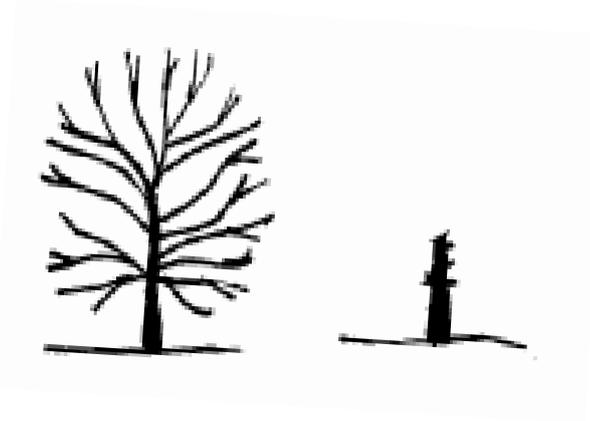


Crown reduction up to a maximum of 15-20% may be acceptable to semi-mature trees providing cuts do not exceed 5-7cm and where shaping and restricting size and spread is essential. Crown reduction of mature or older trees is not normally acceptable as it can severely affect tree health and may lead to the death or decline of the tree and is generally only acceptable as management of last resort.

- **Topping** – This entails cutting at a certain height to reduce the height of the tree. Topping is not acceptable as it severely affects the public amenity and health of the tree, sometimes leading to death. Topping can also lead to future problems due to a flush of weak re-growth that can represent a danger and also exacerbate existing problems. If height reduction is

considered essential and unavoidable, crown reduction (see above) is preferred.

- **Pollarding** – This severe operation entails the removal of the entire tree's branch structure back to the trunk. Pollarding is an ancient way of maintaining trees that is sometimes necessary, particularly on trees that have been pollarded previously. Only certain species will tolerate this degree of pruning, and new growth may be weak and prone to tearing



off. This method of management is not therefore normally acceptable.

- **Dead Wooding or Crown Clean** – This operation is similar to a crown thin except that only dead, diseased, crossing and rubbing branches are removed to tidy up the appearance of the tree. No healthy, sound wood is removed. This operation is recommended to help maintain a healthy, safe tree.
- **Formative Pruning** – The removal of problematic or potentially problematic branches, ensuring good tree development.
- **Stump Grinding** – Stump grinding is the practice of removing a tree stump to below ground level by mechanical means. We will carry out stump grinding where necessary to enable new trees to be planted or to remove a significant hazard. Where stump removal is not necessary tree stumps will be removed close to ground level so as not to leave a trip hazard.

Overview of the Tree Management Policy



STEVEN CRAIG (CLEAN & GREEN MANAGER) AND SIMON McGINNETY
(SENIOR TREE OFFICER), REGENERATION & LOCAL SERVICES

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Background



- Trees are a highly valued feature of County Durham
- The species, size and nature of our trees varies considerably
- Although trees are a very positive feature they can sometimes cause problems, from being a nuisance or inconvenience to potentially causing serious injury or even death
- As a tree owner, Durham County Council have a direct responsibility for ensuring our trees do not pose a danger to the public or property and are maintained appropriately
- Durham County Council has a duty under the Highways Act to ensure that those trees in private ownership adjacent to the highway do not pose a danger to its users.

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Policy Overview



- Policy initially came into effect in July 2014
- It brought together a number of tree management policies and practices inherited from the former Councils and was subject to wide public consultation.
- Policy was reviewed in July 2017 to take account of any subsequent changes to legislation / codes of practice.
- Ensures Service requests consistently responded to and provides a clear basis for decision making
- Outlines ways in which the Council will ensure its own tree stock is in a safe condition

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- A number of Town & Parish Council's and the County Durham Housing group have adopted the policy for use on their own areas.
- The policy is governed by arboricultural best practice and guided by recommendations within British Standards for tree works.
- The policy is a guide and the circumstances on the ground may involve a combination of factors identified therefore some element of discretion is required

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Tree Maintenance



- Majority of our tree stock is safe and healthy
- Trees are naturally growing / evolving organisms that do not generally need active management / attention.
- Lots of regular pruning / maintenance work to trees is neither needed nor desirable.
- Policy informs what we will / will not do and helps to prioritise works / resources.
- For example severe crown reduction / topping is not normally carried out as it can severely affect tree health or encourage a flush of weak re-growth.



DEALING WITH TREE CARE - GUIDANCE

- Obstructing / Overhanging Tree Branches
- Shading and Loss of Light
- Loss of Views
- Trees affecting reception (television / satellite / solar Panels)
- Overhead Cables / Telephone Wires
- General / Minor Nuisances e.g. falling leaves, sap, blossoms, fruit, nuts, birds and insect droppings
- Poisonous fruit / foliage
- Trees considered too big / too tall
- Causing a detriment to the health of residents

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DEALING WITH TREE CARE - GUIDANCE

The policy is a guide and the circumstances on the ground may involve a combination of factors identified therefore some element of discretion is sometimes required in the application of the policy.

Any Questions?



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

8 March 2019



**Work of the Community
Action Team and the use of
targeted interventions**

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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the work of the Council's Community Action Team (CAT) and the use of targeted interventions.

Executive summary

- 2 During 2018 the CAT team carried out a total of 987 pieces of casework, which includes follow up work and review work in previous locations. As well as casework, each project has an action plan with an average of 35 actions to be undertaken by the team and partners per project.
- 3 For each project undertaken an analysis was carried out to determine the type of property creating the greatest workload, which influenced the actions taken in the exit strategy.
- 4 Previous project locations were reviewed by carrying out a desktop evaluation of exit strategies and revisiting project locations to look at sustainability of the work carried out and address any ongoing issues.
- 5 The review of exit strategies showed that the majority of actions are carried out by the team and partners. However, a few actions have had

to be delayed, or are no longer possible due to changing partner resources or priorities.

- 6 The review indicates there continue to be complex issues in these communities, which is exacerbated by high tenant turnover and absent landlords. As a short-term project, the CAT seeks to make an impact in each area while recognising that long-term improvements would most likely require policy change at a strategic or national level.

Recommendations

- 7 Members of the Committee are asked to note information contained within the update report on the work of the CAT and the use of targeted interventions and comment accordingly.
- 8 That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further update on the work of the Community Action Team at a future meeting.

Background

- 9 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee originally received an overview on the Community Action Team (CAT) and the use of targeted interventions at its meeting on 10 November 2014. Following that meeting the committee has received further updates on their work with the last update provided to the committee on 8 March 2018. It is therefore timely for the committee to receive a further update at its meeting on 8 March 2019. Arrangements have been made for Jennifer Jones, Senior Environmental Health Officer to attend the meeting and deliver a presentation focusing on the work of the CAT in the previous year.
- 10 The CAT is a small and ambitious team consisting of members of the Environmental Health and Consumer Protection department who are responsible for delivering Community Action Schemes at identified locations within County Durham. They work alongside Planning Officers, Private Sector Housing Officers, Neighbourhood Wardens, Police and Community Support Officers and Fire and Rescue Teams and with local communities. The aim of the CAT is to bring together key partners with specialist skills, as well as local residents, working proactively to tackle local housing and environmental issues.
- 11 Since the CAT began operating in 2013 it has carried out 29 projects covering 25 locations in degraded communities across County Durham. Locations were chosen geographically across the county against set criteria based on deprivation, visual environmental degradation, commercial buildings, high level of private rents and where existing community groups were operating within the area.

Time was allocated within each programme to review previous schemes.

- 12 Originally, an 8-10-week programme took place – however the project length was extended for each location to 11 weeks for the 2018-2019 programme.
- 13 Each initiative was divided into three phases:
 - Engagement, Intelligence Gathering and Priority setting,
 - Action, and
 - Review, Exit and Feedback.

There were opportunities for the community to get involved through a residents' engagement event, drop-in sessions, and usually a community activity such as a litter pick. Partners met during the engagement period, carried out a walkabout of the area and, following input from the community, prioritised 3-4 issues. A strategy was put in place to carry out targeted interventions in the action period. Partners carried out a variety of interventions including weekly walkabouts of the area, litter clearance, waste carrier licence checks, and talks to local schools. At the end of each project, an exit strategy was put in place with partners. Residents and community groups received a feedback letter at the end of each scheme outlining the action that had taken place, the exit strategy, ways to contact the council and partner agencies, and a survey inviting project feedback.

Key findings from the 2018 Programme

- 14 The team carried out a total of 987 pieces of casework in 2018, which includes follow-up and review work in previous project locations. Core casework related to common issues such as rubbish accumulations and defective drainage, with housing disrepair, fly tipping, and open to access properties also being investigated. There were 226 legal notices served and 27 works in default required where there was non-compliance with notices.

Table 1.1 – Comparison of casework in CAT project areas up to 23 December 2018

Location	Casework	Notices	Work in Default
Spennymoor RV	158	33	2
Dean Bank	262	86	10
Willington	162	21	1
Easington Colliery (partial RV)	226	53	8
TOTAL – 2018	808	193	21

Table 1.2 – Change in casework in CAT project areas from 2017-2018

Year	Casework	Notices	Work in Default
TOTAL 2017	811	258	64
TOTAL 2018	808	193	21
CHANGE	- 0.004%	-25%	-67%

- 15 Each location had different characteristics: Spennymoor was a revisit (RV) project, which the team had previously visited in Spring 2014. Dean Bank had just ended its selective licensing designation when we carried out the project. Willington was a new project. Easington Colliery was a partial revisit, with a larger focus area taking in new areas of Canada and the selective licensing area, Wembley, as well as the A and B streets that had previously been visited at the start of 2017.
- 16 It can be seen from Table 1.1 that Dean Bank generated the largest workload and Easington Colliery the second largest workload. Spennymoor and Willington had a similar workload, with slightly more legal notices being served in Spennymoor.
- 17 Table 1.2 shows that the workload from the 5 projects carried out in 2017 (Easington Colliery, New Kyo, Wheatley Hill, Dawdon and Chester-le-

Street) generated a similar quantity of casework to the 4 longer projects carried out in 2018.

- 18 There is a reduction in the number of notices served and work in default required between 2017 and 2018 as shown in Table 1.2. This indicates an improved level of compliance from residents/owners/landlords. We believe that this is due to the team previously working in two of the areas, and having the contact details for many of the landlords in two areas due to the selective licensing scheme. This meant that when landlords/owners/residents were contacted they were quicker to respond to what was required of them to address the issue. In the two areas where we had contact details, at the start of each project, all licensed (or recently licensed) landlords were able to be notified that the CAT team would be working in the area. Whereas we are only usually able to notify the accredited landlords of this.
- 19 As well as tackling casework, each project had an action plan with an average of 35 actions tackled by the team and partners per project. This includes actions such as test purchasing of alcohol, home fire safety checks, tackling untidy sites, bin marking and working to bring empty homes back into use. This compares to an average of 27 actions per project in 2017 when shorter projects were carried out.
- 20 We have continued to work with Groundwork North East and Cumbria. They carry out 20 weeks sustainability at the end of each project, working with schools and community groups.
- 21 Positive press articles continue to be published for each project.
- 22 In the past year we have continued to develop the project and try new approaches:
 - a) At the start of each project we are delivering initial letters to residents in the focus area instead of leaflets
 - b) We are using picture icons in our resident letters (initial and feedback) to make them easier to read.
 - c) QR codes were introduced at the end of the year. These enable residents to electronically complete our engagement and feedback surveys.
 - d) We are now holding more resident surgeries per project during the action weeks, which are one hour long. These shorter surgeries make better use of partner resources and encourage better resident participation.
 - e) Social media has been used to provide advice about our priority topics.
 - f) The 11 week projects allowed us to tackle additional project work through alternative enforcement approaches:
 - i. In Spennymoor we carried out a door knock to offer residents bin marking and dampness surveys

- ii. In the Willington project we carried out a joint initiative with the Business Energy Efficiency Team and Trading Standards speaking to high street businesses about illicit tobacco and promoting free energy audits to improve energy efficiency.
- iii. In Willington we carried out a downpipe survey of the High Street. As part of the exit strategy the Town Council agreed to fund drainpipe covers for 9 properties. We co-ordinated the installation of these as part of our exit strategy.
- iv. In the Dean Bank project we carried out visits to local letting agents with the Private Sector Initiative team to encourage better letting practices.
- v. In Dean Bank and Willington, the food team carried out an evening of action – visiting all takeaways that were due for inspection on the same evening. This resulted in improvements being made to the takeaways.

23 For each project in 2018 we carried out a casework analysis to see which type of property gave us the greatest workload. This influenced the action taken in the exit strategy. Table 1.3 shows the totals from all the projects.

24 Table 1.3 - Analysis of Rubbish Accumulation Casework per project in 2018

	Landlord and Tenant	Social Tenant	Owner Occupier	Empty Landlord Tenant	Empty Social Tenant
Spennymoor	59.6%	1.9%	17.3%	21.2%	0.0%
Dean Bank	59.0%	6.0%	6.7%	21.6%	6.7%
Willington	53.8%	7.7%	15.4%	23.1%	0.0%
Easington Colliery	50.7%	1.4%	14.5%	33.3%	0.0%
2018 Collated	56.6%	4.3%	11.4%	24.6%	3.2%

* These figures are for rubbish accumulations actively dealt with, where detailed ownership information was obtained by the CAT. Cases referred to other teams have been excluded as the ownership information was not collected.

25 In all projects the rubbish accumulations in the occupied private let properties gave us the biggest proportion of work in the project – as highlighted in light grey in Table 1.3. This is different to what we thought at the start of each project, as we believed the empty properties would be subject to more fly-tipping, but this was not found to be the case – see figures highlighted in dark grey.

26 The higher proportion of Landlord and Tenant properties featured in Table 1.3 is also a reflection of the areas chosen to work in. CAT project locations usually have a high proportion of privately let property, compared to social housing.

- 27 It should be noted that the ‘empty’ properties in Table 1.3 are categorised as those that have been empty longer than 6 months – therefore a property that has been empty less than 6 months would be categorised as occupied. As such, the figures for occupied private lets include both occupied and recently occupied properties.
- 28 At the end of each project all residents in the focus area receive a feedback letter summarising the project, providing useful contact information and inviting them to complete a survey. The feedback received from residents in 2018 shows that awareness of the team has improved with 84% of residents knowing that CAT was operating in the area, 71% of residents knowing how to contact CAT, and 59% felt that CAT had made a difference in their area.
- 29 Partners continue to give positive feedback at the end of each project, as well as suggestions for improving future projects. In the past year community engagement has improved, however there is scope to develop this further.

Key findings from the review periods in 2018

- 30 From 17 September – 8 October and 31 December 2018 - 20 January 2019 the CAT undertook a period of review. A desktop review of exit strategies was carried out and several project locations were revisited: Dawdon, Spennymoor, Chester-le-Street and Dean Bank. The purpose was to look at the sustainability of the work carried out and address any ongoing issues.
- 31 On each review walkabout, the number of housing and environmental issues found was lower than identified in the initial walkabout at the start of the original project. See table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 – Comparison of casework found on the original project walkabout compared to the review walkabout and the % change by location

Location	Original project 1 st walkabout	Review walkabout	% Change
Dawdon	80	37	-54%
Spennymoor	50	20	-60%
Chester-le-Street	68	43	-37%
Dean Bank	161	83	-48%

- 32 The figures in Table 2.1 indicate that the work carried out by the CAT is having lasting effects in each area. The project model which combines enforcement work with community engagement is believed to provide a much-needed role of education along with a zero tolerance approach.
- 33 During the review walkabouts, rubbish accumulations were the most common type of issue found. Although the number has decreased on the review walkabout it does show that domestic rubbish accumulations in terraced rear yards continues to be an issue across the project areas.
- 34 The review of exit strategies shows that the majority of actions are carried out by the team and partners. However a few actions have had to be delayed, or are no longer possible due to changing partner resources or priorities.
- 35 It is clear from the review periods, that there continue to be complex issues in these communities to contend with, which are exacerbated by high tenant turnover and absent landlords. As a short-term project, the CAT seeks to make an impact in each area while recognising that long-term improvements would most likely require policy change at a strategic or national level.

Next Steps

- 36 The Community Action Team plan to continue with their 11 week projects, visiting four locations in 2019: Cockton Hill Road, Grange Villa, Crook central and Eldon.
- 37 The project in Grange Villa will be a re-visit project, following an original project in 2014. The project in Eldon will be a partial re-visit project, with previous projects having been carried out in Coundon Grange/Eldon in 2013 and 2015.
- 38 Project locations continue to be chosen through a combining and scrutinising our EHCP public health complaint data with a dataset of deprivation, empty homes, median house price and percentage private rented in receipt of housing benefit. This allows us to establish locations with greatest need. Some locations continue to rank highly in terms of these indicators.
- 39 Potential locations were excluded where the CAT has visited in the past 4 years, there is less than 10% private rented in receipt of housing benefit, and where the Public Health team data/intelligence show that the area is not environmentally degraded.
- 40 Groundwork North East and Cumbria have worked in partnership with the CAT projects since 2015. They have enabled CAT to leave an environmental legacy through working with schools and community

groups in each location as part of the exit strategy. This partnership will be extended into 2019.

- 41 As the CAT goes into its seventh year in operation it continues to bring great partnership working capabilities. It is viewed by partners as an effective way to focus on some of the more deprived areas of the county, achieving local improvements in housing and environmental issues whilst making use of limited resources. Through each project's exit strategy, partners highlight where greater strategic approaches are needed to make long-term improvements.

Background papers

None

Contact: Jennifer Jones, Senior Environmental Health Officer Tel: 03000 261006

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Challenges to statutory notices served by CAT officers and partners

Finance

Recovery of work in default costs through debt management strategy or by way of land charges register

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Most issues tackled are statutory responsibilities for the local authority under the Altogether Safer objective of the Council Plan

Staffing

None – CAT officers are part of the Environment Protection team within EHCP

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable

Community Action Team (CAT) Update - 8 March 2019

Purpose and Objectives

Purpose – to provide an update on the 2018 work and to look at future work.

Objectives:

1. Briefly explain the background to the CAT
2. Provide an overview of 2018 work results
3. Provide an overview of 2018 review findings
4. Outline future work
5. Answer questions posed by the committee

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Background

- Small ambitious team working with key partners and local communities
- Proactively tackle local housing and environmental issues
- 11 week projects
- 3 phases: **Engagement, Intelligence gathering, Priority setting**
- **Action**
- **Review, Exit and Feedback**

Altogether better



Resident Engagement



Action



Altogether better

Review, Exit, Feedback

Easington Colliery Exit Strategy – December 2018

To follow on from the action plan from the CAT Easington Colliery project: 8 October – 23 December 2018.

Priority issues:

- Rubbish that has been dumped in yards, gardens, on streets and on waste ground.
- Dealing with empty properties
- Improving privately let properties
- Dog Fouling

Number	Task	To Be Actioned By	Status
	Feedback:		
1.	Deliver/Send feedback letters to residents, landlords and community groups.	CAT	In progress
2.	Highlight in the feedback letter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bin collection dates and Christmas arrangements - local Household Waste Recycling Centre details - encourage residents to report specific dog fouling information - include contact details for support groups who attended the Community Advice Day 	CAT	Complete
3.	Include recycling leaflets with the feedback letters	CAT/ Strategic Waste	Complete
	Rubbish:		
4.	Carry out pro-active patrols for littering and fly tipping when reactive workload allows.	Wardens	In progress
5.	Continue to look into using covert cameras to tackle fly tipping, possibly making use of empty properties.	Wardens/ Police/Empty Properties	In Progress
6.	Continue to carry out waste carrier checks in the area	Police/Wardens	In Progress
7.	Speak to allotments to ensure appropriate baiting programmes are in place for pest control	CAT	In Progress

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Contact: Mrs Jennifer Jones
 Direct Tel: 03000 261 006
 Email: Jennifer.jones@durham.gov.uk
 Our ref: CAT / Easington Colliery 2018



December 2018

Dear Resident,

Feedback on the Community Action Team in Easington Colliery

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your input during our time in Easington Colliery. The Community Action Team has been working in the area since 8th October 2018. During that time, we had contact with numerous residents, landlords and community groups and the following priorities were identified for action:



Rubbish that has been dumped in yards, gardens, on streets and on waste ground



Dog Fouling



Dealing with empty properties



Improving privately let properties

Please find below a summary of the activities we carried out:

- Weekly walkabouts – 221 issues of concern tackled. 49 legal notices served.
- Wardens carried out additional patrols at 6 different dog fouling hotspots identified through resident surgeries and investigated fly tipping in the back lanes.
- Waste carrier checks have been carried out in the wider area by the Police and Wardens to ensure that waste carriers are registered
- Northumbrian Water carried out sewer baiting of the A and B streets.
- 15 empty properties have been brought back into use, with 5 more being actively advertised.
- Housing inspections were carried out in the selective licensing area
- The Fire Service carried out Safe and Wellbeing visits
- 31 owners were written to advising that they reinstate gates/walls to prevent fly tipping
- 33 property owners in Wembley were requested to tidy up their overgrown gardens
- Councillors are planning to install new dog bins and new benches in Easington Colliery
- East Durham AAP helped coordinate a Community Advice Day on 28th November where locals could speak to advice agencies
- Police carried out a 'Winter Nights' initiative, 'Hawkeye' initiative, and safer homes visits – to support vulnerable residents and prevent house and car crime
- 3 off-licences in the area were visited by the Police and Durham County Council in relation to underage sales. Improvements have been made and they will continue to be monitored.
- The East Durham Trust's community coaches, part of the East Durham Solutions project, carried out 23 interventions in the area – including giving advice on private housing, assistance with completing benefit forms and making referrals to Housing Solutions.



2018 Programme

26 – <u>Spennymoor Revisit</u>	10*	22 January 2018 – 31* March 2018
27 – <u>Ferryhill Dean Bank North</u>	11	9 April 2018 – 24 June 2018
28 - Willington	11	2 July 2018 – 16 September 2018
Review (CAT 24, CAT 25, CAT 26)	4	17 September 2018 – 7 October 2018
29 – Easington Colliery Central	11	8 October 2018 – 23 December 2018
Review (CAT 27)	3	31 December 2018 – 20 January 2019

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2018 Programme

Total casework:

- 987 pieces of casework tackled
- 226 legal notices served
- 27 works in default

Comparison

- Caseload similar to previous year
- Improved compliance
- More actions undertaken in each action plan

Altogether better

2018 Programme

Core casework:

- Rubbish accumulations
- Defective drainage
- Fly-tipping
- Dog fouling
- Open to access

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New approaches in 2018

- Distribution of 'initial' letters
- Use of picture icons
- QR codes for surveys
- More, shorter resident surgeries
- Social media for priority topics
- Additional project work

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Resident surgeries



Altogether better

Resident surgeries



Altogether better

Casework Analysis

- Ownership data was analysed at the end of each project
- Informs our exit strategy
- Occupied private let properties gave the most casework for rubbish accumulations

Resident Feedback 2018

- 84% of residents knew that CAT was operating in the area
- 71% of residents knew how to contact CAT
- 59% felt that CAT had made a difference in their area

Altogether better



Review Findings 2018

- Housing and environmental issues found were lower than the original walkabouts
- Indicate a sustained improvement
- There remains a need for monitoring following exit
- Some areas continue to have complex issues

Future Work 2019

4 new projects planned

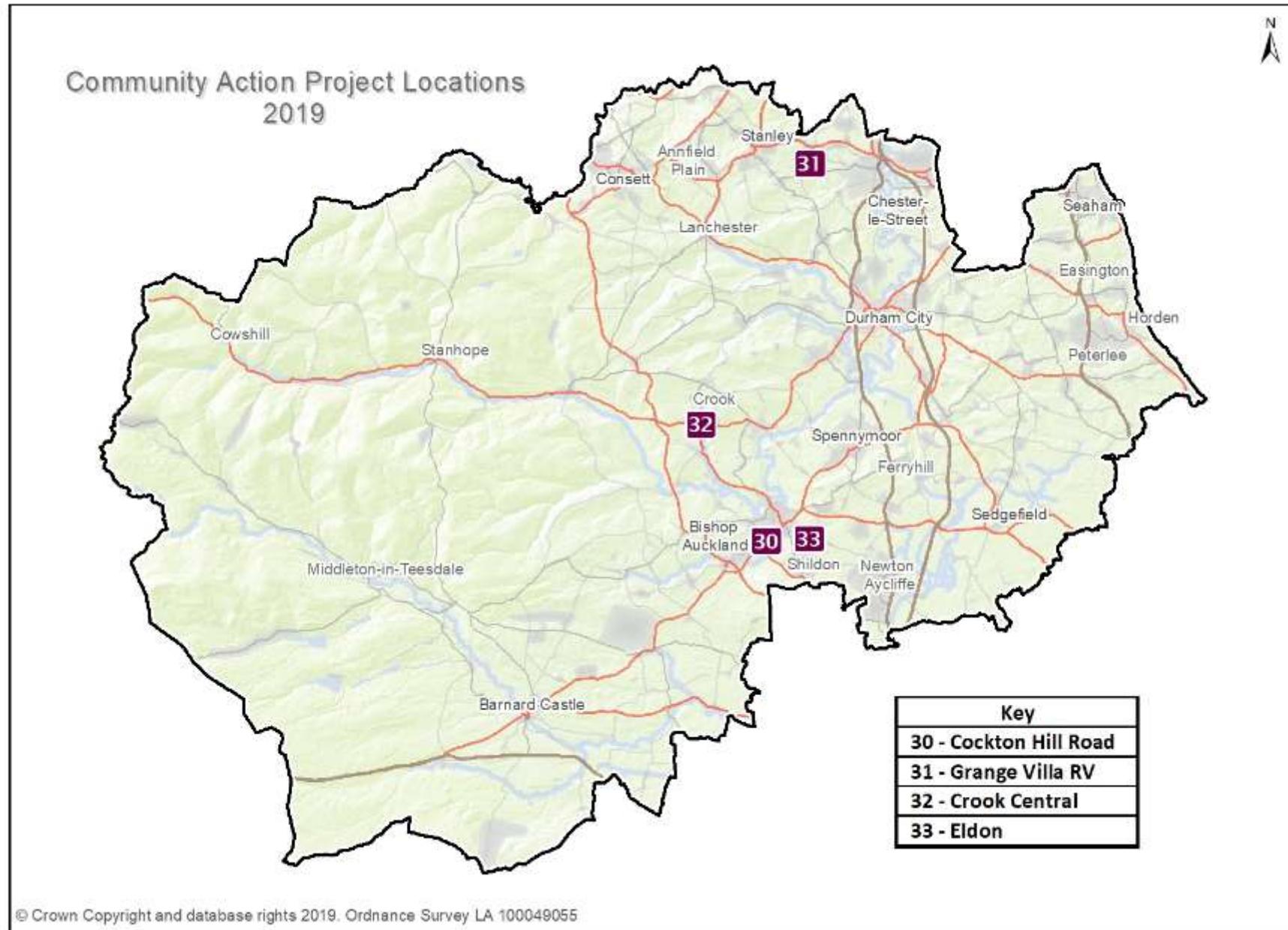
- Continue with 11 week projects
- Enable better resident engagement and participation
- Embed enforcement work
- Continue to review previous project locations

Project locations based on greatest need

- Established through a dataset:
 - Deprivation, empty homes, median house price, housing benefit info & EHCP data

Altogether better

Future Work Map 2018-19



Partnership working



Altogether better



Walkabouts - Spennymoor



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Walkabouts – Dean Bank



Walkabouts - Willington



Walkabouts – Easington Colliery



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Walkabouts – Easington Colliery



Litterpick



Altogether better



'No Dumping' Posters



Altogether better

Dog fouling and litter stickers



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Partnership working



Altogether better

St Thomas Close - before



Altogether better

St Thomas Close - action



Altogether better

St Thomas Close - after



Alt



Overgrowth clearance



Altogether better

Litterpick



Bin and Gate Marking



Before and After





Altogether better





Altogether better



Altogether better

Before and After



Before and After



Altogether better

Before and After



ter

Before and After



Altogether better

Before and After



Altogether better

Before and After



Altogether better

Before and After



Altogether better

QUESTIONS

Altogether better





County Durham Environment Partnership Board Minutes

Wednesday, 5th December 2018
The Burlison Room, Town Hall, Durham

Apologies

Jamie Fletcher	-	Environment Agency
Jim Cokill	-	Durham Wildlife Trust
John Reed	-	Chair, Climate Change Group
Gordon Elliott	-	Partnerships, DCC

Attendees:

Oliver Sherratt (Chair) (OS)	-	Direct Services, DCC
Liz Charles (LC)	-	Durham Community Action
Vicky Burrell (VB)	-	Strategic Waste, DCC
Lyndsey Waters (LW)	-	Communications, DCC
Andrea Petty	-	Partnerships, DCC
Steve Bhowmick (SB)	-	Chair, Coastal, Heritage and Landscapes Group
Glenn Robinson (GR)	-	Partnerships Team, DCC
Susan Langley (SL)	-	Durham County Council
Angela Brown (Minutes) (AB)	-	Secretariat, Partnerships, DCC

Item No.	Subject	Action By	
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>OS welcomed everyone to the meeting and initiated round table introductions.</p>		
2.	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>All actions were agreed as a true and accurate record of the last meeting.</p> <p>If anyone would like any Environment information or data sets adding to the insight database John Mitchell will be happy to add this. GR agreed to draft list of Environment information available on Insight to see what data sets looking for and will circulate to the partnership and ask to consider and supply.</p>	<p>JM</p> <p>GR</p>	

	<p>The Vision – The emerging findings document which includes the draft vision is moving away from the altogether themes and instead has 7 or 8 high level ambitions, will be available to be circulated in the New Year.</p> <p>OS would like this on the agenda to be discussed at the next meeting in March. OS suggested that we need to see the document and make sure we comment.</p> <p>AP agreed to circulate the document once the consultation is live</p> <p>Single Use plastic – The report has been drafted and circulated. Various Government announcements/consultations have made it challenging to keep up to date. A national waste and resources strategy is anticipated by the end of December.</p> <p>The Environment Awards Anniversary – work is still underway assessing options for this.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>AP</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Strategic Action Plan Template</p> <p>GR mentioned that they are proposing to link the actions to each of the 4 themes. OS felt that that on observation these are not specific/smart enough</p> <p>It was felt that Climate change is making a real impact and should be in there</p> <p>Single use plastic is in there but not specific enough needs something more tangible. More work is needed on this.</p> <p>A discussion took place around the actions and it was felt that it may be beneficial to have another column which gives a more detailed explanation. GR and SB will work on these.</p> <p>OS will send out an example of what we are looking for.</p>	<p>GR & SB</p> <p>OS</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Working Group Identified Priorities/Performance Measures</p> <p>Postponed pending agreement to key actions exercise referred to above.</p>	<p>SL</p>	

<p>5.</p>	<p>Environment Partnership Membership and frequency proposal</p> <p>The Board are looking at wider representation. The CDP are doing a Governance Review which may affect the membership and frequency proposal.</p> <p>Suggestions for Board members were: Durham University, Northumbrian Water Ltd, Durham BID, The Woodland Trust, Cathedral, Defra, AAP Rep as there will be a lot more community work through Climate Change. It was also agreed to contact existing members of the Board to see if they are still interested in attending the meetings, such as Katharine Birdsall from Environment Agency and Lorna Smith from Public Health</p> <p>It was agreed to speak to Clare Thompson from Nature Partnership and invite her to next meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed to keep meetings quarterly. It was also agreed that meetings would need to be aligned to what we have as a partnership</p> <p>AP will speak to Gordon Elliott regarding the AAP Rep</p>	<p>GR</p> <p>GR</p> <p>AP</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Work Programme</p> <p>GR Circulated a draft programme. If anyone has any suggestions/comments can you please forward them.</p>	<p>ALL</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Environment Awards & 30th Anniversary</p> <p>The Environment Awards Ceremony took place on 8th November. A note was circulated with the papers for the meeting which included the list of winners for each category. SB mentioned they were very pleased with the outcomes and said the night was a great atmosphere. He reminded the Board that this happens because of the sponsorship to showcase activities.</p> <p>There is ambition about delivering a 30th anniversary as we want to look back over 3 decades of achievements. There is a lot of research and preparation to do for this. The starting point is looking at venue as we are at capacity at The Radisson so if we having more</p>		

	<p>people that won't work. There have been a number of suggestions such as The Cathedral or the Ramside but would need to look at resources around that and practicalities around putting something together</p> <p>SB mentioned that they are currently working on a timetable to 5th June for launch and judging will come in there after once entries have been submitted.</p>		
<p>8.</p>	<p>Single Use Plastics Report</p> <p>The single use plastic report was circulated with the meeting papers. OS reminded the board that the Environment partnership had been asked by scrutiny committee to provide a report which responds to a County Council Resolution on the options for bringing an end to the use of unnecessary Single use Plastic (SUP) in County Durham. The group are looking at the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable DCC to become a full signatory of the 'Plastic Free Pledge@ by phasing out the use of unnecessary SUPs in all County Council buildings, and working with commissioning partners to end the purchase and procurement of SUPs through the DCC supply chain • Encourage the County's businesses, organisations and residents to go 'plastic free' working with best practice partners across the County to explore the creation of a 'plastic free network' that could provide business support, practical guidelines and advice to help local businesses transition from SUPs to sustainable alternatives • To incentivise traders on Council land to sell re-usable or non-plastic biodegradable containers and invite customers to bring their own, with the aim of phasing out SUPs; including investigating the possibility of requiring food and drink vendors to avoid SUPs as a condition of their event permission, strengthening DCC's existing guidance for exhibitors and traders <p>Looked first at some early quick wins which could be implemented:</p>		

	<p>Catering was an example of this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moved to recyclable, compostable, biodegradable coffee cups, food takeaway packaging and hot food service containers as standard • Introduced chargeable reusable plastic sip cups • Joined Northumbrian Water's Refill campaign in DCC civic sites and several public facing cafes • Use of bottles and reusable glasses when serving water for hospitality orders <p>Partners were surprised at how fast these things have happened but was refreshing to see the changes.</p> <p>VB mentioned that there is a huge action plan of what we are trying to tackle over the next year. The key project being awareness and trying to educate people to the issues.</p> <p>Recommendations from the report are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To note the considerable work undertaken in the last 6 months towards reducing use of Single Use Plastics by the County Council and its partners • To approve progression of a pledge to the County Councils cabinet to further reduce Single Use Plastics across Council Services • To extend an invitation to wider Council partners to also sign up to the same pledge, magnifying its impact • To note and approve the establishment of a 'Single Use Plastics network' to build on the success to date, and oversee implementation of plans that make further substantial reductions in single use plastics 		
<p>9.</p>	<p>Updates from Group Chairs</p> <p><u>Coastal, Heritage & Landscape Group</u> SB – The group met on Tuesday. There were presentations from two heritage action zones on regeneration and the heritage. Coordinators came in over respective projects. The Headline was 2025 200 worlds' first passenger railway. Linking in to promotions and celebrations for this. Funding is a big thing and Highways</p>		

	<p>England are a big funding pot around the University as they are wanting to push this to promote biodiversity.</p> <p>The oak and iron project was recognised on Country file programme based in Durham, so it was nice to see a HLF funded programme being promoted. Doing some training around charcoal. A frost fest weekend will also be held.</p> <p>The Wear Catchment partnership held an event on 13th November the funding headline was Environment Agency water environment to improve water in areas, SB will find out from Mark if this was successful.</p> <p><u>Environment in Your Communities</u></p> <p>LC – had PC Mike Gracey as guest speak at the last meeting who presented on the work he does that links in to the CAT team.</p> <p>The Community growing group met at the beginning of October they were looking why they are here and what they are achieving to see if they can put together some collaborative projects to scale up the work around community growing. LC is meeting with Michelle Cooper from CDCF as a first step.</p> <p>The school edible project – there were funds available for sugar tax so we now have 21 schools receiving funding so they have each contributed £500.</p> <p>It's your neighbourhood is due to be launched soon.</p> <p>Pumpkin and seeds had 48 schools and community groups involved.</p> <p>Waste and recycling week had over 300 people sign the pledge to stop using single use plastic. VB mentioned that they will make sure people are aware in recycling week to try and get more people to sign up to sign the plastic reduction pledge.</p>	SB	
10.	<p>Environment Partnership Communications</p> <p>In Durham County News the Christmas Recycling message is to remind people how they can recycle correctly to stop contamination. TV coverage for this. LW mentioned a video with school children tomorrow singing the 12 days of Christmas for the litter programme</p> <p>LW circulated the draft newsletter which was welcomed. If anyone has any comments let LW</p>	ALL	

	<p>know or if you would like anything including in the next edition</p> <p>Caring for your Environment award – VB has a link. A lady from Murton who is very active and very keen to try and feature as news piece or caring in Environment Award</p>	VB to link with LW	
11.	<p>AOB - recap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking to increase membership slightly • Will be sending out example for key actions and will be asking group to look at that 		
12.	<p>Date and time of next meeting: 27th March, 2018, 10.00am, Town Hall, Durham</p>		

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