



Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Thursday 3 September 2020
Time 9.30 am
Venue Remote Meeting - This meeting is being held
remotely via Microsoft Teams

Business

Part A

**Items which are open to the Public and Press
Members of the public can ask questions with the Chair's
agreement, and if registered to speak**

1. Apologies
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the Meetings held on 9 and 16 March 2020 (Pages 3 - 24)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties
6. The response of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change to the Coronavirus Pandemic
 - a) Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change (Pages 25 - 34)
 - b) Presentation by Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change (Pages 35 - 58)
7. Refresh of the Work Programme 2020/2021 - Report of Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 59 - 80)
8. 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
25 August 2020

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, A Batey, D Bell, L Brown, J Carr, B Coult,
R Crute, S Dunn, A Gardner, K Hawley, T Henderson,
J Higgins, C Kay, L Maddison, R Manchester, I McLean,
A Simpson, P Sexton and Wilson

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Holding

Contact: Paula Nicholson

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 9 March 2020 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor E Adam (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors O Milburn, B Avery, A Batey, D Bell, J Carr, B Coult, R Crute, S Dunn, J Higgins, L Maddison, A Simpson, M Wilson and M Wilkes

Also Present:

Councillors J Clare, M Clarke, S Iveson, S Quinn and J Turnbull

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Brown, K Hawley, R Manchester, P Sexton and Mr Bolton and Mrs Holding.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor M Wilkes substituted for Councillor L Brown.

3 Minutes of the Meetings

The minutes of the meetings that were held 8 January 2020, 24 January 2020 and 3 February 2020 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Any Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

6 Media Relations

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred members to the recent prominent articles and news stories relating to the remit of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

'Thousands of trees to be planted to create greener urban areas' (Northern Echo 17 February 2020) related to Durham County Council securing almost £500,000 to plant thousands of trees in spaces where tree canopy was low as part of the Forestry Commission's Urban Tree Challenge Fund across County Durham's towns and villages to create greener and healthier urban areas.

'Low carbon thinkers connect for communities' (DCC 20 February 2020) related to a workshop aimed at finding environmental energy solutions for communities in the North East had held its first session. The new networking event was aimed to bring together people with an interest in community led energy projects. This related to item 10 on the agenda that would be presented by the Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader.

'Council leads drive for greener highways by rolling out rubber roads' (DCC 21 February 2020) related to Durham County Council working with Rainton Construction to use rubber waste from worn tyres and recycled plastic waste to create more durable and environmentally friendly road surfaces.

'Fly Tippers fined by Durham County Council' (Northern Echo 17 February 2020) related to three men and two women being fined after they failed to assist Neighbourhood Wardens investigate the illegal disposal of waste at sites across the County.

Resolved

That the verbal report be noted.

7 Fuel Poverty

The Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Interim Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided members with details of the projects and schemes available in the County to tackle fuel poverty.

The Chair introduced the Housing Regeneration Project Manager who was in attendance to provide a presentation to members on fuel poverty and the warm homes campaign. He informed the Committee how those identified as being fuel poor were measured using low income high cost definition that rose from a household's inability to afford to heat their home to a temperature of 21°C in their living room and 18°C in another living areas of the home. He explained that there were 11% of households in County Durham that were in fuel poverty. He added that this figure was lower than the national average and over time had showed a downward trend.

The Housing Regeneration Project Manager noted that there were issues with some households in County Durham especially in rural areas where the use of solid fuels was the only option to heat their homes that created higher fuel bills. To tackle fuel poverty in County Durham the County Durham Energy and Fuel Poverty partnership had brought together external organisations to deliver an action plan of seven key strategic elements

- Maintain a strategic partnership to co-ordinate delivery of affordable warmth and energy efficiency programmes in County Durham
- Maintain a countywide housing energy database to target assistance and report on fuel poverty, energy efficiency and carbon reduction programmes
- Maximise the uptake of all current energy efficiency programmes in private sector properties
- Maximise awareness of energy efficiency programmes in Social and Registered Provider properties
- Signpost vulnerable households to income maximisation and debt management services
- Improve the health and wellbeing of residents and reduce health inequalities by minimising the negative health impacts of cold homes
- Provision of energy efficiency advice services

The Housing Regeneration Project Manager advised the Committee that the Warmer Homes Campaign had been launched through Housing Solutions and was a one-stop referral system for those who were eligible to access energy efficiency grants to transform their homes with energy saving improvements such as central heating or home insulation to have a warmer home and lower energy bills.

The Team worked with the Area Action Partnerships, GP surgeries, had door to door promotions and had carried out a mail-out using data from the Revenue and Benefits department to target 23,000 residents who were claiming benefits to raise awareness and put mechanisms in place to get information out to residents about the service. The Housing Regeneration Project Manager explained that residents who were most eligible were those who had cold related ill health like Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and asthma and had an income of less than £30,000. He noted that there had been £1.4 million grant brought into the County.

The Housing Regeneration Project Manager told the Committee that 41 GP surgeries within County Durham wrote to their patients to inform them of the grant. He explained that his service were unaware of this data until the patient chose to complete and return the questionnaire to Durham County Council, which acted as permission for the service to make contact with them to see how they could be helped. He noted that residents could also be put in touch with other organisations that offered further services such as the Fire Brigade offering carbon monoxide alarms. He added that for those residents with mobility issues home visits could be arranged to offer help and advice on choosing the cheapest energy companies.

The Housing Regeneration Project Manager noted there were issues experienced by some residents who were in fuel debt that prevented them from accessing cheaper energy tariffs. He notified the committee that all energy companies had charitable arms to have fuel debt written off and his service had worked with some residents to allow them to change to cheaper companies and offered them advice on how to manage their money better.

Councillor Wilkes was concerned that some residents were paying high tariffs for their energy bills. He wanted to know if Durham County Council could do anything further through the Durham County News to target elderly people to help them reduce their bills. He was aware that energy prices were reducing, and this would make the figures look better but he was worried that they may disguise issues when they start to increase.

The Housing Regeneration Project Manager responded that there was a downward trend regarding fuel prices at present but the Warmer Homes Campaign did take measures to lower energy bills of residents who sought help. Information was published in the Durham County News that was distributed to every household in Durham and the team worked with Durham County Council's Area Action Partnership's to engage with people in the community to promote the service.

Councillor Higgins thanked the Housing Regeneration Project Manager for the information and asked when GP's would be writing out to patients.

The Housing Regeneration Project Manager notified the committee that writing to patients through GP's was an annual project and it was proposed that letters would be sent out in March 2020. He stressed that information regarding patients was kept strictly confidential and the team only contacted patients to offer advice when they gave authority through the returned the completed survey.

Councillor Coult asked if there were any plans to target organisations that provided care to the elderly in their own homes.

The Housing Regeneration Project Manager acknowledged that the service was always looking for new partnerships and organisations to contact to spread the message further afield. He asked Councillors to let him know if there were any networks, they knew of that may benefit from being contacted.

Councillor Coult agreed to pass on contact details of the organisations that she was aware of.

Councillor Milburn was concerned that the Government's plans to move away from using gas in the future would be implemented immediately and wanted to know if there was a plan B with regards to gas boilers.

The Housing Regeneration Project Manager stated that by 2025 no gas boilers would be installed into new properties and it was proposed to have a new form of fuel to supply new homes and businesses other than gas. He stressed that this would be a phased approach for older properties and would not happen overnight.

Councillor Milburn thanked the Housing Regeneration and Project Manager and was glad to hear that there were stages to the process.

Councillor Crute wanted to know if the grants were promoted to the private sector and private landlords.

The Housing Regeneration Project Manager advised that a new scheme had been introduced that would allow private landlords the ability to apply for the grants if they were willing to make a 50% contribution. The Housing Solutions Team worked with tenants and if eligible could apply for assistance but required approval from the private landlords before any works could be carried out at the property.

Councillor Crute thought that seeking approval from private landlords may prove difficult if they were not local but was happy that they would be given the opportunity to apply for the grant.

Councillor Adam commented that the selective licensing that was to be introduced would help with absent landlords.

Resolved

- (i) That the report and presentation be noted
- (ii) That further progress report be included in the Committee's future work programme

8 External Low Carbon Funding

The Committee received a report of the Interim Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided members with information on External Low Carbon Funding opportunities.

The Chair introduced the Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader who was in attendance to provide an update on external low carbon funding. She notified the committee that there had been £20million received from the European Union that had funded numerous low carbon projects including BEEP1 and BEEP2.

In addition, the Sustainable and Climate Change Team Leader noted that it was unclear as to whether the funding would come through for a further four projects that had been successful at the ERDF outline bid stage which included the Durham History Centre Project, the Louisa Centre Mine Water Heat project, the Zero carbon Depot Project and the Auckland Castle Deep Geothermal project. She agreed that she would provide an update on these bids once she received any information. She added that the Government was to create a Shared Prosperity Fund to replace some lost funding.

Councillor Adam stated that there were some interesting projects in the pipeline and the Government should be encouraged to fund them through the shared prosperity fund.

Councillor Avery found the use of mine water to heat Bishop Auckland Castle fascinating. He thanked Officers who had undertaken the housing project at Dean Bank in Ferryhill as now the area looked very attractive.

Councillor Wilkes applauded the huge amount of good work that had been carried out. He thought that there had been a lot of progress made on developing technology that would go into the new history centre to make it a low carbon building. He enquired if new technologies were going into the new build County Hall at the riverside in Durham and asked retrospectively what could be done to make the new build more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader replied that new buildings could not apply for grants as they did not fit the criteria as there was an expectation that new buildings had low carbon emissions. She noted that although she was aware of work going into the new HQ building, she was not involved directly on the project to be able to comment further with clarity.

Resolved

- (i) That the report be noted
- (ii) That a further update report back to a future committee meeting

9 Leisure Centres

The Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Interim Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided an update in relation to activity levels in County Durham and proposals for the transformation of Durham County Council's (DCC's) leisure centre offer.

Councillor Adam stated that the item was part of the work programme of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and on that basis was why it was on the agenda to be discussed.

Councillor Adam introduced the Interim Head of Culture and Sport who was in attendance to provide a presentation to members on the Leisure Centres in County Durham. The Interim Head of Culture and Sport informed the Committee that a report had been considered by Cabinet on transforming Leisure Centres within County Durham in January. She stressed the importance of the benefits of mental and physical wellbeing. They affected people's health to help reduce sickness, improve productivity and in turn boost the economy. It was essential that children remained active as some activity was lost as they got older and in adults it was even less.

The Interim Head of Culture and Sport advised that the transformation would make Leisure Centres more accessible and affordable, creating a robust offer across County Durham to get more people active in a safe environment as they were considered as an asset for families to frequent. It was proposed that every leisure centre would be reviewed to gain an overview of who used them; what the catchment area was like; what was the demand for each service provided including the cost; what type of offer would entice people to go and what barriers people experienced that prevented them from attending. She added that there would be a phased approach to refresh the leisure centres, looking at the front of house, how they could thrive as a brand and how some could be refurbished as to not to just include huge sports halls but to use the space in different ways. She notified the committee that the community, stakeholders, schools and Members would be engaged with to help influence the project plan to take things forward.

Councillor Adam appreciated that there was a lot going on with the service and the level of investment that involved the community to be healthier.

Councillor Avery felt it was pleasing that Durham County Council were trying to get communities to be healthier. He often visited Spennymoor Leisure Centre and was saddened that the Council had lost Ferryhill Leisure Centre to the private sector.

Councillor Coult was concerned that there were children and young people that did not do any activities at all decreasing their fitness levels. She commented that activities such as trampolining and climbing parks were trending with young people and these should be incorporated into the leisure centres as not to lose out to private companies.

The Interim Head of Culture and Sport stated that as part of the review of each leisure centre the traditional activities were being explored to coincide with change following the understanding and engagement of service users. She added that this would also include the pricing to ensure activities were affordable.

Councillor Adam acknowledged that there was an excellent leisure centre facility in Newton Aycliffe that had outgrown the original building as it was used by children and young people who lived in the area.

Councillor Wilkes made it clear that all Councillors should have been made aware that Durham County Council Leisure Centres was on the agenda so they had the opportunity to attend the committee. He also stressed that the community should be notified of when the leisure centre was going to be discussed. However, he was delighted that work was planned to review leisure centres. He felt that Members should be involved in discussing the details of the leisure centres before going out for consultation with the public.

The Interim Head of Culture and Sport welcomed the feedback from Councillors and the review was planned to commence with local members asking for their views.

Councillor Adam felt that there was the opportunity to discuss concerns with village leisure centres in order to rectify them.

Councillor Batey welcomed the consultation through the AAPs. She was disappointed at the lack of winter training facilities for football for young people within Durham. She wondered if links could be made with the Football Association to establish these types of facilities so children and young people did not miss out over the winter months.

The Interim Head of Culture and Sport stated that the wider physical activity framework was being looked at to include winter training facilities. She agreed that work could be carried out with the Football Association for bids and create opportunities.

Councillor Maddison was saddened at the lack of cycle storage at Spennymoor Leisure but plenty of car parking spaces. She wanted to know if more cycle storage could be included to encourage people to use their bikes when visiting the facility.

The Interim Head of Culture and Sport explained that within the review people would be asked what prevented and enabled them in being active. She noted that if the lack of cycle storage was something that would prevent people attending the leisure centre then it would be considered to implement more bike storage.

Councillor Turnbull wanted to know if discounts could be offered for deprived families to use the all-weather play areas as he felt that they stood empty for long periods of time as people couldn't afford to use them.

The Interim Head of Culture and Sport advised that within the review people would be asked what barriers they encountered in accessing services. She felt that this was a good opportunity to review the pricing of activities but done in a way that was both affordable and cost effective.

Councillor Clark informed the committee that his nearest Leisure Centre was in Consett but that was not in his division of Delves Lane and wondered if the consultation would ensure all Councillors were involved in the review.

The Interim Head of Culture and Sport agreed that she would ensure that all local councillors not just those associated with AAP's would be engaged.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader offered her services when looking at leisure centres within County Durham to see if the buildings were energy efficient.

The Interim Head of Culture and Sport advised that the transformation board were looking at climate change and environmental issues within the leisure centre transformation.

Councillor Adam stated that the Committee was to comment on the report. He suggested that the Committee got involved with discussions around the Leisure Centre offer that would contribute to its future. He felt that there was a requirement from local members to also get involved in the process as well.

Resolved

(i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny committee remains engaged in the significant engagement and discussion to the transformation of DCC leisure centre offer.

(iii) That arrangements are made for a further update to come to a future meeting of the committee.

10 Gala Theatre

The Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Interim Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided members with a follow up review of the Gala Theatre.

The Chair introduced the Strategic Manager Culture who was in attendance to provide a presentation to Members on the Gala Theatre following the initial report that had been presented to the Committee in January 2019. The Strategic Manager Culture explained that the Gala Theatre was a 500 seat theatre that included two-screen cinema, café, flexible studio space that could be hired out and an area that was used as a small visual arts gallery.

She informed the Committee that the Gala Theatre had undergone some major challenges over the last twelve months including changes in the audience numbers and the increase in competition with the new Odeon opening.

The Strategic Manager Culture advised the Committee that the Gala Theatre was constantly being monitored and new ideas had been initiated. She noted that a new electronic point of sales had been introduced to make stock control more efficient, that also created useful data to target audiences on their secondary spend in the bar and café. The purchasing of tickets online had not only created opportunities to reduce queues at the box office on show nights but allowed customers to be sent preshow emails illustrating what was on offer on the night and also after show surveys to gain feedback that was invaluable information that would be used to improve the experience and give people what they wanted. A new Programme Manager had been employed to refresh the programme for the Gala Theatre although the programme that had been inherited and would need to run its course before any major changes could be made in 2020. An application for mobile phones was in the making that would allow people to buy drinks in advance and to increase secondary spend.

The Strategic Manager Culture notified the Committee that the seats could be removed from the theatre that made it possible to explore different types of shows that could be offered like live music events, which would tap into a new audience. The Gala Theatre had a very successful Christmas pantomime season that had seen during Christmas 2019 a low attendance from schools that would need to be addressed to see why the numbers had declined. She noted that the major issue was the cinema, following the opening of an Odeon cinema in the same vicinity and another cinema under construction. The Strategic Manager Culture referred members of the committee to the financial element within the report that showed how the Gala Theatre had performed over the last three years and stressed that the Gala Theatre was being monitored frequently to see how things could be improved further.

Councillor Adam indicated that there had been some improvements since the last report working towards positive performance. He felt that it was work in progress as there was still a lot more to achieve. He wanted to know if there was a timescale to monitor the issues surrounding the cinema, particularly in view of the increased competition since the opening of the Odeon Luxe in Durham and the anticipated opening of the Everyman Cinema.

The Strategic Manager Culture responded that the cinema element of the Gala Theatre would be monitored for six months with work ongoing to analyse weekly figures. It was agreed that the situation would be assessed in June to work out the next course of action. She noted that there was plans for a further Everyman Cinema to be opened in Durham and if this came to fruition then it would be very hard for the Gala to remain competitive. She added that options were being looked at to see what could be done with the space and gave an example of operating just one cinema or using the space of the second cinema in a completely different way.

Councillor Wilkes stated that there were approximately 20,000 students within County Durham with a quarter being made up of foreign students. He expressed the idea that if other cinemas were playing mainstream films whether it was worth featuring foreign films for the captive audience to create a niche.

The Strategic Manager Culture explained that the Gala Theatre could not show a film for just a couple of times as the contract with the distributor stipulated that films had to be taken for a week. She had suggested this very idea of showing foreign films when she came into post, however upon looking at the previous programmes there had been seasons where foreign films had been shown including those that targeted Chinese students that had very little attendance. She added that relations had been established with the university and various societies to try to target students as a key audience but this had only confirmed that there were barriers which had proved ineffective as it was found that the Gala Theatre could not give students what they wanted in a cinema experience with comfy seats and quality sound and would travel further afield for this.

Councillor Willkes felt that if students wanted to go to Newcastle cinemas for a better experience then why not refurbish the cinema with more comfortable chairs and better sound systems.

The Strategic Manager Culture advised that there was no guarantee that if the cinema was refurbished that it would attract more students and other customers to the cinema and without the guarantee it would be a waste of resources.

Councillor Wilkes thought that the future of the cinema element of the Gala Theatre should be seriously considered.

The Strategic Manager Culture agreed that the future of the cinema had to be considered and that was why it was being monitored and thoughts were being processed into potentially using the cinema space in a completely different way to generate revenue.

Councillor Dunn thought that it would be a mistake to make any rapid decision at this present time without the relevant information to act upon. He considered that although new cinemas like the Odeon were an exciting prospect for some people but when all was considered, they would rather watch a film in a cinema that was within their budget. He believed there was still a market for the cinema at the Gala Theatre if it continued to provide a cost-efficient service. He felt that June was too soon to make a terminal decision regarding the future for the cinema.

The Strategic Manager Culture sensed it would be sad if the cinema was lost from the Gala Theatre. She explained that there was a lot to consider but everything was being looked at to save the cinema.

Councillor Maddison informed the Committee that she had experienced the Gala Theatre for the first time recently to see a live streaming of a West End show. She felt that the whole experience was wonderful with some of the audience participating with the show. She thought that press releases through the County Council and the use of the website could be used to try to generate interest.

The Strategic Manager Culture highlighted that the cinema offered lots of shows from the National Theatre that were all well attended as not all people could travel to London to see their favourite shows. She thought it was a great opportunity to bring theatre to the people and even though it was on the screen the audience reacted as if they were present in the theatre.

Councillor Batey felt it was a shame that the park and ride could not be used to provide an opportunity to get people to attend the Gala Theatre by means of discounted tickets.

The Strategic Manager Culture explained that the cost price of tickets had been looked at especially through the festival programme and encouragement was required for the park and ride to support the facility.

Councillor Coult informed the Committee that attendance at the Empire Theatre, Sunderland included a £2 charge to park in the car park all night. She commended all the work that had gone into the Gala Theatre and had thoroughly enjoyed attending the excellent Christmas pantomime for the last five years. She thought that a scheme should be introduced to allow people with mobility issues to access the Gala Theatre easily. She was unaware that the seats could be removed from the theatre area that would enable to think outside the box in relation to its survival. She felt that it may be hype with the Odeon cinema that could die down but the cost of a ticket was an issue that they needed to get right.

Councillor Adam highlighted the recommendations on page 76 of the report and noted that big decisions needed to be made regarding the Gala Theatre.

Resolved

- (i) That the report be noted
- (ii) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting

11 County Durham Environment Partnership Board Minutes

The Overview & Scrutiny Officer referred members to the series of County Durham Environment Partnership Board minutes that had been circulated for information purposes only.

Resolved

That the minutes had been received.

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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 **Monday 16 March 2020 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor E Adam (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors O Milburn, B Avery, A Batey, D Bell, L Brown, J Carr, R Crute, S Dunn, J Higgins, R Manchester, M Wilson and M Wilkes

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Coult, K Hawley, A Simpson, Mrs P Holding and Mr T Bolton.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor M Wilkes substituted for Councillor A Simpson.

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 Climate Change Emergency Update Report

The Committee considered the joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Interim Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided Members with detail of the headlines from the Climate Emergency Consultation and progress on the further development of the identified range of measures necessary to achieve the new targets for carbon reduction by Durham County Council and detail of work undertaken to reduce carbon emissions countywide (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Mr S McDonald - Principal Officer: Low Carbon Economy and Ms R Farrow – Carbon and Energy Analyst: Low Carbon Economy were in attendance and provided Members with a presentation that highlighted the following points:

- Climate Emergency Response Plan
 - Consultation Outcome – it was noted that there had been a good response from the elected members survey. In addition, it was highlighted that groups such as Extinction Rebellion and Durham Road Block had also fed into the consultation as well as a number of schools to ensure that young people were engaged in the consultation process.
- Council Emission targets – including change
- Carbon Management Plan 2019-20 – Detail of successful work undertaken in last year, Council emission targets for 2025 and 2030, emission reductions by service area and area of focus identified in the Climate Emergency Response Plan
- Countrywide Emission targets and Actions
 - Countywide Emissions targets
 - Renewable Energy Capacity
 - 2019 Progress
 - Looking Ahead 2020
- Partnership Working

The Chair thanked officers for their presentation and asked about looking ahead to 2020 and measurement, monitoring and targeting and that it was difficult to see in terms of looking ahead at projects to determine if they are the projects that will produce the required reductions in emissions. He asked what analysis of data suggested that these projects/areas are the areas that the council should focus on and what results will be achieved from these projects.

The Principal Officer responded that the detail was in the 'Climate Emergency Response Action Plan'. We need to focus on decarbonising heat, this is the big challenge. One of the key headlines that came through from the consultation was the need for more tree planting to neutralise emissions however this was not going to have a huge impact in terms on CO₂ emissions so the focus needs to be on other things such as decarbonisation via renewable electricity and the continuance of projects such as LED light replacement programme. Transport was also another key area of focus.

The Carbon and Energy Analyst indicated that these issues were included in the Climate Emergency Response Plan and probably the simplest way to consider this is that the focus needs to be on emissions and the ones resulting from burning fossil fuels including cars and central heating boilers. Heat and transport were the key areas.

The Chair responded why wasn't there more investment into solar panels and considering investment in solar panels on our buildings although he recognised that European funding was no-longer provided for the fitting of solar panels. He continued by asking why new gas boilers are still being installed into people's homes. He commented that he was aware that after 2025 planning regulations were coming in preventing the fitting of gas boilers so why continue to install gas boilers why not spend on fitting solar panels. He continued by agreeing that the other key area of focus for CO₂ omissions was transport and therefore the focus needed to be on these two areas to meet our targets.

The Principal Officer responded that in terms of solar panels the council had just installed its first solar farm at Tanfield and that originally Durham County Council did have permission for a much larger area but had been advised that it would cost £3 million to upgrade the substation, so it was unfortunately not financially viable. There was however still potential to expand the site and meet the energy supply of other buildings in the area, it was confirmed that the council does have a big portfolio of buildings. He continued that the Council was successful when the feed in tariff first came out and a number of buildings were installed with various levels of solar PV, however they still have a number of buildings that do not have solar PV and work is ongoing looking at these buildings. Other authorities are going further and have invested in big solar farms and installed solar panels on partner buildings. They were currently in discussions with the likes of Northumbrian Water to install solar panels on some of their buildings.

The Carbon and Energy Analyst indicated that electricity was expensive a lot more than gas and that PV projects made money allowing money to be spent on heat projects and whilst reducing carbon emissions.

The Principal Officer agreed with the Chair in relation to installing gas boilers in homes and that northern gas networks were piloting in areas and the putting in of a 20% mix of hydrogen, but how do you create that hydrogen, this was an issue as it is quite carbon intensive to create. He continued that other sources of energy are used when areas are off the gas network and there is a need to look at domestic dwellings holistically.

Councillor Wilkes indicated that there would be a fall in CO₂ emissions this year due to the public health crisis but as we come through this we needed to look and see what had been learnt during the process.

He then referred to public transport and commented that this caused a lot of problems in Durham City in relation to emissions and now that we have heard that the 2 relief roads will not be included in the plan which could have reduced pollution and congestion. The money to pay for these roads was coming from housing developers and it was important to ensure that Durham County Council receives the money from the developers that would have been paid towards the infrastructure to invest in public transport in the county. Councillor Wilkes continued that in order for

the council to hit the targets all new houses proposed in the plan need to be carbon neutral and developers were not going to pay to do this as the rules currently only require them to build to a certain standard. Discussions need to be undertaken to make sure all new housing was carbon neutral, this may have to be achieved nationally through legislation but locally the council needed to see what could be done to ensure as much as possible that new homes in the county are carbon neutral and that the council put in place the public transport and network improvements that are needed.

They council also needed to look at battery storage and he referred to the slide on the success of Tanfield Solar Farm that showed during the night the same amount of energy was used as previously and this could be stored. He suggested that maybe the council needed to spend some money on installing battery storage that other people could copy and for the authority to see how it worked and asked if this was something that the authority were looking at. The key thing was making sure all new developments were carbon neutral.

The Chair indicated that the authority was relying on government to push this legislation through as the authority could not do this on its own.

The Principal Officer agreed that getting developers to develop to better standards was difficult. In terms of battery storage this was something that Durham County Council was actively investigating at Tanfield. The authority also have an ERDF project; that had successfully got through round one bidding with round two in August. This was a solar farm and battery storage facility at Annfield Plain which was a £9 million-pound project. The project would fully decarbonise the Morrison Busty depot at Annfield Plain including the provision of charging points and electric heating at the site.

Councillor Wilkes sought clarification as to where the £3 or £4 million pound funding that was not coming from ERDF, was coming from.

The Principal Officer responded that this sum would be coming from invest to save as this would be paid back in approximately 12 years.

Councillor Manchester sought clarification on the distribution of funds for the community energy projects and commented that his ward was currently looking at a community energy project around mine water heating. He then indicated that they had only managed to find one company that would tender for mine water heating projects. He asked what was being done with the private sector to bring them on board to consider minewater as a feasible option. Residents had been asking about hydroelectricity, aside from the mine water and asked if options were being looked at for hydroelectricity.

Officers responded that in terms of hydroelectricity there are some opportunities and referred to the hydroelectricity scheme in the city centre and commented that you

needed a big drop for it to generate the electricity and make the scheme worthwhile so was not as easy as just putting it on a bit of river but was an excellent piece of technology.

The Principal Officer referred to a scheme that was being developed at Hexham and that Durham County Council would be watching this project. In terms of the mine water projects, Durham County Council went out to procurement for the Louisa Centre mine water project and got 4 companies to tender for the work and provided details of the company that was awarded the contract, which was a local specialist company. They also worked very closely with the coal authority on the project which was key as they are the experts and they managed the contract. The Officer indicated that it might be prudent to wait for a few pilot schemes to be up and running in particular the project at Stanley to allow lessons to be learnt.

Councillor Wilkes referred to Hydro and wind turbines over producing electricity and wondered if there were opportunities to use the wind power at night to pump water up hill to create a storage of energy.

The Carbon and Energy Analyst responded that these projects do exist and that there was one in Wales.

The Principal Officer indicated that they were looking at heat storage in mines and gave the example of Jade Business Park where there was a need for offices to be cooled, there is the Hawthorn shaft with heat from the mine put into the shaft and then used later.

Councillor Brown asked about planning regulations for the conservation area to be relaxed on solar panels as some properties had been advised that there were unable to install solar panels as they are in a conservation area. She then referred to the SOSCI project funding 100 charging points across the County with the focus of the project on rural areas and asked if funding at some point would be allocated money for terraced properties in the city centres.

The Principal Officer responded that the SOSCI project was mainly for rural areas, but they had some funding to deliver extra charge points in central locations.

Councillor Dunn asked about the possibility of battery storage at large factories to capture energy generated at night.

He then thanked both members and officers for pushing the climate emergency agenda. The research and views sought from public and members of staff and the changing of direction and attitude of so many people in the last year was massive. The development of the action plan, harnessing the views and opinions and then setting out a programme of works for the next 2 years to achieve the identified targets had been a huge step forward.

He then referred to the 2 graphs for council emissions and that it was great that the target had been brought up to 80% by 2030 but looking at the graphs if the downward trajectory for council emissions at the rate it was going then the council could be carbon neutral by 2030 and the county carbon neutral by 2040. He indicated that they needed to focus on the areas where Durham County Council controlled as some things were beyond our control and needed government support.

He then referred to the 1000 new homes being built in his division over the next 5 years and commented that it would be great to see a lot of these homes carbon neutral but developers would not change unless public pressure was put on developers to make these homes carbon neutral similar to the pressure put on supermarkets to stop using plastic packaging.

He then referred to investment and commented that the quicker they move then money would be brought in that could be invested in greener council estates and supporting businesses.

Looking forward vehicle replacement the more investment the council put into the 5-year programme and commented that the possibility of replacing vehicles earlier with electric vehicles and having the charging infrastructure in place, that investment would pay off not just in terms of fuel savings but also damage to the environment.

He was surprised that the report did not include the carbon offset of the 359,000 trees to be planted against the council's targets as this would have contributed massively to offsetting carbon emissions and would achieve carbon neutrality sooner.

He referred to the Joint Stocks site at Coxhoe and commented that gas was already being pumped out of the site with 2.5 m watts going into the grid this meant that the area would be an ideal sight for a solar farm that at some point could be used to generate income for the authority.

The Chair indicated that wider partners have a big part to play.

The Principal Officer indicated that in terms of joint stocks they have been having those conversations.

The Carbon and Energy Analyst advised Members that offset emissions had not been included in Durham County Council carbon emission reductions however they could be used to offset the remaining 20%.

Councillor Milburn referred to the under capacity of substations and commented that in her ward the former Eveready site had planning permission for housing development and expressed concerns that if the housing development goes ahead the substation would not be able to cope.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee includes in its work programme for 2020/21 further progress updates on the Climate Emergency Response Plan and the Carbon Management Plan.

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



3 September 2020

**The response of
Neighbourhoods and Climate
Change to the Coronavirus
Pandemic**

**Report of Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director for Neighbourhoods
and Climate Change**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide members of the committee with a summary of the actions that the teams within Neighbourhoods and Climate Change have taken, working with partners, to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Executive summary

- 2 The highly infectious nature of the COVID 19 virus and the serious illness it can cause has significantly affected how we live, work and play. It has resulted in global adjustments to normal ways of life, travel and commerce, to try to contain the spread of the virus, minimise deaths and ensure that COVID-19 cases do not overwhelm health and social care systems. As such, the coronavirus pandemic is one of the most profound challenges society has faced in more than a generation and with effective vaccines yet to be produced, we have to anticipate that society will be affected by COVID-19 for some time to come.
- 3 The council and its partners had emergency and business continuity management planning frameworks in place, which enabled us to respond promptly to the threat as it emerged. However, we have had to respond dynamically and innovatively revising our approach as the national coronavirus action plan and recovery strategy evolved.

- 4 During late March, partly in response to the enactment of the Coronavirus Regulations, a rapid assessment of front line services was made. Libraries and leisure centres closed on 18 March, followed a few days later by decisions to close customer access points, park and ride, play areas, recycling centres, festivals and events.
- 5 Highways and construction maintenance were reduced to emergency response only with only winter maintenance continuing uninterrupted. In a number of instances, service delivery was re-designed and prioritised to enable continuity. For example, our clean and green teams no longer work in groups, so that we comply with social distancing and can continue to carry out priority work such as emptying dog waste and litter bins, spraying weeds and cutting grass with fewer staff.
- 6 Clean and green crews, along with other staff, drivers and council vehicles, have been re-deployed to ensure that we were able to maintain the weekly household refuse and recycling collection service, while complying with restrictions to the number of staff who could work in close proximity to each other or travel in the same vehicle cab.
- 7 Protecting the waste collection service during the anticipated peak of the pandemic, involved temporarily suspending the start of the garden waste collection service. However, as the council became more certain about its staffing levels we were able to re-design the collection arrangements and reinstate the service, with the collections for 2020 commencing at the beginning of May. Although refunds were offered if subscribers were not happy with the revised arrangements, we have had very few cancellations and in fact, a further 3,000 households have signed up to the service this year.
- 8 Following government advice issued on 24 April, and on a prioritised basis, we have now recommenced a number of building and highways maintenance projects. Initially, this was focussed on white-lining and carriageway resurfacing projects that would benefit from lighter than usual traffic volumes. Subsequently, other construction work followed along with footway maintenance and structural work. Full risk assessments were carried out and safe operating practices developed to ensure the safety of our employees and contractors. The trade unions were consulted and fully engaged in the process.
- 9 We also worked with the contracted provider of our household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) to reconfigure how the sites operate and the waste is handled. The amendments to the Coronavirus regulations made journeys to the recycling centres allowable from 13 May and the council's 12 HWRC sites re-opened to the public on 18 May.
- 10 The implementation of the Coronavirus regulations also introduced new responsibilities and challenges to the council's regulatory teams, for example trading standards teams and environmental health officers are

engaged in the monitoring of compliance against business closure requirements and several letters of advice and closure notices have been issued in this respect.

- 11 This report will be accompanied by a presentation by the Corporate Director reviewing the response of the front-line services.

Recommendations

- 12 That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to:
 - a) note the content of the report and presentation and comment accordingly.
 - b) Receive a further report on the response of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Service Grouping on the COVID 19 Pandemic.

Background

- 13 The council and its partners had emergency and business continuity management planning frameworks in place, which enabled us to respond promptly to the threat as it emerged. However, we have had to respond dynamically and innovatively revising our approach as the national coronavirus action plan and recovery strategy evolved.
- 14 The council has worked nationally, regionally and locally to protect our communities and to support those affected by the pandemic, economically, socially and in relation to their own physical and mental health.
- 15 County Durham communities themselves have been a major force in this and have made an immense contribution to the 'County Durham Together' response.
- 16 County Durham residents have observed and cooperated with national guidance and while the lockdown restrictions are beginning to be relaxed for many, the council will continue to support the many thousands of residents who are still shielding and self-isolating.
- 17 Council employees also have risen to the challenge and demonstrated their willingness to work flexibly, adopt new ways of working and support each other, focussing on what needs to be done to maintain services and support local communities.
- 18 Locally, the council has worked with partner agencies via the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to manage the multi-agency response to COVID-19.
- 19 The council has played a key leadership role regionally, supporting the LRF and regional health partnerships. Locally the council has focused upon the following key aspects of its own response plan:
 - a. public health and overall planning and response to the pandemic;
 - b. population health management;
 - c. community support, action and welfare support;
 - d. social care and commissioning;
 - e. support to businesses;
 - f. education and children's services;
 - g. business continuity;

- h. neighbourhood services;
 - i. on-line services;
 - j. workforce and human resource management;
 - k. testing;
 - l. recovery planning.
- 20 The council's focus has now turned to restoring council services and laying the foundations for recovering from the pandemic.
- 21 While there is a possibility that we may experience further outbreaks and pandemic peaks, recovering from COVID-19 will set the context for future community and council planning and decision-making in the county as we develop and implement the new county vision and council plan.

Neighbourhood services

- 22 During late March, partly in response to the enactment of the Coronavirus Regulations, a rapid assessment of front line services was made. Libraries and leisure centres closed on 18 March, followed a few days later by decisions to close customer access points, park and ride, play areas, recycling centres, festivals and events.
- 23 Highways and construction maintenance were reduced to emergency response only with only winter maintenance continuing uninterrupted. In a number of instances, service delivery was re-designed and prioritised to enable continuity. For example, our clean and green teams no longer work in groups, so that we comply with social distancing and can continue to carry out priority work such as emptying dog waste and litter bins, spraying weeds and cutting grass with fewer staff.
- 24 Clean and green crews, along with other staff, drivers and council vehicles, have been re-deployed to ensure that we were able to maintain the weekly household refuse and recycling collection service, while complying with restrictions to the number of staff who could work in close proximity to each other or travel in the same vehicle cab.
- 25 Protecting the waste collection service during the anticipated peak of the pandemic, involved temporarily suspending the start of the garden waste collection service. However, as the council became more certain about its staffing levels we were able to re-design the collection arrangements and reinstate the service, with the collections for 2020 commencing at the beginning of May. Although refunds were offered if subscribers were not happy with the revised arrangements, we have had very few cancellations and in fact, a further 3,000 households have signed up to the service this year.

- 26 Following government advice issued on 24 April, and on a prioritised basis, we have now recommenced a number of building and highways maintenance projects. Initially, this was focussed on white-lining and carriageway resurfacing projects that would benefit from lighter than usual traffic volumes. Subsequently, other construction work followed along with footway maintenance and structural work. Full risk assessments were carried out and safe operating practices developed to ensure the safety of our employees and contractors. The trade unions were consulted and fully engaged in the process.
- 27 We also worked with the contracted provider of our household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) to reconfigure how the sites operate and the waste is handled. The amendments to the Coronavirus regulations made journeys to the recycling centres allowable from 13 May and the council's 12 HWRC sites re-opened to the public on 18 May.
- 28 The implementation of the Coronavirus regulations also introduced new responsibilities and challenges to the council's regulatory teams, for example trading standards teams and environmental health officers are engaged in the monitoring of compliance against business closure requirements and several letters of advice and closure notices have been issued in this respect.

Conclusion

- 29 The coronavirus pandemic is one of the most profound challenges society has faced in more than a generation.
- 30 Previous pandemics have lasted a number of years and with effective coronavirus vaccines yet to be produced, we have to anticipate that society will be affected by COVID-19 for some time to come.
- 31 The council and its partners had emergency and business continuity management planning frameworks in place, which enabled us to prepare and respond promptly to the threat as it emerged. However, we have had to respond dynamically and innovatively as the pandemic developed, revising our approach as the national coronavirus action plan and recovery strategy evolved.
- 32 In line with the national response, the council has worked regionally and locally to protect our communities from the virus and to support those affected by the pandemic, economically, socially and in relation to their own physical and mental health. County Durham communities themselves have been a major force in this and have made an immense contribution to the 'County Durham Together' response.
- 33 Council employees also have risen to the challenge. In line with our council values, they have demonstrated their willingness to work flexibly,

adopt new ways of working and support each other, focussing on what needs to be done to maintain services and support local communities.

- 34 Our focus has now turned to restoring council services and laying the foundations for recovering from the pandemic. While there is a possibility that we may experience secondary outbreaks and pandemic peaks, recovering from COVID-19 will set the context for future community and council planning and decision-making in the county as we develop and implement the new county vision and council plan, within the context of the significant financial pressures we can expect to face.

Background papers

- None

Contact: Alan.Patrickson@Durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Under section 2B NHS Act 2006 (inserted by Section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012), local authorities have a statutory duty to take such steps as they consider appropriate for improving the health of the people in their area.

The Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013 (SI 2013/351) make provision for the steps to be taken by local authorities in exercising their public health functions. This includes providing information and advice for the purpose of protecting individuals in the area of the authority from events or occurrences which threaten, or are liable to threaten, their health, and may in particular include arrangements to deal with infectious diseases.

Section 73A (1) of the 2006 Act, (inserted by section 30 of the 2012 Act), gives the Director of Public Health responsibility for exercising their local authority's functions in planning for, and responding to, emergencies that present a risk to the public's health.

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, local authorities also have a duty to collaborate with others to protect the public, which includes promoting business continuity and resilience. The council is designated as a category one responder under the Act, and as such collaborates with other agencies through the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 gives further powers to government to slow the spread of the virus; reduce the resourcing and administrative burden on public bodies; and limit the impact of potential staffing shortages on the delivery of public services. Under regulation, this includes postponing local elections including that of the County Durham and Darlington Police and Crime Commissioner due in May 2020, postponing the annual meeting of the council and allowing existing postholders to continue in office until an annual meeting is able to be held; and introducing 'virtual' council and committee meetings in the light of the lockdown and ongoing social distancing measures.

Finance

The council has been allocated government grants to help cover the additional costs and lost income associated with coronavirus.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable.

Climate Change

The lockdown and reduction in traffic and building use has generally been seen as having a number of environmental benefits including reduction in noise, light and air pollution, emissions and carbon reduction. Aspects of this may continue with walking and cycling being promoted as safer, socially-distanced modes of travel.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable.

Staffing

500 employees were redeployed during the COVID-19 response and all of the council's main HR policies and procedures were revised as part of a comprehensive emergency HR policy.

Accommodation

It has been necessary to close a number of council premises as part of the national lock-down and in some instances, where the council is an accommodation provider to business/commercial tenants, rent and/or rates relief has been offered to support tenants during the lockdown. A Facilities Management Task and Finish Group has been established under the council's recovery and restoration plan, to ensure that closed premises are re-commissioned and safe before they are opened again.

Risk

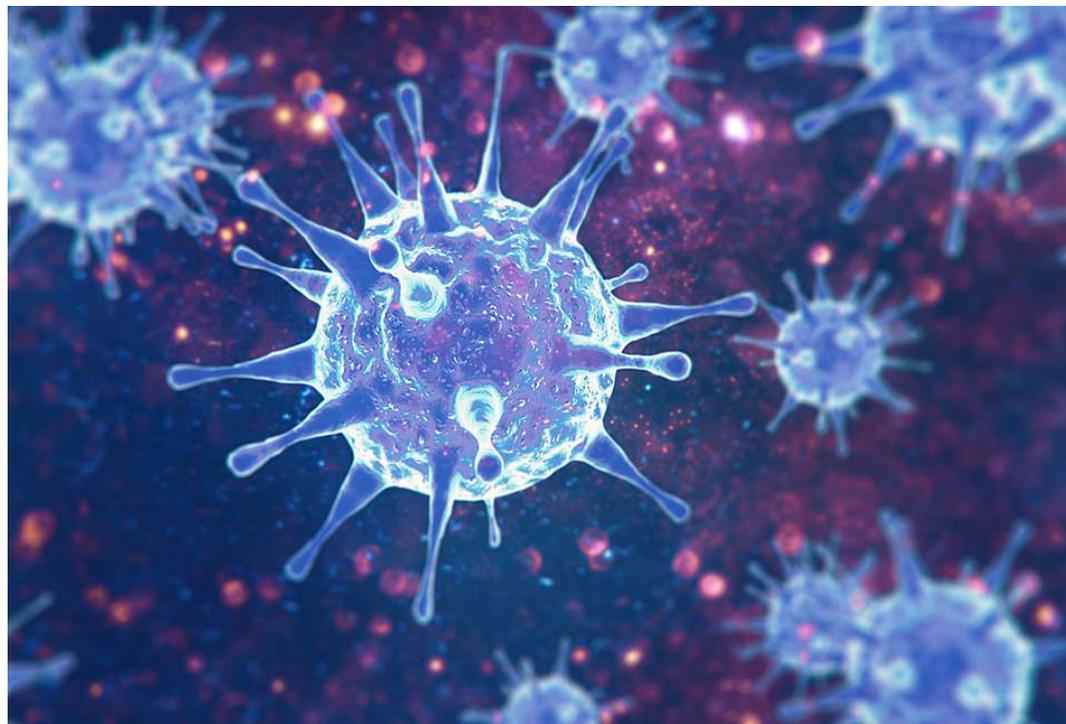
A risk assessment of the impact of the pandemic has been undertaken by a risk management task and finish group as part of the council's governance arrangements. Risk assessments have been undertaken as part of the council's business continuity and response arrangements to ensure the health and safety of staff, volunteers and service users.

Procurement

In order to respond to the pressures the council faced, emergency procurement procedures were adopted in line with government coronavirus legislation and procurement regulations.

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Neighbourhoods & Climate Change



COVID-19 Pandemic

Altogether better





Environment Services



Altogether better



Refuse and Recycling

- Public support and recognition for key workers.
- Garden waste crews and vehicles support Tuesday to Friday main rounds.
- Garden waste moved to Saturday/Monday with increased customers (over 65,000).
- Fleet maintenance service operational to support safety on all vehicles and plant.
- Household waste recycling centres closed and reopened with traffic management plans and social distancing.

At the same time: Major multi Council agreement on waste procurement post 2025

Altogether better



Parks and Open Spaces

- Services maintained but scaled back and prioritised to parks, cemeteries.
- Winter bedding put to use, and services now resumed with summer bedding and grass cutting.
- Play areas – closure and risk assessed reopening of 177 plus 40 MUGAs
- Binchester re-opened.
- On with – reopening Pavilions.



Altogether better

Pulling together

- Bereavement services – shift patterns and temporary cremator.
- Wardens redeployed (eg food parcel, bereavement, HWRC)
- Volunteers from other services eg highways, culture and sport support refuse collection.
- Pest control – substantial increase in domestic calls. Staff even redeployed to support.
- Climate Change – many of the key projects (eg Morrison Busty depot still progressing)



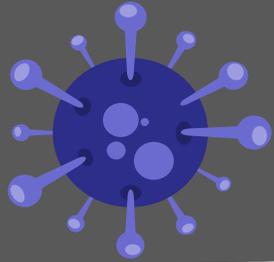


Community Protection



Altogether better





Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Community Protection Service Response



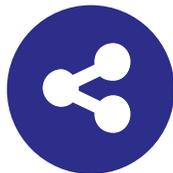
COVID-19 Compliance

Responsible for the enforcement of Health Protection Regulations and Health & Safety in the workplace to ensure COVID -19 compliance.



Business Support

Providing direct advice to local businesses on implementation of COVID-19 restrictions including proposals for re-openings and diversification



Local Outbreak Management & Control

Manage and control local COVID-19 outbreaks including supporting Test and Trace / Mobile Testing arrangements. New powers introduced to close individual premises, events and public places where there is a significant risk of COVID-19 infection.



Altogether better





Health Protection



- >880 COVID-19 compliance concerns
- Issued 13 Prohibition Notices to close premises
- COVID-19 Outbreak Investigation & Control
- Supported on site Mobile Testing Unit

ASB / Nuisance



2053 nuisance complaints received during lockdown. The main causes of complaint were Noise (1459) and Smoke (497)

Unauthorised Encampments.



86 Unauthorised Encampments with over 1,100 people encamped.

Business Support



>1078 business provided with COVID-19 compliance advice since start of lockdown.

Community Resilience



Community Resilience Team is being created to build capacity within the service to investigate covid-19 outbreaks, investigate local outbreaks and enforce Direction to close premises, events and public places

Altogether better





Technical Services



Altogether better



The pandemic of COVID-19 has had an extraordinary effect on all services:

- Lockdown March 2020
- All but critical/emergency services ceased
- Restrictions and guidance from Public Health England (PHE) and Department for Transport (DfT)
- The Authority focused on statutory obligations
 - Highway Inspections
 - Emergency Repairs
 - Road Traffic Accidents and clean-up
 - Street Lighting/Column Knockdowns

Altogether better



Health and Safety implications:

- Social Distancing
- Cleaning, Hygiene and Hand Sanitiser
- Transport to work
- Single Vehicle Occupancy
- Protect Vulnerable Workers
- Making the workplace COVID-19 secure
- Depot and Building Risk Assessments
- Communicating our essential services with General Public
- Face Coverings
- Site and Vehicle Signage



Altogether better





“Covid-19 – General Advice”

Guidance to help apply government guidelines while using work vehicles and undertaking general work duties. The advice given in this document is based on current information from Public Health England, if further guidance is provided staff will be updated with any additional controls

Government guidance for COVID-19 remains focused on *Work from home, if you can*. Whether working at home or working at your normal place of work delivering justified services, the following government guidance should be adhered to by all staff.



We can help control the virus

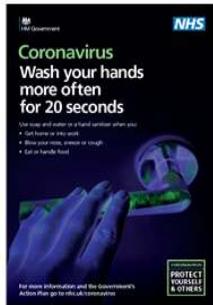
- Stay at home as much as possible
- Work from home if you can
- Limit contact with other people
- Keep your distance if you go out (2m where possible)
- Wash your hands regularly
- Do not leave home if you or someone in your household has symptoms

For more information visit www.durham.gov.uk/coronavirus

For those working to deliver justified services the following guidance should be adhered to:

General

- If you have any symptoms or live with those who have symptoms associated with Covid-19 do not attend work and contact your line manager. If you become unwell whilst at work, speak to your manager via telephone immediately.
- Stay safe and take responsibility for your own health and that of others by adhering to the guidance from the government



- Where social distancing cannot be achieved then you should inform your line manager who will review the activity. A facial covering will be provided in specific circumstances such as not being able to maintain social distancing in an enclosed space or work environment such as in some vehicles and restricted spaces. Your line manager will also provide details on how to obtain facial coverings where these are required.
- Where facial coverings are provided you are encouraged to wear it. If worn, a facial covering should cover the mouth and nose, but should not be worn if you have a respiratory condition.

Altogether better

- Safe operating procedures and risk assessments.
- Working closely with Health and Safety Teams.
- Toolbox Talks developed outlining key messages
- Delivered to all operational staff



The key areas where activities resumed included:

- Road surfacing schemes
- Highway and Footway maintenance schemes
- Specialist surfacing schemes (surface dressing and micro asphalt)
- White Lining and Cats Eyes
- Gully Cleansing and maintenance
- Street Lighting maintenance
- Bridges and Structures maintenance



Altogether better

Junction 61 – Bowburn Interchange

- Critical Highway projects safely delivered during the pandemic:
- A1(M) / A688 Interchange Improvements
- Integra 61 / Amazon
- Business Park / Economic Growth
- See drone footage



Altogether better

New Elvet Bridge

- Risk of failure – essential maintenance
- Renewal of Bridge half joints
- Major refurbishment
- 14 months project - £7.3m
- Traffic flows at a minimum (75% of normal)
- See link to video
- <https://www.facebook.com/durhamcouncil/videos/new-elvet-bridge-works/1119685731738259/>



Altogether better



Witton Park Bridge

- Links communities
- Failed structure
- Closed to all traffic
- Full bridge deck replacement underway
- Completion later this year



Altogether better

Chester le Street De-Culverting:

- Safely managed under COVID-19 restrictions
- Additional H&S measures in place
- Complete September 2020



Altogether better



PPE Distribution Cell - Chilton

- Shortage of PPE nationally
- Frontline care services struggling to cope
- Limited stock and difficulties in distribution
- DCC/ LRF distribution cell
- Critical supplies delivered to:
 - Care Homes
 - Children and Young People's Services
 - Adult and Health Services
 - Durham County Care and Support
 - Durham Pathways
 - DCC Care Connect
- First operational cell nationally



Altogether better



Partnerships and Community Engagement



Altogether better



- Establishment of the COVID-19 Community Hub which took 6506 calls, primarily staffed in its early weeks with AAP and Partnerships staff who also ensured Locate was up to date with information on COVID-19 support.

Coronavirus Support in County Durham

Following current government advice people who have certain medical conditions must be protected and isolated in order to be shielded from coronavirus.

Many people will be getting help and support from friends, relatives, local groups and existing services; all of which remain the first point of contact during this period.

We understand that the measures put in place to protect people from coronavirus could be making life very difficult for people to access essential supplies and engage in social contact. We are here to help.

County Durham Together is a multi-agency community hub that is led and coordinated by Durham County Council. We want to make sure you get the help and support you need, either through established networks or directly from us.

You can find a list of local support groups and organisations that provide assistance on the council's 'Locate' website [locate](https://www.durhamlocate.org.uk)

www.durhamlocate.org.uk on the coronavirus section which will guide you to the help you need.

#CountyDurhamTogether

Delivered by ROYAL MAIL
POSTAGE PAID: 03
H000024

If undelivered, please return to Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham, DH1 1SL

How can I get additional support?

If you don't have anyone to pick up medication, please contact your GP or community pharmacy.

If you are unable to access support for help with essentials such as food supplies, or someone who can listen, talk and support you, please contact us:

Call: 03000 260 260 Email: communityhub@durham.gov.uk

Or fill in our **Covid 19 Help form on our website www.durham.gov.uk/covid19help** and we will connect you to the help you need.

Our current opening hours are Monday- Friday, 9am-5pm and weekends and bank holidays 10am-3pm.

You can always get our latest coronavirus information and advice at www.durham.gov.uk

You may not need our services now but please keep this flyer in a safe place and should your circumstances change please get in touch.

Do you know someone who may wish to join our community hub volunteering centre?

If you or someone you know are in a local voluntary group, local business or other agency offering help in the community, you can join our community hub to help people find support in this time of crisis. It's free, and you would need to fill in our form at www.durham.gov.uk/covid19volunteer or call **03000 260 260**.

You will receive a call to verify your details and your service will be added to Locate. This will help people in need find information about the service.

#CountyDurhamTogether

Altogether better



- Creation of the COVID-19 Volunteering Unit that received offers of help to provide COVID-19 support from 430 individuals and 27 business.



Coastguard



Refuse Café/Fire Service

Altogether better



- Delivery of COVID-19 Emergency Relief funding through AAPs and member's Neighbourhood Budgets to 334 projects, totalling £1.44 million of investment to help sustain struggling VCS groups as well as groups provide vital support such as access to food and help tackling isolation.



Derwentside Trust



Dawdon Youth & Community Centre



Jack Drum Arts



Meal Orchard

Altogether better



- AAP Boards are now fully concentrating on COVID-19 recovery with all of their annual budget focussed on this issue – totalling £144,902 for each AAP.
- AAP teams have not only supported projects with staff, a number have been hands on e.g. 4 Together office used as a base for food donations
- Partnership Manager one of two Multi-Agency Information Cell managers, a 24 hour service to ensure the LRF effectively managed data and information.
- The CCU have been fundamental to helping the Council and the LRF coordinate its efforts throughout the crisis, from initially co-ordinating a number of preparation exercises, coordinating food boxes in the first weeks of the pandemic to latterly coordinating the mobile testing units.



Altogether better

The new normal:

- COVID-19 will be with us for the foreseeable future
- Continue to focus on essential front line activities
- Keeping staff safe
- Maximise business as usual opportunities
- Acknowledge, predict, respond and react to behavioural changes
- Preparation where possible
- Work towards saving jobs, safeguarding local supply chain and economic growth

Altogether better



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



3 September 2020

**Refresh of the Work Programme
2020/21 for Environment and
Sustainable Communities OSC**

Report of John Hewitt, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ESC OSC) with an updated work programme for 2020/21.

Executive summary

- 2 Overview and Scrutiny work programmes are designed to be flexible to accommodate items which may arise throughout the year. For 2020/21 this flexibility is essential to enable the scrutiny function to respond to the changing landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3 The proposed ESC OSC work programme has been framed around COVID-19 and in the context of the new shared County Durham vision 2035 which has been developed with partners around three strategic ambitions – ‘more and better jobs’, ‘long and independent lives’ and ‘connected communities.
- 4 ESC OSC work programme has been developed to reflect new powers which enable local government meetings to be held remotely during this period. Holding virtual meetings has prompted us to consider how best to carry out the scrutiny role in these new and challenging circumstances.

Recommendations

- 5 Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to:
- a) Receive and comment on the proposed work programme for 2020/21.
 - b) Agree the work programme for 2020/21 as attached at appendix 2 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues.

Background

- 6 Scrutiny has adapted to the unprecedented situation of a global pandemic with a flexible and pragmatic approach to the 2020/21 work programme. New regulations enable committee meetings to be held remotely and formal scrutiny meetings will be held virtually for the foreseeable future.
- 7 To assist with the new approach to meetings we propose to keep agendas short to ensure meeting time is focussed on those matters which are the highest priority. Where agreed by the Committee, regular overview reports will instead be circulated separately via email for comment and information. We hope by doing so, we can help make progress of moving meetings on-line as smooth as possible and manage our workload efficiently and effectively.
- 8 As we all become more familiar with holding remote meetings, we will review our agendas and work programmes with the Chair and Vice Chair and make any necessary changes in consultation with the Committee.
- 9 This prioritisation of the work programme will enable the scrutiny function to operate flexibly and take into consideration any changing national, regional or local responses to COVID-19 pandemic.
- 10 The overview and scrutiny committee's work programmes are informed by:
- County Durham Vision 2035
 - Council Plan
 - Cabinet's Notice of Key Decisions
 - Partnership Plans and Strategies
 - Performance and Budgetary control data
 - Changes in government legislation
 - Key questions for improving performance.
- 11 In addition, scrutiny work programmes are informed by the four priorities of Inspire, the Council's Transformation Programme:

- Redesign our services to better meet the customer's need at reduced cost to the Council
- Help communities become more resilient and self-reliant
- To move our partnership working from good to great
- To become renowned for our skilled and flexible workforce and our employee engagement.

ESC OSC Work Programme

12 During 2019/20 the ESC OSC has undertaken budgetary and performance monitoring, review activity, responded to consultations and considered overview and progress monitoring reports and presentations in relation to the following:

- Review activity
 - Durham County Council's Proposed Allotment Policy
- Consultations
 - Climate Emergency Response Plan
- Areas of overview and monitoring activity
 - Strategic Walking and Cycling Plan
 - Single Use Plastics
 - Fly Tipping in the county
 - Operation Spruce Up
 - Street Lighting Overview
 - Woodland Management
 - Air Quality Management in the county
 - DCC's Fleet Management
 - Business Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP 2)
 - Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham
 - Leisure Centres Transformation
 - Gala Theatre
 - External Low Carbon Funding
 - Fuel Poverty in the county
 - Carbon Management Plan
 - Climate Emergency Response Plan
 - Highways Maintenance
 - Heritage Coast and Tourism
 - Heritage Assets

13 Budgetary and performance monitoring:

- Quarterly budgetary monitoring for the Regeneration and Local Services (Neighbourhoods and Climate Change) Service Grouping.
- Quarterly corporate performance monitoring for the Regeneration and Local Services (Neighbourhoods and Climate Change) Service Grouping.

Areas for Consideration in the ESC OSC Work Programme

- 14 Members of the ESC OSC are asked to agree the proposed work programme for 2020/21 that has been prepared and is attached at appendix two. The work programme is very comprehensive drawing on topical areas across the remit of the committee and it should be noted that it is also flexible.
- 15 The work programme includes an indication of those reports which will be considered by ESC OSC at a remote meeting and those which will be circulated to members. The dates when reports are taken to ESC OSC or circulated may flex with the additional demands on and the capacity of services during the COVID-19 response period.

Conclusion

- 16 The work programme identifies areas of work that fall within the remit of ESC OSC and is flexible in its delivery.

Background papers

- None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Climate Change

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

The Overview and Scrutiny work programme is an important element of the Council's governance and risk management arrangements.

Procurement

Not applicable

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<p>Overview and Scrutiny Draft Work Programme 2020/21</p> <p>Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Lead Officer: Tom Gorman</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Officers: Diane Close and Ann Whitton</p> <p>Oliver Sherratt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected communities • People live long and independent lives 	<p>Note:</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Review – A systematic six monthly review of progress against recommendations/action plan</p> <p>Scrutiny/Working Group – In-depth review/light touch review</p> <p>Overview/progress – Information on an issue; opportunity to comment, shape, influence, progress with a scrutiny review</p> <p>Performance/Budget – Ongoing quarterly monitoring performance reports/budgets</p>
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Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to ESC • circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
O/S Review					
Scrutiny/Working Group (light touch / in-depth review)					

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> report to ESC circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Refuse and Recycling collection Review	ESC OSC 2021/22 work programme TBD	Report to ESC OSC	Diane Close/Ann Whitton (Resources)	Members will consider the proposed ToR and project plan for a possible review to be undertaken as part of the 2021/22 work programme	Members will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed ToR and project plan for a review focusing on refuse and recycling collection
Overview/Progress					
Impact of COVID-19 on key service areas	3 September 2020 12 March TBD	Report to ESC OSC	Alan Patrickson	Members will receive detail of the impact of COVID-19 on key service areas and the response taken	Members will be aware of the impact of COVID-19 on key service areas and the response taken including future actions

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to ESC • circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Highways and Bridge Maintenance	ESC OSC 5 February 2021 TBD	Report to ESC OSC (Invite E&E OSC)	Brian Buckley	Members will receive further detail of the work currently undertaken and issues/challenges in relation to highways and bridge maintenance	The committee will be able to monitor the progress made by the authority in relation to highways and bridge maintenance in the county
Refuse and recycling Service	16 November 2020	Report to ESC OSC	Oliver Sherratt	Members will receive an overview of the refuse and recycling service including detail of the impact of COVID-19 and the response	Members will be aware of the service provided, the impact of COVID-19 and the response

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> report to ESC circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Environmental Campaigns including fly-tipping	16 November 2020	Report to ESC OSC (Invite S&S OSC)	Ian Hault	Members will receive detail of various environmental campaigns undertaken by DCC including those undertaken with partners. The information will include fly-tipping statistics, various initiatives undertaken by DCC and partners to tackle this issue and the impact of COVID-19	Members will be aware of the various environmental campaigns undertaken by DCC and partners including those targeting fly-tipping in the county and the results to date. They will also be aware of the impact of COVID 19 on the number of fly tipping incidents

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to ESC • circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Bereavement Services	16 November 2020	Report to ESC OSC	Ian Hoult	Members will receive an overview of DCC Bereavement Services in relation to cemeteries and crematoria and the impact of COVID-19 on the service	The Committee will be aware of what DCC offers in relation to bereavement services
Air Quality	19 January 2021 TBD	Report to ESC OSC	Denyse Holman / Dave Wafer	To provide members of the committee with further detail of air quality management arrangements in County Durham including the impact of COVID-19 on air quality and how this affects management plans	Members will be aware of progress made in relation to the air quality management arrangements in County Durham

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to ESC • circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Fuel Poverty	19 January 2021 TBD	Report to ESC OSC (Invite E&E OSC and AWH OSC)	Cliff Duff	The committee will receive current information on fuel poverty in the county and a progress update on the various projects running in the county to help tackle this issue	Members will be made aware of the current level of fuel poverty in the county and the various projects taking place and planned to help tackle this issue
Flood Risk Management Authorities	5 February 2021 TBD	Report to ESC OSC	Brian Weatherall	Members of the committee will receive further information from the Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham on current and future projects, funding, partnership working and any issue/challenges	The committee will be undertaking its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> report to ESC circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Climate Emergency Response Plan	12 March 2021 TBD	Report to ESC OSC (All O&S members to be invited)	Stephen McDonald	The committee will receive information on the progress of the plan and the impact of COVID-19	Members will be updated with the progress of the Climate Emergency Response Plan
Carbon Management Plan	12 March 2021 TBD	Report to ESC OSC	Stephen McDonald	The committee will receive detail of projects undertaken by DCC to reduce its carbon emissions and detail of how COVID-19 has impacted on the plan	Members will be aware of the progress made by DCC in reducing carbon emissions
Museums & Libraries	12 March 2021 TBD	Report to ESC OSC (E&E OSC members to be invited)	Allison Clarke	To provide members with an overview of the work of the service	The committee will be aware of the work of the service.

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to ESC • circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Community Action Team	September 2020	Brief to be circulated to ESC OSC and S&S OSC Members	Jennifer Jones	The Committee will receive a progress update that will detail of Community Action Team programmes	Members will be aware of CAT programmes across County Durham
Heritage Coast and Tourism Offer	November 2020	Brief to be circulated to ESC OSC and E&E OSC Members	Niall Benson/ Michelle Gorman	The committee will receive detail of the development of the Heritage Coast and proposals for the future including plans for building the tourism offer	Members will have knowledge of how the Heritage Coast has been developed and future plans including building the tourism offer

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> report to ESC circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Environment Partnership	November 2020	Brief to be circulated to ESC OSC Members	Steve Bhowmick & Glenn Robinson	Members will receive detail of the partnership's priorities, structure and future activities	Members will know the priorities of the partnership, it's structure and future activities
EU and other funding	December 2020	Brief to be circulated to ESC OSC Members	Maggie Bosanquet	Members will receive detail of EU and other funding used to develop projects/initiatives in the county and any future projects	Members will be aware of the various funded projects/initiatives in the county and any future projects
DCC Fleet	December 2020	Brief to be circulated to ESC OSC and E&E OSC Members	Michael Toas	The committee will receive progress on the management of DCC's Fleet including detail of measures implemented to reduce carbon emissions	Members will be aware of how DCC's fleet is managed and work currently undertaken to reduce carbon emission and

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to ESC • circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
					plans to further reduce emissions
Leisure Centre Transformation	October 2020	Brief to be circulated to all O&S Members	Allison Clarke	To provide members with a progress update on the transformation of the leisure centres and an opportunity to input into the consultation	Members will be aware of the timeline of the consultation and the progress made with the transformation programme
Heritage Assets	February 2021	Brief to be circulated to ESC OSC Members	Steve Bhowmick	The Committee will receive detail of the County's Heritage Assets including challenges and opportunities	Members will be aware of the range of the County's heritage assets and how DCC maintains and manages these assets

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to ESC • circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Gala Theatre	October 2020	Brief to be circulated to ESC OSC and E&E OSC Members	Helen Ross	To provide members with a progress update on the proposed future management of the Gala Theatre and provide detail on plans and performance	Members will be aware of proposals for the future management of the Gala theatre including work to be undertaken to address future challenges
Stockton and Darlington Bicentennial Celebrations	November 2020	Brief to be circulated to ESC OSC and E&E OSC Members	Allison Clarke	To provide Members with a progress update on the bicentennial celebrations and DCCs involvement in them	The Committee will be aware of the progress being made on the bicentennial celebrations.

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to ESC • circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Urban Tree Challenge	September 2020	Brief to be circulated to ESC OSC Members	Sue Mullinger	To provide members on the progress of the Urban Tree Challenge	The Committee will be aware of the identified areas and the progress made against the challenge
Sustainable Travel – Walking and Cycling Plan	January 2021	Brief to be circulated to ESC OSC Members	Victoria Lloyd Gent	Members will be provided with detail of progress made in relation to the Strategic Walking and Cycling Delivery Plan and local plans.	The Committee will be aware of the progress made with the delivery plan and local plans.

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to ESC • circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Single Use Plastics	February 2021	Brief to be circulated to ESC OSC Members	Oliver Sherratt Victoria Burrell	To provide members with an update on progress made in relation to the actions identified in the Environment Partnership Task Group report 'Phasing Out Unnecessary Single Use Plastics'	The committee agreed to monitor the progress made against the action plan of the 'Phasing Out Unnecessary Single Use Plastics' report of the Environment Partnership
Lanchester Wines	May 2021 TBD	Visit		To provide members with an opportunity to see a carbon neutral site in operation	Members will be aware of carbon neutral opportunities open to businesses

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> report to ESC circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Performance/Budget					
Performance Quarterly reporting	Nov 2020. Nov 2020 Jan 2021 March 2021 TBD	Report to ESC OSC	Tom Gorman (Resources)	To provide members with progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework.	Summary information to Members
Budget Outturn Report Quarterly reporting -	Nov 2020 Nov 2020 Jan 2021 March 2021 TBD	Report to ESC OSC	Phil Curran (Resources)	Detail of budget	Summary information to Members
Minutes					
CDEP Minutes	TBC	Minutes to be circulated to ESC OSC members	Partnership Team	Members will be kept updated on the activity of the partnership	The committee will be aware of activity undertaken by the partnership

Item	When (Subject to management arrangements for remote meetings)	Priority during COVID-19 response period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to ESC • circulate to ESC members via email 	Who	Outcome	Comment
Minutes of Regional and local flooding bodies/committees	TBC	Minutes to be circulated to ESC OSC members	Brian Weatherall	Members will be kept updated on the activity of FRMAs	The committee will be aware of activity undertaken by the FRMAs

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