

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham on **Friday 5 April 2019 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor E Adam (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors O Milburn, B Avery, D Bell, L Brown, J Carr, B Coult, S Dunn, D Hicks, P Howell, I Jewell, P Jopling, 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 J Clark, R Crute, C Kay, R Manchester, A Simpson and P Sexton.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor B Coult substituted for Councillor A Simpson and Councillor I Jewell substituted for Councillor R Manchester.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 8 March 2019 and 21 March 2019 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman subject to the inclusion of Councillor Patterson's apologies on the 8 March 2019.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

5 Any Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

The Chairman informed the Panel that he had agreed to change the Agenda order so that Item No 8 would be considered after Item No 5 to allow a demonstration of a new data intelligence system.

6 Performance Management Quarter 3 2018/19

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

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager and Strategy Officer were in attendance to present the report and deliver a presentation using live data that included a map of the area that provided information on incidents such as fly-tipping which could also be broken down further to show waste by type.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager advised that 18% of waste put into recycling bins cannot be recycled due to contamination, this was largely due to recyclable being placed in black bin bags and put into the recycling bin. An education programme to ensure the public knows what can and cannot be recycled and that recycling materials such as metals, paper and cardboard should be placed directly into the recycling bin. There was an ongoing 'Know your Metals' campaign and leaflets had been distributed and were available, however officers believe that not everyone was recycling metals and there was more that members of the public could recycle.

Councillor Jopling referred to contamination materials and indicated that she had a label advising what you could recycle, and aerosols and tin foil was included on the list as recyclable items.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that these items were being placed in the general waste bin rather than recycling by some members of the public.

Councillor Hicks sought clarification if items were not washed then would they be classed as contamination. The Strategic Manager responded that they asked for them to be washed for hygiene reasons, but it was not necessary.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager went on to advise that Durham County Council had been unsuccessful in its bid to the Department of Transport ADEPT Innovation Fund for further road surfacing trials using plastic materials.

Councillor Jopling asked for further information on plastic roads in particular, why the scheme was not continuing.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that the scheme was not continuing due to the failure of the innovation fund bid but the use of plastics on roads had been successful.

Councillor Howell referred to the figures for 'How clean and tidy is my local environment?' and asked if they had any more recent national figures.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that the national figures were no longer available, so the comparative data will not be included in future reports.

Councillor Howell referred to the percentage change in carbon emissions from local authority operations which had dropped 9% compared to 14% the previous year and asked what figure this was based on.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader responded that the meeting to be held on 30 April 2019 would be looking at carbon emissions and would provide an answer to the question.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager advised that following a number of member's questions in relation to fly tipping at the January meeting work had been done to provide members with a demonstration of a new system that could provide intelligence data on fly tipping. The Strategy Officer provided members with a demonstration using a product called Microsoft Power BI that showed the types of fly tipping, the capacity of the load, and the location down to detail as to whether the fly tip is in an alley way, commercial land, private land, council land, footpath or highway. Members were advised that the data used was the most up to date.

Councillor Jewell asked if the live data system would be available to Members. Members were advised that the system could be available to Members in the future.

Councillor Avery referred to the charge for bulky collections and asked if this generated much income as he found in his area fly tipping increased when the charge was introduced and asked how this compared to the cost of cleaning up incidents.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that the implementation of the charge was introduced some time ago and the data only goes back to 2016 so they were unable to show a trend, but he could look at income compared to the cost.

The Strategy Officer indicated that there was a 2.5% increase in bulky waste requests and the price had increased last year.

The Chairman indicated that this question had previously been asked by the Committee and were advised that the implementation of the charge had made little difference. An income was now generated but this had no impact of fly-tipping.

Councillor Patterson indicated that the cost to collect rubbish were high, so a true reflection could not be made and there were other varying factors to take into consideration.

Mr Bolton referred to fly-tipping on private land and asked how this was identified and when fly-tipping occurred on private land did Durham County Council contact the land owner.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that it depended on how the report was made, for example if an incident was reported online the person reporting indicate the location by dropping a pin on the online map. However, this can be difficult unless you know the exact location, if the incident was reported via the telephone and a postcode was known then a team would go out to determine land ownership. Where fly tipping had occurred on private land some landowners would sort out the fly-tipping themselves but if it continued to be an issue then the Council would work with the landowner.

Councillor Jewell asked how accurately the figures reflected the problem as not all incidents were reported.

The Strategy Officer responded that all wardens had hand held devices that allowed them to instantly report incidents they come across that goes onto the same system as the public use to report fly tipping incidents but there could be a small number of incidents that they were not aware of.

Councillor Jopling referred to private tenants moving out of properties and leaving behind rubbish such as mattresses and asked who paid for the removal of these items.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that it was up to the landlord in the first instance, but the council would arrange for the removal if necessary. Wardens often identify where fly tipping has occurred in back yards, the first point of call would be to the tenants or owner of the property and ask them to clear it up. Ultimately, Durham County Council would clear up and forward the bill to the landlord.

The Chairman referred to the registered landlord scheme and how this was vital for these situations.

Councillor Patterson commented that if the tenant asked for the removal of rubbish it would cost £20.00 but if the landlord made the request it would cost £140.00. The Economy and Enterprise OSC has in its work programme the Housing Strategy and this committee should be mindful of the overlap.

Councillor Howell commented on the tremendous amount of data asked how well the data was used and what was done with it.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager indicated that the Microsoft Power BI tool could be used on any data set and can link data sets and overlay them for example against areas of deprivation, where Household Waste Recycling Centres are located and compare them with population densities. The tool allows officers to look at key areas all clean and green activities could be put onto the system and link to data which could be used to take actions.

The Chairman commented that the tool was similar to a new members' portal which would be rolled out to members in the near future which included a dashboard that allows for comparisons to be made with other Durham County Council divisions.

Councillor Dunn asked if the system would allow you to identify who reported the incident and if training would be provided to members.

Members were advised that the system would identify who reported the system and members would be provided with training on the use of the new portal.

The Chair advised that in relation to the members' portal training was given but from a member point of view there was a need to be IT literate but it was a good system.

Councillor Howell advised that knowing who had made the report was important and knowing the location was important too as members judge whether area campaigns had been successful.

In response to a question from Councillor Jewell the Strategy Officer confirmed that the system was able to show hot spot areas.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager and the Strategy Officer for the demonstration.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

7 Media Relations

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred to recent press articles that fell within the remit of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The articles were:

- Joy as Stainton Grove HWRC Reopens – The centre was official reopened following the completion of the work. The centre would also provide an area for small businesses to deposit trade waste. Member would have an opportunity to visit the site on the 2 May 2019.
- West Cornforth and Ushaw Moor get makeover in Operation Spruce Up – The deep cleaning programme in West Cornforth and Ushaw Moor had completed. The team would be heading to Newton Aycliff and Wolsingham in the coming months.
- Partners Pledge to Tackle Single Plastics – The region's largest council and a number of its partners have signed a collective new pledge as part of an ongoing campaign to eradicate single use plastics.
- £3.2 m investment in North East and North Yorkshire coastline – The Government had revealed that seven projects would receive vital financial backing as part of the scheme. Among the confirmed grant recipients in the North East was the Crimdon Coastal Hub with £1.325 million granted towards a £2.23 million project to create a visitor and events hub for Crimdon Beach.

The Chairman advised Members that a local school had signed the pledge to tackle Single Use Plastics.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

8 EU Funding and Other Funding for Carbon Projects

The Committee considered the joint report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided members with information on the latest developments relating to European funding and other funding for low carbon projects (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader advised that Business Energy Efficiency Projects (BEEP) was now in its third year and had supported 165 small to medium enterprises (SMEs) to date. BEEP was really successful and had achieved

national publicity within the UK Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (BEIS) who had requested Durham's BEEP to advise on and trial a national approach to SME energy efficiency and they had been awarded €163,000. They currently had 4 million worth of funding in place with an additional 4 or 5 million available for bids.

Members were advised that the Solid Wall Insulation Innovation (SWIi) had been targeting the fuel poor who lived in housing had solid walls to provide insulation to the building with cladding on the outside to give a local landscape and heritage feel. Work had been undertaken in ex mining villages at South Moor; Ferryhill; Cockfield and Ramshaw.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader advised members of the Erasmus programme which was delivered in partnership with Durham University Anthropology Department looking at how business can work better with universities. This is a people centred area of work focussed on electric vehicles to understand people's needs.

Members heard how the authority had been awarded a grant from Innovate UK to support an electric vehicle project that would look at issues with charging vehicles and to help us as a local authority to understand about electric vehicle infrastructure and what we are doing as a council.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader advised that outline approval had been given to BEEP to continue for another three years but more information was expected in May 2019.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader advised there were a number of projects under development.

The Chairman thanked the Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader for her report and indicated that a lot of good things were happening, and Durham County Council were recognised for leading national projects. He commented that Councillor Clare had recently attended a conference on environmental projects.

Councillor Patterson referred to wall insulation project and asked who sets the criteria and if the council had any control over it.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader responded that this was not her area, but she would pass her question to a colleague and respond to her direct.

Councillor Clare advised the committee there was a range of different solid wall insulation schemes available.

Councillor Martin referred to the new headquarters and asked if it would be green and sustainable in the future.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader responded that her team had not initially been involved at the design stage but were now involved and were keen for the building to be as energy efficient as possible.

The Chairman commented that this was work in progress and there were lots going on.

Councillor Martin commented that the Council had recently declared an environmental emergency.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader advised that this would be addressed at the Special meeting of the committee on 30 April.

Mr Bolton referred to the SWli project and suggested if they had any before and after photos could they be shared with the committee and commented that there had been concerns in the past by local residents of water ingress behind the insulation.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader responded that she would refer this to her colleague who specialised in this area. She also advised Members that there was a web site that showed before and after photographs of the SWli project.

The Chairman asked The Overview and Scrutiny Officer to circulate the insulation before and after photographs to members of the committee.

Councillor Howell indicated that the new Durham County Council Headquarters was a flag ship building that was high profile and the expertise of officers needed to be utilised or if not available these services purchased.

Councillor Clare indicated that the new headquarters will be constructed to modern building standards making it more energy efficient and with a low carbon footprint.

Councillor Dunn referred to the motion to declare an environmental emergency and climate impact should be part of the design of the new headquarters.

Councillor Jopling indicated that during the demolition of County Hall as much of the building as possible should be recycled.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader advised that a working group had been set up to look at recycling materials from County Hall.

Resolved: That the report be noted

9 Budget Outturn Quarter 3 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 that fall within the remit of this committee. The report highlighted and explained any major variances in comparison with the budget based on the position to the end of Quarter 3. 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 Howell commented that he would prefer the data to be year to date rather than forecast. He then referred to the building and facilities management and sought clarification on the £390,000 underspend.

The Finance Manager indicated that the council made a profit on jobs recirculated, so any additional works would increase profit resulting in an underspend.

Councillor Howell then referred to Strategic Waste and sought further information on the potential penalty for high contamination levels.

The Finance Manager advised that recycling materials were sold to a private contractors which generated an income but if there were high levels of contamination this would reduce the income.

Councillor Patterson indicated that budget pressures could not afford overspends and asked why the MTFP savings were not achieved.

The Finance Manager responded that this related to rare problems with the fleet that were not programmed as anticipated and would be replaced next year.

Councillor Coult referred to the lost income from the Gala and if they were promoting for more usage.

The Finance Manager advised that the Head of Culture and Leisure had attended a meeting of the committee in January and had reassured members that steps were being taken to improve the Gala's position and to be assured the service is working on it.

The Chairman advised that the Committee had received a presentation on the future of the Gala at a previous meeting and the committee had agreed this would be a future item for the Committee.

Councillor Hicks asked if the overspend in Culture and Sport was a result of the Council taking over Leisur4works, the Derwentside Trust for Sport and Arts. The Finance Manager indicated that staff had transferred to Durham County Council and there had been some issues with energy costs, but this would not be an issue going forward.

Resolved: That the Quarter 3 forecast outturn position on Revenue and Capital for 2018/19 be noted.

10 Refresh of the Work Programme

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships, which provided Members with an opportunity to review and refresh the work programme for 2019/20.

Members reviewed their work programme each year to reflect the objectives and associated outcomes and actions identified within the Council Plan for the Council's Altogether Greener priority theme (for copy see file of minutes).

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the report and advised Members that this report was the first report in a two part process to refresh of the work programme and acknowledged that it had been another very busy year for this committee.

In relation to review activity looking at the Management of Durham County Council Allotments was paused while a consultation had taken place. The consultation had now ended and arrangements were being made to pick this work up with additional meetings. It was suggested that a report to Cabinet could be expected in the Autumn.

Members of this committee had attended several visits that linked into the work programme and had given members the opportunity to see operations in practice such as visits to:

- Thornley Waste Transfer Station
- Tudhoe HWRC
- Flood Schemes

Members were advised that further visits would take place within this year's work programme to the new facility at Stainton Grove HWRC and to visit Heritage Assets.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that looking forward to the new work programme many of the items considered this year, members had asked for these items to go forward. Items included:

- Strategic walking and Cycling Delivery Plan 2018 – 2028
- Air quality – which will also pick up members concerns on idling vehicles
- Winter Maintenance
- Single Use Plastics
- Fuel poverty
- Heritage Coast
- Stockton to Darlington Bicentennial Celebrations
- Gala Theatre
- Flood Risk Management Authorities
- Community Action Team
- Highway Maintenance
- EU Funding and Other Funding for Carbon Project
- Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan
- Carbon Management Plan
- Fly Tipping – perhaps combining the information presented to members at this meeting with information provided by the service

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised of new areas members had asked to be included in the work programme which was:

- Waste Collection Process
- Heritage Assets
- Evaluation of Operation Spruce up

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer asked members to consider items to go forward into the new work programme and if they had any thoughts on work programme items outside of the meeting to email.

The Chairman commented that it was a substantial work programme which would continue into next year. He suggested if Members had any items they wished to look at then they may need to take something out rather than add to the programme.

Resolved: (i) That the report and work programme in relation to the current Council Plan 2016-19 Altogether Greener theme be noted.

(ii) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in July 2019, receive a further report detailing the committee's work programme for 2019-2020.