



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

**Date** Monday 28 March 2022  
**Time** 9.30 am  
**Venue** Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham

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### **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 13 December 2021, 18 January 2022 and 14 February 2022 (Pages 3 - 32)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested parties
6. Leisure Transformation
  - a) Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 33 - 46)
  - b) Presentation by the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 47 - 58)
7. Draft Physical Activity Strategic Delivery Framework - Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 59 - 68)
8. Quarter 3: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/22 - Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change (Pages 69 - 80)
9. Quarter Three 2021/22, Performance Management Report - Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 81 - 96)

10. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

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

County Hall  
Durham  
18 March 2022

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

Councillor B Coult (Chair)  
Councillor J Elmer (Vice-Chair)

Councillors E Adam, P Atkinson, L Brown, J Charlton, L Fenwick, G Hutchinson, C Kay, C Lines, R Manchester, C Martin, B McAloon, I McLean, D Nicholls, R Potts, J Purvis, J Quinn, T Stubbs and S Townsend

**Co-opted Members**

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Holding

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## DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Special Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 13 December 2021 at 9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor B Coult (Chair)**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors J Elmer, E Adam, P Atkinson, L Brown, J Charlton, L Fenwick, C Lines, R Manchester, D Nicholls, J Purvis, J Quinn, T Stubbs and S Townsend

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Hutchinson, C Kay, B McAloon, I McLean and Mrs P Holding.

### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor D Nicholls informed the meeting that his spouse worked for the British Ecological Society.

### **4 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

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

### **5 Question to Council on 22 September 2021 - Ecological Emergency**

The Chair welcomed Oliver Sherratt, Head of Environment and Stuart Priestley, Principal Ecologist to the meeting.

Ann Whitton, Overview and Scrutiny Officer introduced the report outlining that the review activity was as a result of a report to Cabinet on 13 October entitled 'Consideration of an Ecological Emergency in County Durham' and asked Councillor Elmer, Vice Chair to provide context to the question.

Councillor Elmer highlighted that this was a very important area hence the question to Council in September asking that the authority consider declaring an emergency and take the same approach as it had in declaring a climate emergency. He continued that the collapse of ecosystems was item four on the World Risk Register and was fundamental to our survival as a human race and that not protecting ecosystems could lead to global incidents such as a pandemic.

Councillor Elmer advised that there was evidence of a global and national decline of ecosystems but data as to whether this constituted a countywide emergency was less definitive. Councillor Elmer added that based on global and national data it was warranted to justify an ecological emergency but it was less clear whether the data available was sufficient to justify a countywide emergency. He continued that the Environment Act 2021 placed responsibilities on the County Council to map habitats at a county level and look at the gaps but did not ask the County Council to look across council services to address and identify actions to help repair and develop habitats in the county.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **6 Consideration of an Ecological Emergency**

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change regarding the declaration of an ecological emergency (for copy see file of Minutes) and received a presentation from the Head of Environment and the Principal Ecologist (for slides see file of Minutes).

The Head of Environment referred to the report to Cabinet on 13 October which was an overview report looking at the national picture and requesting Scrutiny to look at this issue and examine the available evidence to determine whether an ecological emergency needed to be declared with Scrutiny providing a response to Cabinet with recommendations within a six-month period. The Head of Environment highlighted that the information had limitations and that the Committee would need to determine whether it had enough information to make a decision. The Committee may wish to provide feedback to Cabinet in relation to the evidence available at a local level and defer making a decision or decide whether based on the information available they were either going to declare or not declare. The Head of Environment highlighted the decline in species and gave an example of looking at wildlife living in a stream and the closer the stream got to sewerage outlets the wildlife became less and that when wildlife became depleted this could tell us a lot about ourselves as wildlife had benefits for all as everybody was dependent on healthy resilient ecosystems. Once wildlife had gone it had gone for good.

The Head of Environment advised that wildlife was a key feature in tourism and recreation and gave an example that Sea Eagles on the coast could increase visitor numbers. Wildlife enriched the quality of life. There were strong links to climate

change because the loss of wildlife could be an indicator of pollutants in either water courses or the earth.

The Principal Ecologist informed the Committee that the presentation included readily available data with international and national data based on United Nations and UK Government reports, local data based on previous audits, species atlases, Durham County Council green mapping, Ancient Woodland and data from Natural England and the Environment Agency. In addition, discussions had been held with various organisations including Durham Wildlife Trust, Durham Bird Club and the Environment Agency. In relation to global data the data available was summarised and was taken from global sources such as the Living Planet Index which was key and gave information on thousands of populations and indicated an alarming decline in species due to development and deforestation. More than 85% of area of wetlands had been lost, which was very significant. National data was taken from a variety of UK government reports and provided a similar picture to global data which showed a decline in wildlife. The 1970s baseline showed changes in wildlife and habitats that gave a clear national picture. However, this decline in habitats and species predated the 1970's baseline and the baseline was already low when tracking of the decline started in 1970's.

The Principal Ecologist outlined that moving from national data to regional and then local data resulted in the picture becoming less clear and there was less confidence in the data, so local data gave a picture that came with a health warning. Local information had been collated from Sites of Significant Scientific Interest (SSSI) data from Natural England, re-survey of the Local Wildlife Sites, information from Durham County Council Green Infrastructure Mapping and Ancient Woodland Inventory and the Environment Agency.

In relation to habitats in SSSIs the data was good. Data from Natural England on SSSIs indicated that a large proportion of sites were in an unfavourable condition. SSSIs were of national importance for biodiversity. The County Council had carried out condition assessments of 42% of local wildlife sites and of those approximately 70% failed due to compartments being in unfavourable condition, usually due to inappropriate management. There was good data to show condition of Local Wildlife Sites which were designated as they were locally important for biodiversity.

In relation to woodlands, there had been a loss of a quarter of Durham's ancient woodland since the 1920s and the ancient woodland left was usually located adjacent to watercourses with steep valleys where it was impossible to plough. The functionality of woodlands was 10 hectares or above and the majority of County Durham's woodlands were too small to be regarded as functional. Small areas of woodland allowed more light and wind into the core therefore the smaller the woodland area the more impoverished it became. Ancient Woodland was categorised into two types, Broadleaf and Planted Ancient Woodland (PAWS) that were planted with non-native species. Although PAWS were regarded as ancient woodland (soils and woodland cover retained), they could not be regarded as being

in good condition and a significant proportion of ancient woodland was impoverished PAWS.

The Water Framework Directive was intended to achieve a good status of all waterbodies. This was EU legislation that was still viable, and the Environment Agency carried out water quality improvements with the aim to get waterways in good condition. There were no high-quality waterways in County Durham. The vast majority of both the Wear and the Tees were classified as being in a moderate to poor condition and were not reaching the respective targets in the Water Framework Directives.

Data on habitats was good and supported the national data, but data on species was less so as there was often no clear data to show trends across periods of time, The records were ad hoc.

The Principal Ecologist informed the Committee that in relation to Durham priority birds the atlas provided 'guiding statement' trends between 1985 and 1995. In relation to coastal birds data which was available that showed an increase in 4 species of bird, a slight decrease in 3 and a stable population in 1 species, however there was no data available for 9 species of coastal birds. There was more data available for farmland birds which indicated that 7 species had decreased plus a further 3 species had experienced a slight decrease. There was a clear decrease in Farmland birds. Similarly, the data available showed a decline in upland and scrub and woodland birds although data was not available for 4 species of upland birds and 5 species of woodland and scrub birds. There was also a decline in the number of urban and garden birds although there was no data available for 5 species.

In relation to priority mammals, there were 17 priority mammals and herptiles in County Durham and there were clear trends for five species. There had been a catastrophic decline in Water Vole numbers in County Durham and this followed the national trend with a loss from approximately 90% of range in the late 1990's and a further 30% loss between 2006 and 2015. The other species included the great crested newt, grass snakes, common lizard, and red squirrel all of which had seen a decline in populations or distribution.

The first recorded data of Bumblebees was from the 1800s, and there was now a four species that were extinct and two others were declining or had declined.

There were seven priority butterfly species in County Durham and key butterfly species were declining. However, in relation to the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary and the Dark Green Fritillary active management had been undertaken, working with farmers to create breeding areas and increase numbers, although the declines had not been reversed.

The salmon population which had increased when issues with pollution were resolved, but fish counter data on the Wear and Tees indicated a recent decline.

The assessment of populations and probability of achieving management objectives in relation to the salmon population was at risk in the Tees with less than a 5% chance, the prognosis for the Wear was slightly better currently they were not at risk with a 50 -95% but the projection for 2025 is that they would probably be at risk (5 - 50%) of not achieving management objectives.

Members were advised of positive information in relation to some species declines being reversed such as otters and small pearl bordered fritillary but there was a need for caution as the numbers were not at the level they previously were. Work had been undertaken in the county to create habitats and to restore habitats with work undertaken by Durham Heritage Coast, NPAONB and Woodland Revival projects.

The Head of Environment informed the Committee that even the most protected sites were showing signs of decline and these trends in County Durham were being reflected nationally. There was strong evidence of international and national decline and although the local data was not perfect it did mirror this. Although the Environment Act 2021 had details for Durham County Council to follow it did not state about determining whether there was a need to declare an ecological emergency. Durham County Council was a major landowner in County Durham that included 92 local wildlife sites and a wide estate of public open space and that even on SSSI sites there is a decline in species. Members were advised that any declaration would be more effective if it was declared on a partnership basis.

The Head of Environment added that there were links between climate change and an ecological emergency as there was a lot of scientific evidence that both species and habitats were impacted by climate change. Good work had been carried out in relation to restoration of peatlands, which had stopped the erosion of peat bogs. Local Nature Recovery Strategies were a requirement of the Environment Act 2021, but the Act provided little detail and the service was awaiting additional information.

The Head of Environment advised that the committee had taken an interest in the work of the Environment and Climate Change Partnership and the work of the Ecological Emergency Workstream which had started work on a Local Nature Recovery Strategy and this would fit well and work in tandem on an ecological emergency.

The Chair thanked the Head of Environment and the Principal Ecologist for their joint presentation and sought comments from the Committee.

Councillor Brown did not consider that conifers should be planted on ancient woodlands (PAWs) because they were not a native species. Councillor Brown highlighted the decline in birds such as starlings, the rise in disease through climate change and was horrified at the lack of available data which needed to be rectified. She supported the view that there was a link between an ecological emergency and climate change.

The Head of Environment replied that there was a need to properly understand the state of the environment by using data that was comprehensive and solid. The Committee may wish to raise issues with Cabinet about improving both data and knowledge of the environment to inform the development of future plans.

Councillor Quinn considered that the public should be educated in relation to the importance of habitats and wildlife. Councillor Quinn gave an example in his Electoral Division where the public had requested that woods be cut down and suggested that an education package was required to help the public understand what the Council was doing and the reason for doing it. Councillor Quinn asked whether there were changes in wildlife numbers during the pandemic.

The Head of Environment replied that education was vital and fell into two areas, firstly the need to explain why the Council was doing certain actions and activities and secondly the need to improve signage. He gave an example of work the Clean and Green team had done in cutting around the edge of verges to show that it was a deliberate action. He continued that many habitats on SSSIs were on land in private ownership and there was a need to educate landowners. With reference to the pandemic the Head of Environment considered that there had been an increase in wildlife and also that people had become more aware of their surroundings and noticed wildlife more.

The Principal Ecologist advised that habitats needed to be managed and not left to their own devices. In relation to an increase in wildlife during the pandemic, the Principal Ecologist advised that although information was not available there was no doubt that people had more time to notice wildlife and there were reports of more wildlife being seen in urban areas. There was also less noise from traffic which had allowed people to hear birds more than usual.

Councillor Adam suggested that at this moment an ecological emergency could not be declared as there was insufficient detail. He continued that he thought there was a need to hear evidence from partners and get their views. Councillor Adam suggested that by doing small actions this could help stop the decline in habitats and species and suggested that the Council should look for some quick wins. He advised that he had noticed that there were small areas of woodland and that some of the trees were dying. Habitats were being destroyed at a rapid pace and various species could not adapt to the change at the pace it was happening. Biodiversity, ecology and climate change were intrinsically linked, and ecological emergency should be linked with climate change as pollution of air and water all fed in to this. Councillor Adam suggested that ecology needed to be strongly built into the planning application process and added that more needed to be done around peatlands, limestone escapements and coastal waters and sand dunes. It was essential to invite partners to be involved in any work to be undertaken in relation to the Ecological Emergency.

The Head of Environment noted Members comments in relation to the data but advised that the collection of data would take a long period of time.

The Principal Ecologist advised that work was undertaken with partners such as the Environment Agency and Natural England and it was a case of managing expectations with regards to what local data was available. The Principal Ecologist referred to the local wildlife sites and advised that for them to reach a 100% of sites surveyed would take years.

The Head of Environment added that the Service valued input from partners and that the Service heard first-hand from the County Durham Environment and Climate Change Partnership's Ecological Emergency Work Stream.

Councillor Lines supported the representation made by Councillor Adam and added that ecology needed to be embedded into the culture of the Council and a consideration when decisions were made. He continued that if it was decided to make a declaration then the Council needed to identify urgent actions to be undertaken to prevent any further loss of habitats or species.

The Head of Environment agreed that ecology needed to be embedded into the culture of the Council. He added that ecology issues were currently considered as part of the planning process, but this was mostly linked to developments. He continued that there would need to be an action plan developed, identify what elements would be included and clear actions against each of those elements. The Council would need to ensure that it managed its own land properly to encourage the habitats for breeding and would need to review the plans for Countryside sites.

The Principal Ecologist advised that in relation to planning process measures were in place and in relation to marine, the LNRS did not make provision therefore the Council was planning on a marine bolt-on to the LNRS extending 6 miles off the coast

Councillor Charlton referred to water discharge from former colliery sites into watercourses and asked whether there was any interaction with partners regarding this.

The Principal Ecologist replied that while the Environment Agency led on statutory issues around discharges the Service did work with Northumbrian Water in relation to the Wear and Skerne catchments and other catchments.

Councillor Nicholls advised that his partner had worked on over 100 sites with Mammals Web and Durham University, but work with the University had not been mentioned during the presentation to the Committee. Councillor Nicholls considered there was a lack of understanding and awareness and felt frustrated that the Council was not working with more partners. Councillor Nicholls asked whether Council officers had access to academic journals to do their research.

The Head of Environment apologised that the service had not picked up on the agencies referred to by Councillor Nicholls that they the Service would be happy to engage more widely and would be interested in the information from the survey of 100 sites.

The Principal Ecologist advised that he was meeting with Durham University prior to Christmas and commented that Mammal Web did not provide the type of data that was needed to identify trends. All staff had access to academic papers.

Councillor Potts informed the Committee that Hamsterley Forest was within his Electoral Division and asked about the impact on habitats from tourism. He added that there were planning applications for log cabins in the area and asked about what processes were in place or proposed for dealing with the impact of tourism on this area of the County.

The Head of Environment replied that the service encouraged people to access to the area and added that visitors needed information which should be done in a managed way. If the site was primarily wildlife then this should take precedence, if the site was mixed use then this should be managed to ensure a balance in trying to achieve the objectives of the plan for the specific area.

The Principal Ecologist advised in relation to planning the impact of the lodges would require an environmental impact assessment which would feed into the planning process and confirmed that objections relating to recreational, or tourism impacts had previously been fed into the planning process.

Councillor Potts then commented that partners had already established an Ecological Emergency Group and had started to undertake work and asked whether it was worth the Council declaring an emergency as well.

The Head of Environment replied that there was undeniable national evidence to suggest that there was an ecological emergency, and it was his view that this there had been such an emergency for a long period of time. There was a need to develop an action plan and ensure it was resourced so that it had impact at base level.

The Principal Ecologist agreed and considered that the Country was in a state of being a green desert. Wildlife was rarely seen and expectations of what a biodiverse landscape looked like were low and the baseline had changed. Documents from 100 years ago showed that wildlife was significantly more abundant.

Councillor Elmer advised that this was the initial trawl and there was more work to be done. The Committee would receive more data at the next special meeting. He continued that a precautionary principal should be used in that gathering data may

take too long and would not progress matters very much. Global and National data was more definitive than local data and there was a need to embed a point of purpose in the work of the Council going forward. That was the reason for declaring an emergency so that this important issue progressed at the pace it deserved.

Councillor Townsend highlighted the work in her Electoral Division of AAPs and Parish Councils and suggested this was an effective way to disseminate information. She then asked if bird flu was a recurring issue that was affecting wildlife in the county.

The Head of Environment replied that bird flu was affecting wildlife populations and the Service was notifying DEFRA of the number of diseases affecting various wildlife populations in the County.

The Principal Ecologist confirmed that AAPs and Parish Councils were a fundamental part of integrating countryside and urban areas and were vitally important in local delivery. The Service had worked with both AAPs and Parish Councils and believed that was the best way to engage.

Councillor Nicholls asked how much could be done for free as that would be a huge benefit to Council.

The Head of Environment confirmed that there were willing groups and volunteers doing good work which the service fully recognised and part of the plan was to build on this.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their input and comments.

**Resolved:**

That the report and presentation be noted and that further information be considered at the next special meeting of the Committee to be held on 14 February 2022.

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## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of the **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Tuesday 18 January 2022** at **9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor B Coult in the Chair**

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

Councillors E Adam, P Atkinson, L Brown, J Charlton, L Fenwick, G Hutchinson, R Manchester, C Martin, D Nicholls, R Potts, J Purvis, J Quinn, T Stubbs and S Townsend.

### **Co-opted Members:**

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Holding

#### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors C Kay, B McAloon and I McLean.

#### **2 Substitute Members**

No substitute members were in attendance.

#### **3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 November 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

No declarations were made.

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

There were no items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.

## **6 Neighbourhoods and Climate Change – Quarter 2: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/22**

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided details of the forecast outturn budget for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change, highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget, based on the position to the end of the second quarter of 2021/22 (for copy of report see file of minutes).

In presenting the report, the Finance Manager for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change reported a cash limit underspend of £101,000 against the revised budget of £108.492 million. He explained that the outturn takes account of £6.2 million of COVID-19 related costs treated as outside of the cash limit, including increased costs due to service disruption, agency fees relating to staff absences and increased waste disposal costs. The Finance Manager drew Members' attention to Appendix 3 of the report which provided details of variances at Head of Service level, information which had been requested by a member at the October meeting of the Committee.

The Finance Manager highlighted the forecast cash limit reserve position of £995,000 at 31 March 2022 which provided the service with some flexibility to deal with unbudgeted expenditure in the future. The outturn also took account of a contribution to and from reserves of £786,000.

The Committee noted the capital budget of £62.231 million, with expenditure during the first six months amounting to £20.853 million. Key areas of spend during the period included highways and bridges and environmental and crematoria schemes.

The Chair thanked the Finance Manager for the report and invited questions from the Committee.

Councillor Adam referred the Finance Manager to Appendix 3 and requested an explanation of the £107,000 underspend on the fleet due to additional work required for extra vehicles. The Finance Manager explained that the County Council's fleet was maintained by Environmental Services which recharged when extra vehicles required maintenance over and above work budgeted for, this therefore was an over achievement on income, awaiting recharge from another service area.

Councillor Adam voiced concerns over the lack of progress made with regard to the purchase of electric vehicles. The Finance Manager replied that the variance referred to in Appendix 3 did not relate specifically to electric vehicles and confirmed that the service continues to purchase smaller electric vehicles.

The Finance Manager added that it is hoped that, as time progresses and technology advances, when it is necessary to purchase larger, more expensive vehicles such as gritters and refuse vehicles, technology will have advanced and costs will have reduced.

Councillor Adam then asked the Finance Manager to explain the reference in Appendix 3 of the report to the overspend on highways revenue maintenance work which included £700,000 of costs to be transferred capital and met from additional investment monies. The Finance Manager responded that the Highways Service undertook both revenue and capital works and this work had been charged to the service, however, it would be charged to capital in due course. The additional investment monies referred to were one-off investment monies which had been allocated over the past two years to deal with matters relating to highways and climate change, however they would not continue to be built into the budget and will be moved to capital. Councillor Adam asked if this was standard accounting practice and the Finance Manager responded that capital expenditure was funded through a variety of sources, and this was a revenue contribution.

Councillor Elmer referred to the Community Protection budget area detailed in Appendix 3 and the underspend on staffing. He expressed concern that there were vacant posts in this front line service and stated this should send an important message to the service regarding recruitment. The Finance Manager responded that there had been difficulties with filling posts over the previous two to three years, particularly in the areas of Community Protection and Trading Standards, however, the service had continued to operate effectively. Plans are in place to develop a revised workforce development strategy which aims to improve staff recruitment and retention, address the ageing workforce and provide succession planning, to ensure the service is well placed for the future.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**7 Quarter Two, 2021/22 Performance Management Report**

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which presented an overview of progress, in and to the end of quarter two, (July to September 2021), towards achieving the key outcomes of the Council's corporate performance framework and highlighted key messages to inform strategic priorities and work programmes (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager presented progress under the four ambitions as set out within the Council Plan, highlighting specific areas of performance. He advised that some information contained within the report, particularly that from external agencies and government departments, was subject to time-lags.

Referring to the 'More and Better Jobs' ambition, the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager highlighted County Durham's success at being named as one of the eight locations shortlisted in the UK City of Culture 2025 competition, with the winner due to be announced in May. The Committee noted that at their meeting in September, Cabinet approved a further feasibility study on options for the former Durham Light Infantry Museum and Art Gallery, with the findings expected to be reported in the near future. A number of festivals and events were held during the quarter, providing a welcome boost to the economy following the pandemic. Details of visitor numbers would be reported to the Committee when available. Heritage open days had returned during the quarter, however, fewer settings participated in 2021 compared to those taking part in 2019. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager then referred to visitor numbers to parks and indicated that this figure had fallen compared with the previous year. It was explained that the same period last year coincided with the partial relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions and, with socialising in open spaces permitted, many people had taken advantage of this.

In relation to the 'Long and Independent Lives' ambition, the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager informed the Committee that recent carbon emission results released for 2019 showed a reduction across the county of 54% from the 1990 baseline, with the greatest source of emissions being heat, with domestic heating being the highest sub-category. Emissions from electricity saw the greatest reduction, mainly due to the decarbonisation of the national grid. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager referred to a number of projects which are underway to reduce carbon emissions throughout the county.

The Committee noted that the percentage of waste diverted from landfill had decreased on the previous year which was due to a number of factors including an increase in the volume of waste collected. The current recycling rate had also decreased on the previous year, however, recent months had seen improvement. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager referred to a question from the Chair at a previous meeting as to whether the content of bags of litter collected at litter picks was separated into residual waste and recyclable waste. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager stated he had requested that the service provide clarification on this and once a response is provided by the service it will be circulated to the Committee.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager referred to the increase in contamination rates of household recycling which stood at 35.8%, driving down the recycling rate. He informed the Committee of a number of campaigns underway to improve the rate of recycling, including the small electrical recycling project which was shortlisted for a national award. In response to a question from the Committee at a previous meeting as to whether there are plans to expand the small electricals recycling project to include larger electrical appliances, information from the service indicates that the public make use of household waste recycling centres for larger electrical appliances.

Moving to the 'Connected Communities' ambition, the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager reported a 0.4% drop in fly-tipping incidents during the 12 months ending September 2021. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager referred to observations of an increase in litter following Storm Arwen which led to a question raised at a previous meeting as to whether increased litter picking is carried out during the winter months. He informed the Committee that this question had been forwarded to the service for a response to be provided in due course.

In relation to the performance ambition to be an excellent council, the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager outlined the continued efforts to reduce emissions through actions set out in the Climate Emergency Response Plan, highlighting the work undertaken at the Morrison Busty Zero Carbon Depot. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager suggested that the Committee may wish to visit the depot to view the improvements when COVID-19 restrictions are fully lifted.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager referred to matters raised in a previous briefing as to how public transport is being used to contribute to carbon reduction and the suggestion that public transport usage be included in the basket of performance indicators. He confirmed that data was available and this information will be included in future reports, when the most appropriate performance measurement indicator had been identified.

Members heard that a focused session is planned for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees in order to review the performance indicators, to ensure correct performance indicators are being used and that data is being presented to Members in a meaningful way. The focused session would be used to gather Members' views as to whether they would like to see other indicators included and how they would like to see the information reported. Representatives from within the services would be invited to the session to answer Members' questions.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager for the comprehensive report and invited questions and comments from the Committee.

Mr Bolton referred to the feasibility study being undertaken on the options to bring the former Durham Light Infantry Museum and Art Gallery (DLI) back into use as a wider cultural attraction. He commented that he had been a regular visitor to the exhibitions, and he suggested that, should the museum be brought back into use, the County Council's collection of artwork could be displayed at the Museum and Art Gallery for the public to enjoy. Mr Bolton further observed that some of the exhibitions held at the former museum in later years did not have mass market appeal and that consideration should be given as to how to attract a wider audience. Mr Bolton also highlighted the tranquil location of the former DLI Museum, with its proximity to the Aykley Heads wildlife reserve adding that it is ideally located for school visits as pupils could explore the biodiversity of the surrounding area. Mr Bolton requested that his comments be passed to the Member/Officer Working Group for their consideration.

Agreeing to pass Mr Bolton's comments to the Working Group, the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that it was recognised that the city of Durham lacks exhibition space and the Council holds an impressive art collection which should be displayed. He referred to the Special Meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board which focused on the DLI Museum and Art Gallery, at which Members suggested there should be a space for contemplation, with the location being used to its fullest extent.

Councillor Adam raised concern at details in the report on the percentage of 'A' roads where maintenance is recommended. Noting the data provided in the report was from 2019, he asked if more recent data was available. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager replied that further information will be available following the publication of the Transport Asset Management Plan. He explained that the performance data and transport figures may be slightly out of sync in the report and he added he would liaise with the service in order to receive updated data to share with the Committee.

Referring to contamination in recycling, Councillor Nicholls expressed concern at the contamination rate of 35.8%. He added that it would be useful to have information on the financial penalties incurred by the Council as this could be a factor when considering how much money to invest to tackle the current contamination levels. Councillor Nicholls asked if the Council had the capacity to check every bin for signs of contamination.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that the Council endeavours to educate the public and may use enforcement powers on those who repeatedly place contaminants in their recycling bin. He added that a small amount of contaminated waste may lead to the rejection of an entire load and this may account for the high contamination rate.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager suggested that the Committee may wish to focus on this issue in more detail in the future, when they have completed their current review activity.

Councillor Nicholls praised the targeted work of the Community Action Team and asked how the service selects areas for targeted intervention as it was clear to him from feedback from residents that these are extremely important issues which require a targeted approach and that many areas would benefit from similar targeted work being undertaken. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that the Community Action Team identify areas for targeted work through data and intelligence and that these were often areas that the team had visited on several previous occasions. He added that areas which have a large transient population are often targeted as problems may occur where there is a high turnover of tenants. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager reminded the Committee that routine services also operate across the county, including the work of the Clean and Green Team.

Councillor Elmer referred to the increase in municipal household waste and the reduction in recycling and expressed concern that good habits should not be allowed to wane, commenting that it was important to take urgent action in this regard. Referring to measures to educate the public, Councillor Elmer recognised the Council had carried out good work in the past, however, he questioned whether the Council had provided recycling information to residents recently. He queried whether this was due to a lack of capacity. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that increased household waste was a national problem and he agreed that a cost-benefit analysis exercise may be useful to investigate the cost of a public awareness campaign to reduce the contamination rate, against the cost of the financial penalties incurred when waste is rejected due to contamination. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager stated that he would refer these comments to the service who could investigate whether there are more effective ways of increasing awareness, for example the use of social media.

In relation to visits to cultural assets, Councillor Elmer commented that the impact of the pandemic must not be underestimated and it was important to establish whether visitor numbers to attractions such as heritage open days and parks had increased since the pandemic. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager acknowledged that the two years during the pandemic were largely non-representative, and the quarter three report will include data over the last ten years in order to obtain a longer-term picture of visitor numbers to identify trends.

Councillor Quinn commented that the Community Action Team had carried out excellent work at Dean Bank, however, he was disappointed to see that only a short time after the work had been completed, the previous problems had recurred.

Councillor Quinn expressed the opinion that unfortunately he did not feel this was a sustainable solution. He added that Dean Bank had recently introduced the Selective Licensing scheme and he hoped this would lead to a reduction in the high turnover of tenants.

Referring to recycling, Councillor Quinn stated there was a need for education and simplification of the current system, as the public may not be aware that only a very small amount of food left on a cardboard box placed in a recycling bin can be a contaminate. He suggested that a solution may be bins with separate compartments, which could encourage the user to think about whether they are recycling correctly. He added that it would be useful to know exactly how much damage a relatively small amount of contamination can cause to a full load of recycling and asked whether the Council could do more work with recycling companies to alleviate the problem.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager agreed that the Selective Licensing scheme will help to investigate the correlation between a high turnover of tenants and problems relating to anti-social behaviour and untidy residential areas.

He stated that information from the Head of Environment at a previous meeting had indicated that the government's Waste and Resources Strategy is expected in the near future and this aims to introduce a standardised approach across the country to recycling, in order to simplify the process. The strategy may also introduce a food waste collection service which could reduce contamination in recycling. In response to the question regarding the level of contamination caused by a small amount of food left on a cardboard box, the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that he could not provide an answer, however, he confirmed the Council works closely with contractors to drive down rejection levels and reduce 'fines' resulting from contamination. The Scrutiny and Strategy Manager agreed to seek further information on what constitutes contamination of a full load of waste and the costs to the Council in relation to contaminated recycling.

Councillor Brown informed the Committee that the City of Durham Parish Council is carrying out work with the Clean and Green Team in Durham city to educate students on recycling. She added that she would welcome a food waste recycling scheme, however, having spoken to the Portfolio Holder she was advised that such a scheme was prohibitively expensive.

Councillor Elmer referred to the figures for county-wide carbon emissions and acknowledged the Council does a lot of work to monitor the progress of road maintenance however there is more work to be done to improve public transport connectivity and to encourage walking and cycling.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that strategic transport planning is to be the subject of a future joint Economy and Enterprise and Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny meeting. In addition, the focused session mentioned previously in the meeting to investigate performance indicators will be useful in this regard.

Referring to the comments made by Councillor Brown, Councillor Nicholls stated that it was his understanding that the government was intending to make it a legal requirement for all local authorities to collect and recycle food waste and he asked if the government's plans could be looked at in detail. He added that it may be useful to investigate how other local authorities carry out their recycling. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that the Waste and Resources Strategy was yet to be published, however, it was expected to mandate a food waste collection service on all local authorities. He added that, if the Waste and Resources Strategy imposes standardisation, then all authorities must adopt a uniform approach. Furthermore, the Head of Environment had advised that a free garden waste collection service is also expected to be included in the strategy and, if introduced, this would have cost implications for the Council which currently charges a fee for this service. The Finance Manager commented that there was an expectation that if a food waste collection service was mandated, there would be funding available from government, however, this was unlikely to cover the full cost and further details on the content of the Waste and Resources Strategy are awaited.

Councillor Fenwick spoke of how she had observed an increase in black sacks being placed next to bins, particularly after Christmas, which were not collected and this was leading to problems of littering and the attraction of vermin. Councillor Fenwick suggested that social media could be used to provide a polite reminder to residents that black sacks containing additional recycling would not be collected when left next to recycling bins. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager agreed that social media posts may help to reach a wider audience.

The Chair asked if it was possible to obtain the annual cost to the Council for the removal of fly-tipping and suggested that the use of social media could be explored for the reporting of fly-tipping, such as Messenger or What's App. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager agreed to contact the service for a response to be provided to the Committee in due course. With regard to the costs relating to fly-tipping, the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager informed the Committee these would be included in the Clean and Green Service area and that he would contact the service for the figures.

**Resolved:**

The report be noted.

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## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a **Special Meeting** of the **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Monday 14 February 2022** at **9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor B Coult (Chair)**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors E Adam, P Atkinson, L Brown, J Elmer, L Fenwick, G Hutchinson, C Lines, R Manchester, I McLean, C Martin, D Nicholls, R Potts, J Purvis and J Quinn

**Co-optees:**

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Holding

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Charlton, C Kay, B McAloon and T Stubbs.

### **2 Substitute Members**

Councillor D Sutton-Lloyd was present as substitute for Councillor T Stubbs.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **4 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

There were no items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.

### **5 Consideration of an Ecological Emergency (County Durham)**

Members considered a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change which provided information to assist the Committee in determining whether to recommend to Cabinet that Durham County Council should declare an ecological emergency (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Chair welcomed Oliver Sherratt, Head of Environment, Stuart Priestley, Principal Ecologist and Chris Woodley-Stewart, Director of North Pennines AONB Partnership and Chair of the Ecological Emergency Workstream of the Environment and Climate Change Partnership, to the meeting.

The Principal Ecologist introduced the presentation (for copy see file of minutes) and referred Members to the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 13 December 2021 which found that whilst global and national data was robust, there were limitations with regard to local data. The Principal Ecologist explained that the presentation aimed to provide local information relating to habitats and species within County Durham and informed Members that, since the meeting held in December, he had engaged with various organisations including Durham University, Durham Bird Club and reptile, amphibian and butterfly recorders to confirm they were happy with the tone of the report.

Information had also been provided by the Teesdale Special Flora and Conservation Trust regarding the Teesdale Assemblage, a collection of rare plants found on two fells in the Teesdale area which are considered to have survived for approximately 10,000 years, since the last glaciation. Data collected from surveys during 1968 to 1977 and 2010 to 2020, found an average 66% decline in species abundance in five key species in the area. A survey carried out on one fell where 19 species were surveyed from 1968 to 1975 and again more recently, the survey found on average, a greater than 50% decline in population on an area of 10 square kilometres where the species were present.

The Principal Ecologist highlighted information relating to designated sites, water framework directives and declines in species. He informed the Committee that evidence suggested that local declines in bird species match the national trend. Members noted that reptiles continue to decline, that the grass snake was probably extinct, red squirrels and water voles had undergone a significant decline and five out of seven priority species of butterfly had declined. The Committee noted that four species of bumblebee had become extinct since 1926, however, some positive news was reported with a new colony of tree bumblebee expanding throughout the country.

The Principal Ecologist introduced the Director of North Pennines AONB Partnership and Chair of the Ecological Emergency Workstream of the Environment and Climate Change Partnership to present information on work undertaken in the county to promote nature recovery. The Director of North Pennines AONB Partnership began his presentation by highlighting the good work in terms of biodiversity throughout the county, including the restoration of Durham Heritage Coast, the management of 160 hectares of grassland habitat for nature conservation and the work being done to extend nature recovery into the marine environment, noting that Durham County Council is leading the Seascapes project.

The Director also highlighted the work of the National Trust, the Heritage Coast Partnership and the Wildlife Trust. Members also noted that the North Pennines hosts 30% of all the species rich upland hay meadows in the UK.

The Director of North Pennines AONB Partnership commented on Durham County Council's promotion of green spaces and the work in conjunction with charities, including the Tees and Wear Rivers Trusts, to promote good soil management and initiatives such as the Coolwaters tree planting. The Committee heard that 16,000 hectares of North Pennines peatlands had been restored by the AONB Partnership which had brought benefits for nature, flood prevention, biodiversity and reduced carbon emissions. Information was also provided on the work to expand tree and woodland cover including the Durham Woodland Revival Project and the Durham Woodland Creation programme.

The Committee noted that County Durham has an active Wildlife Trust and several projects were currently underway, for example, the work with partners to restore water vole populations and the Heart of Durham project to restore arable and forestry land to semi-rural habitats and how this work had assisted to save the small pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly from extinction. The work of Durham Wildlife Trust's Brightwater wetland restoration project was also highlighted.

The AONB Partnership Director informed the Committee of the work of Tees Swale Naturally Connected, explaining that the partnership between North Pennines AONB and North Yorkshire National Park Authority had led to one of the largest restoration projects in the UK to restore, expand and connect habitats, working with farmers, landowners, conservation organisations, volunteers and partner organisations.

The AONB Partnership Director commented on the funding programme to work with farmers to boost nature recovery and access to nature, adding that there was likely to be investment of £1million in the Durham area of the North Pennines AONB of a £2million project that was focussed on nature, climate, people and places. The Director also commented on the work on training and skills to assist farmers to assess habitats, fund new equipment and encourage a new generation of farmers into the industry. The Committee noted the steps taken to increase traineeships and community engagement, including training for volunteers and initiatives such as 'citizen science' projects. The AONB Partnership Director stressed the importance of engaging with communities and continuing the good work to encourage the public to access the countryside.

The AONB Partnership Director concluded the presentation with a slide showing gamekeeper kills from one estate in Scotland during 1837-1840. The slide demonstrated the high number of predators killed within the period and the Director remarked on the vast amount of life that would have existed in the landscape at the time, in order to underpin the amount of predators present.

He cautioned the Committee to be aware of 'shifting baseline syndrome' and explained that although particular species may continue to be observed, it is not always an indication that they are in abundance and he pointed out that declines in species may be gradual, therefore the public may fail to notice the decline.

He provided examples that in this lifetime 60% of swifts had declined, 95 out of every 100 hedgehogs had disappeared, water voles had declined by 97% and 29% of birds are now on the 'red list' of species of conservation concern, including the house sparrow and starling.

The Director of North Pennines AONB Partnership encouraged the Committee to maintain the momentum, connecting habitats and working with communities to engage with nature, as it plays a vital role in health and wellbeing. He emphasised the importance of making smart planning decisions adding that Durham County Council should continue to carefully manage its estate, in the interests of biodiversity. He referred to a lack of political will over recent years to tackle environmental decline and concluded by thanking the Committee for their time. He advised that members of the Ecological Emergency Workstream of the Environment and Climate Change Partnership were very supportive of a declaration of an ecological emergency.

The Chair invited questions and comments from the Committee.

Councillor Sutton Lloyd referred to the survey information and asked the officers how confident were they that data was reflective of the current position. The Principal Ecologist stated that he was confident with the data in the report adding that he had sought opinions from local experts who agreed the data provided a good understanding of the situation. The Principal Ecologist confirmed that he would stand by the data contained within the report.

Councillor Adam observed the officers' passion for their work which was clear from their presentation and commented that he was pleased to hear of the good work being undertaken, not only within County Durham but also regionally, nationally and globally. He asked what more was required by Durham County Council, the Committee and the Environment and Climate Change Partnership to make a significant difference and to assist the Committee to make recommendations. The Head of Environment responded that Members had been presented with survey evidence, however some evidence was incomplete and future plans should aim to address gaps in knowledge. The Head of Environment added that greater awareness should be encouraged to increase public participation in nature and build upon the enjoyment of the natural environment. This, in turn, may lead to greater awareness and an increase in the number of volunteers whose involvement is key, as habitats are largely manmade and require active management to promote their particular elements of biodiversity. He also commented on the important work with charities such as the Wildlife Trust and efforts to improve links with private landowners.

Councillor Elmer stated that whilst he did not wish to pre-empt the decision and future outcomes, at this stage, the Committee was asked to look specifically at whether or not the declaration of an ecological emergency was warranted. A report to Cabinet would then consider what actions should be taken in response, with a potential recommendation being that a cross-service review should take place to identify measures to be delivered in response. Councillor Elmer highlighted that the Environment Act requires the Council to produce an ecological recovery map and he added this would be an opportunity to identify actions for the review and to work with partners to optimise opportunities.

The Director of North Pennines AONB referred to Durham County Council's work in respect of woodlands and grasslands on the estate and he commented that resources and support for organisations in the wider landscape were vital, as work on private land was key to future success. He stated that, if the Council made a declaration of an ecological emergency, this would require the ecological agenda to be incorporated into wider processes such as procurement and planning and he suggested that ecological implications should be considered in all decisions across the Council in the future.

Councillor Quinn commented that more work was required to educate the public about the importance of the ecological emergency and he expressed concern at the number of contacts he had from members of the public requesting that wildflowers planted on road verges and roundabouts be cut back. He asked if there would be scope in the future to increase the number of planters in urban areas to encourage the public to appreciate nature within their communities.

The Principal Ecologist responded that leaving grass to grow on verges may be contrary to public perceptions of 'neat and tidy' communities however these initiatives were gradually helping to increase public awareness. In terms of cost and maintenance, he explained that amenity grass required 14 cuts per year, however, wildflowers required only one cut per year, therefore this measure had a positive impact on the budget. He pointed out that it was clear that a declaration of an ecological emergency would require increased resources and he added that planters had been successfully introduced in several urban areas.

The Director of North Pennines AONB agreed that planters were a good initiative however, he pointed out the distinction between wildflower grasslands and the sowing of annual flowers on land that required spraying to clear it and he commented that where grass was left to grow, this often led to many different flowers and plants appearing. He expressed the view that it was crucial to educate and engage with the public, to encourage them to embrace green open spaces and through educating children, whose enthusiasm and curiosity will often encourage their parents and carers to participate. He added that 'nudge theories' suggest that if a quarter of the population is moved, the remainder will follow.

Councillor Nicholls agreed with the view that an ecological emergency exists and referred to the remarkable effort that had been made in order to cut carbon emissions. He stated that he hoped the same impetus would be given to an ecological emergency, commenting that what is in nature's best interest is likely to be in humans' best interest. He highlighted the importance of community involvement which he had observed in several local projects within his division. He added that Durham should seize the opportunity to become a beacon for other areas, for example through the work done to reclaim the landscape through projects such as the Woodland Revival. He pointed out that these initiatives bring community, health and economic benefits and he referred to life-style changes during the pandemic which had led more people to discover rural parts of the country and to an increasing appreciation of nature. The Director of North Pennines AONB agreed with Councillor Nicholls and stated that economies and supply chains are affected by and rely upon the natural environment, a point which is often overlooked.

In response to a question from Councillor Potts, the Director of North Pennines AONB confirmed that he was of the opinion that an ecological emergency was present, that there was unquestionably a catastrophic decline in nature and that no evidence had been presented to the contrary. He added that all partners were of the same view that this was a time of serious ecological crisis.

Councillor Lines referred to the articulation of the declaration and suggested that it should be written in a way that provides hope for the future, whilst emphasising that urgent action is required. He added the declaration should reassure the public that it is not too late to make a difference and it should showcase initiatives already being undertaken at a local level. He stated the view that all Members could contribute to this within their own divisions, by supporting action locally and he commented that consideration should be given to the criteria for allocating neighbourhood budgets to include support for actions to address the ecological emergency. The Director of North Pennines AONB agreed that it was important to have tangible evidence and that role models are important to prove what can be achieved, for example groups that cultivate their local green space often encourage others to do the same.

Councillor Sutton-Lloyd provided his view that education and communication were vital in a declaration of an ecological emergency and to illustrate the importance of connecting with nature for enjoyment and wellbeing, he quoted a Chinese proverb meaning that as food sustains the body, nature sustains the soul.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the report and presentation and noted its content.

## **6 Consideration of an Ecological Emergency – Summary and Next Steps**

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided a summary of information provided at the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 13 December 2021, detailing relevant ecological data, to consider whether to recommend to Cabinet that a declaration be made and to determine any further additional recommendations for Cabinet's consideration (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer explained that when Cabinet asked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake this work and consider the evidence base in relation to biodiversity decline, Cabinet requested that Overview and Scrutiny respond, with a recommendation to Cabinet, as to whether the Council should declare an ecological emergency.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred members to paragraph 10 of the report and having received evidence, stated that it was now a matter for Members to decide whether the Council should recommend to Cabinet that an ecological emergency is declared and to consider making further additional recommendations to the potential recommendations detailed in paragraph 11. Following the meeting, a detailed report would be prepared, summarising the evidence provided and key findings of biodiversity decline, which would be presented to the Committee at a Special Meeting in April. Members were then asked whether, having received the evidence, they wished to recommend to Cabinet that a declaration be made. Councillor Elmer suggested that unless the Committee wished to discuss the issue of declaration first, there should be a show of hands which would provide an indication of Members' views regarding the declaration.

Members at the meeting were unanimous in their decision to recommend to Cabinet that the Council should declare an ecological emergency.

The Chair then advised that two questions had been received from Mr Owens, a member of the public, and it had been agreed that the questions should be presented to the Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer read out the questions as follows:

1. Should the scrutiny committee decide to recommend to Cabinet that Durham County Council declare an ecological emergency (which I hope it does!) would the committee encourage those carrying out this work to engage with those County Durham residents and local conservation/nature groups willing to help, beyond just a consultation after a draft plan is produced, to not only to inform the drawing up of a plan or Local Nature Recovery Strategy but also explore how local 'citizen scientists' can help with the longer term monitoring

of the effectiveness of any proposed actions/interventions from that strategy/plan? This could also prove to be a helpful and economical way to improve the data gaps at a county level, particularly over time, that have been identified in the reports provided to the committee.

2. Like climate change, the gradual degradation of the natural environment and the habitats of a number of endangered species of both flora and fauna is not fully appreciated by most residents in County Durham, or in the rest of England. In part this is due to the relatively slow rate of change over the years but also due to the increasing numbers of folk in the current era preferring to be increasingly engrossed with the virtual environments of television or the multitude of platforms available on the Internet rather than engaging with outdoor activities and so possibly noticing these changes for themselves. Would the committee consider recommending that any strategy/plan incorporates effective communication to raise awareness of the issue while also encouraging a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle incorporating activities out of doors for all County Durham residents regardless of age.

Councillor Elmer stated that in relation to the questions posed by Mr Owens he agreed that there was a need for wider community involvement in developing and assisting the delivery of an action plan, as well as raising awareness of this issue within local communities. He suggested a recommendation was required to articulate the need for engagement and consultation with communities and special interest groups in developing and delivering an action plan. In addition the Committee should also consider how to raise awareness of this issue across the county.

The Head of Environment welcomed the questions posed by Mr Owens and referring to the second question regarding awareness, he agreed that this was a prerequisite to increase engagement and support for the Council's efforts with regard to wildlife and conservation. He referred to the projects and schemes mentioned previously during the discussion, adding that future plans would build upon those schemes. The Head of Environment then advised Members that, at the Cabinet meeting held on 9 February 2021, a range of investments were highlighted including extra resources to support the direction of travel for nature reserve management, extra resources in relation to engagement with volunteers and educational outreach work and the appointment of a local nature recovery strategy officer to offer a corporate and countywide approach.

Councillor Elmer commented that by declaring an ecological emergency, this would emphasise the gravity of the situation and elevate the work that was previously conservation, to work that is essential for future survival and that making this point was educational in its own right. He then referred to Councillor Quinn's question and agreed on the need for a step change in education and engagement.

Councillor Elmer referred to the additional recommendations set out in paragraph 11 of the report and asked Members for their views on adding a further recommendation to respond to Mr Owens' questions.

Councillor Adam referred to the next steps and advised that the information presented in the meetings highlighted the situation, not just locally but also nationally and globally. He commented that the information had expanded Members' knowledge as to whether the declaration of an ecological emergency was necessary. He commented that human nature is essentially selfish with actions driven by economic pressures, having little regard to environmental impact. Councillor Adam suggested that, in making the declaration, it was important to have a strategy to apply it, similar to the climate emergency response plan in 2019 and the work in relation to single-use plastics. He suggested that a task force should be established to look at processes and procedures to identify the best ecological practices currently available to services within the Council. He added that all decision-making reports by the Council should include the consideration of ecological emergency implications. He also suggested that the work with partnerships should be expanded to include businesses, communities, the Environment and Climate Change Partnership and landowners. Councillor Adam concluded by suggesting that objectives should be set for future long-term aspirations and the medium term financial plan should provide for dedicated funding and resources.

Councillor Quinn suggested that the recommendations should include financial considerations for an education and communication strategy.

Councillor Elmer added that an analysis was required on the work the Council carries out on its estate, including costings, and to identify further work required to encourage the wider community.

The Chair then referred Members to the second recommendation in the report concerning the declaration and proposed, with the agreement of the Members, that an interim report be prepared and sent to Cabinet for consideration at their April meeting, advising them of the Committee's decision that Durham County Council declare an ecological emergency and that the Committee intends to send the full review report to Cabinet in June, following the agreement of the report by the Committee at a Special Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held in April.

Members agreed that an interim report would be sent to Cabinet recommending that Durham County Council declares an ecological emergency.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the report and noted its content and:

- a) Agreed unanimously to recommend to Cabinet that Durham County Council declares an ecological emergency and that arrangements be made for an interim report to Cabinet advising of the Committee's intention that a full review report will be presented to Cabinet in June.
- b) Agreed the potential recommendations outlined at paragraph 11 and that a further recommendation was required in relation to awareness raising and education and that individuals, specialist and community groups are involved in the consultation, development and delivery of the action plan.

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

**28<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**Leisure Transformation**

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**Report of Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director Regeneration, Economy  
& Growth**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ESC OSC) with an update on leisure transformation programme and the planned stages of consultation.

**Executive summary**

- 2 As part of a three stage process of consultation set out to Cabinet in September 2021, the first phase of leisure conversations has been completed and the various outcomes noted. This progress now allows the programme to move ahead with final design work at Abbey LC, Peterlee LC, Spennymoor LC and Teesdale LC.
- 3 Many of the improvement projects will continue to develop with several starting in 2022/23.

**Recommendations**

- 4 Members of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note this update and overall progress on the programme.

**Background**

- 5 Three key decision reports have been presented to Cabinet on the leisure centre transformation programme:

- i. January 2020, set out the original strategic context and initial proposals for the programme;
    - ii. March 2021, covered the initial site selection proposals for the new build leisure centres and;
    - iii. September 2021 set out the due diligence work undertaken on the new build site selection and provided an overview of the overall programme.
- 6 It is proposed that a third report will be presented to Cabinet early in 2022, setting out the further work which has been undertaken on the Seaham site locations and what options are available. This report will also cover a wider and more comprehensive update on the timeline, programme deliverable and finances.
  - 7 Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report in March 2021 outlining development of the leisure centre transformation programme and the emerging impact of Covid-19. The committee received a further report in October 2021, setting out the plans for consultation and the key details relating to the first leisure conversation phase.
  - 8 A three-stage process of consultation and engagement was set out in the September 2021 Cabinet report. The first leisure conversation (covering; Abbey LC, Spennymoor LC, Teesdale LC and Peterlee LC) phase took place between the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 and the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2021. During the 4-week consultation period a considerable range of engagement methods were used to seek the views of residents and key specialist groups.
  - 9 The first conversation phase also captured feedback from members of the ESC OSC via formal written response and was fed into the body of information collated from the overall conversation period.
  - 10 Overall, the first cohort of conversations received a good response across a range of engagement channels. Almost forty-five thousand people visited the consultation website or engaged with the council's social media channels. The programme team lead several different engagement opportunities, with more than 300 customers, residents and visitors discussing the proposals through in-site face to face sessions at leisure venues and via a range of special interest sessions and customer focus groups. Although the digital engagement survey attracted a relatively small number of respondents (421), this was still very useful and is in no way a reflection of the digital engagement approach, given the numbers who interacted with the web and social media information.
  - 11 Overall, the response to the digital survey and the responses across the other engagement channels suggest an overriding positivity towards the

planned investments. The feedback received suggests that each project should proceed as planned, where there is feedback noting any minor points, this will be considered in the final stages of design work. Those users & clubs directly affected by the proposals will continue to be engaged and where appropriate mitigating arrangements will be explored further.

- 12 The second phase of leisure conversations (covering; Louisa Centre in Stanley, Riverside in Chester-Le-Street, Meadowfield LC and Newton Aycliffe LC) will commence later in March

## Programme Overview

- 13 It is forecast that several improvements, except for Shildon, Wolsingham and Freemans Quay, can commence in 2022/23. Shildon and Wolsingham will be the subject of a second phase when further options have been developed for both sites. Freemans Quay improvements will be finalised when contractual income-share arrangements expire.
- 14 Work has continued across the new build and refurbishment projects and the current works planned for each facility are outlined below. This is still being developed and will be further refined as the schemes continue to be designed as well as factoring in contributions from consultation and engagement activities.

<b>Spennymoor</b>	
<b>Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation complete</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocate the main reception to the centre of the building, creating a better / closer link to the town centre and high street</li> <li>• Improve the walkway / route from the main car park to the new entrance</li> <li>• Co-locate the library into the leisure centre as well as a staff work area and community space</li> <li>• Utilise the area where reception is currently located to expand and improve on the leisure offer by installing a soft play area</li> <li>• Install Café provision</li> <li>• Improve and add to the water play features offered by the leisure pool (sprays and fountains and interactive sensory wall)</li> <li>• Using the opportunity to resolve various capitalised maintenance issues and to improve environmental sustainability</li> </ul>	
<b><u>Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation Outcomes</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposals will proceed broadly as planned and introduce the changes to the activity and facility offer.</li> <li>• Lots of positive comments were received about the family focus of the venue and the new activity and facility proposals. But this also</li> </ul>	

<b>Spennymoor</b>	
<b>Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation complete</b>	
<p>highlighted the need to ensure the new offer was supported by the right ancillaries, such as baby changing, buggy parks etc. Therefore, the designs are being reviewed to consider the inclusion of such things to support the overall offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were many comments about the plans for the activity programme and now that the facilities and activities have been confirmed, work can commence on programme reviews, which will be shared with customers and residents as it develops.</li> </ul>	

<b>Teesdale</b>	
<b>Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation complete</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New reception area and reception desk</li> <li>• Existing pool changing to be converted into a modern changing village</li> <li>• Installation of a Wellbeing offer (centred around toning)</li> <li>• Essential maintenance issues and improvements / modernisation to the customer environment</li> <li>• Upgrades to pool plant to modernise the facilities behind the scenes and to improve pool water quality standards</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation Outcomes</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposals will proceed broadly as planned and introduce the changes to the activity and facility offer.</li> <li>• Comments were received in relation to the proposed new changing village for the pool, and consideration will be given to include more private areas and facilities as well as how best to integrate the pool and dry changing rooms.</li> <li>• There were many comments about the plans for the activity programme and now that the facilities and activities have been confirmed, work can commence on programme reviews, which will be shared with customers and residents as it develops.</li> </ul>	

<b>Abbey</b>	
<b>Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation complete</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentrating on improving and locating the fitness offer to the first floor to overall modernise and improve the gym facilities.</li> </ul>	

<b>Abbey</b>	
<b>Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation complete</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install a large-scale play centre in the main hall, utilising soft play for 0-5 years as well as more adventure focussed activities for older children and young adults that maximise physical activity and fun through play.</li> <li>• Installation of a Wellbeing offer (centred around toning) to expand the health benefits and commercial opportunity at the site</li> <li>• Improve the group exercise spaces to allow for the development of a new and broader programme of activity</li> <li>• Alterations to the site to reflect the new mix of facilities such as improvements to changing rooms and provision of suitable toilet facilities</li> <li>• Install Café &amp; Catering offer</li> </ul>	
<b><u>Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation Outcomes</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposals will proceed broadly as planned and introduce the changes to the activity and facility offer</li> <li>• The changing rooms were noted in numerous responses and so the project will consider refurbishing these spaces to improve them and ensure that they work well alongside the new offer.</li> <li>• The provision of Sauna and Steam was a theme within the responses and although marginal, it has been decided to include a sauna facility.</li> <li>• There were many comments about the plans for the activity programme and now that the facilities and activities have been confirmed, work can commence on programme reviews, which will be shared with customers and residents as it develops.</li> <li>• A number of clubs and key users provided comments on the impact of the changes to them, officers will be in touch with each club and user group to continue discussions on how we can best manage the changes.</li> </ul>	

<b>Peterlee</b>	
<b>Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation complete</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocate the fitness suite and improve the overall offer</li> <li>• Create a “destination” venue, which is based around soft play, adventure play and tenpin bowling</li> <li>• Improve the group exercise spaces</li> <li>• Install a catering offer</li> </ul>	

<b>Peterlee</b>	
<b>Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation complete</b>	
<p><b><u>Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation Outcomes</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposals will proceed broadly as planned and introduce the changes to the activity and facility offer.</li> <li>• There were many comments about the plans for the activity programme and now that the facilities and activities have been confirmed, work can commence on programme reviews, which will be shared with customers and residents as it develops.</li> <li>• A number of clubs and key users provided comments on the impact of the changes to them, officers will be in touch with each club and user group to continue discussions on how we can best manage the changes.</li> </ul>	

<b>Riverside</b>	
<b>Proposals – Cohort 2 Leisure Conversation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install 2 x new 3G pitches on the site</li> <li>• Resurface of the existing 3G pitch</li> <li>• Essential works to the athletics track and ancillary facilities to return it to the required standard to meet club and community needs</li> <li>• Improvements to floodlighting</li> <li>• Refurbish the changing rooms in the pavilion</li> </ul> <p>The works planned for the summer this year focus on the outdoor facilities only, other works, including the indoor areas will come in early 2023.</p>	

<b>Louisa Centre</b>	
<b>Proposals – Cohort 2 Leisure Conversation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install a large-scale play centre, utilising soft play for 0-5 years as well as more adventure focussed activities (TAG Active / Clip &amp; Climb) within half the sports hall for older children and young adults, which together will maximise physical activity and fun through play.</li> <li>• Installation of a Wellbeing offer (centred around toning) to expand the health benefits and commercial opportunity at the site and in that area</li> <li>• Install Café / catering offer to support the junior play and adventure play activities</li> <li>• Expansion and improvement of group exercise spaces</li> </ul>	

<b>Meadowfield</b>	
<b>Proposals – Cohort 2 Leisure Conversation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to group exercise spaces to allow for more classes and development of the offer. This will aid the service to realise latent fitness demand for this site</li> <li>• Concentrating on the improvement of the fitness offer through the transformation of the sports hall into a gym and functional exercise area</li> <li>• Essential maintenance works to changing and toilets</li> </ul>	

15 Newton Aycliffe and Consett are both projects which are focussed upon addressing key maintenance issues and refurbishing targeted facilities. Consett is concerned with addressing the latent build defects with the pool and Newton Aycliffe, which has already benefitted from significant transformation due to the collocation of the library, is focussed on refurbishment of certain changing rooms and toilet areas.

16 In addition to maintenance works, Newton Aycliffe and Consett will both see changes and updates to the activity programming and services offered.

17 All sites will, in addition to changes to their activity and facility mix also receive a comprehensive programme review.

18 The below table covers the proposed facility mix for the new build leisure venues, although due to the early stage of design it requires further review to confirm the exact nature of each of the facilities at each site. Planning is also underway to prepare for consultation on the new build facility mix, although this is subject to sufficient design progress, to ensure there are suitable plans and resources to share.

<b>New Builds – facility mix core principles</b>	
<b>Proposals</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming Pools</li> <li>• Children’s play</li> <li>• Fitness Suite</li> <li>• Group Exercise Studios</li> <li>• Food &amp; Beverage offer</li> <li>• Outdoor areas / space</li> </ul>	

19 At this stage the exact timeline for each project is still being finalised and this is not usually available until later in the design process when

key contractors have been engaged to ascertain supply chain and sub-contractor availability and capacity.

- 20 The below table sets out the high-level roadmap for delivery of consultation and engagement, through to project delivery, however, it is subject to a number of influencers and is therefore a best estimate at this current time.

Activity	Date
Cohort 1 Leisure Conversation (Abbey, Peterlee, Spennymoor & Teesdale) - <b>COMPLETE</b>	Oct – Nov 2021
Cohort 2 Leisure Conversation (Newton Aycliffe, Meadowfield, Louisa & Riverside) – <b>SCHEDULED</b>	Mar – Apr 2022

## Finance

- 21 The council has taken a prudent approach within the cost envelope and has applied a degree of contingency and risk to each of the schemes. Many have been costed within the upper quartile of anticipated costs, based on BCIS rates. These prudent measures should allow for a degree of change within the overall cost envelope and allow for some degree of risk to be managed.
- 22 Although the cost plans to date have been carefully considered, given the volatile nature of the current market, the project team have commissioned our designers to re-qualify budgets.
- 23 Key construction indicators from a number of sources are reporting price increases year on year between August 2020 and August 2021, in a range of 16% - 23%.
- 24 Ensuring a focus on low carbon and delivering a path to Net Zero, has also added further additional cost considerations. The average net affect of such measures on projects is circa 18%.
- 25 VAT continues to be a key consideration for the programme and officers are working to assess how expenditure on the leisure transformation programme, key maintenance activities and decarbonisation priorities can be managed within the councils 5% partial exemption position.
- 26 Many other factors are also key considerations;
- High levels of demand.
  - Cost of labour.

- Availability of professional services.
- Availability of materials (potential for delays).
- Contractors will not fix price bringing increased uncertainty.

## Procurement

- 27 The finalised procurement approach will progress the programme in a timely and expeditious manner. Utilising a blended solution, with the new build projects and refurbishments at Abbey, Louisa and Peterlee being delivered by Alliance Leisure, a specialist leisure development partner; at this time the other projects are being designed and delivered by the in-house design and build teams.

## Expected Benefits

- 28 The overall delivery of the leisure transformation programme is expected to support a range of the council's overall plans and strategies with the key specific benefits noted below;

• An Increased social value and a considerable social return on investment
• Increased levels of physical activity and an emphasis on key groups
• Improving the physical, mental and social wellbeing of residents
• Contributing towards the regeneration of our towns and villages
• Supporting recovery from the pandemic with investment in County Durham
• Creating places, spaces and experiences for residents and visitors of the county
• Supporting the delivery of the council's climate emergency response plan
• Assisting towards the council's carbon reduction targets
• Achieving BREEAM accreditation for our new leisure centres
• Reduced maintenance and condition liability
• Reduced subsidy for the leisure services
• Improved performance across a range of key performance indicators
• Provide facilities which meet rising customer expectations

## Consultation & Engagement

- 29 The transformation proposals vary in scale; from new builds and extensive refurbishments, to more light touch, but still transformative, projects. The approach to engagement will continue to be proportionate to the level of changes being put forward for consideration.
- 30 Construction of a new leisure centre is a significant issue for any community, so a formal consultation process (across a 6-week period)

will be carried out around the development of the projects for these new venues.

- 31 The level of change across the refurbishment projects is relatively minimal. Consequently, a leisure conversation engagement approach (across a 4-week period) is being taken whereby customers and residents will be able to participate in a shorter programme of 'conversation' activities to create a dialogue and inform facility mix plans.
- 32 Consultation and conversation activity will happen in phased cohorts to correspond with the development stages of the individual projects. Only projects ready for consultation will be brought forward in each cohort.
- 33 The same approach will be taken for each cohort to develop and maintain a constant dialogue with various users and special interest groups. The following activities will be delivered as part of each stage:
  - Engage with elected Members/MPs
  - Engage with sector and sports bodies
  - Engage with existing customers and members (via email, directing them to the website)
  - Staff - Briefing notes & workshops (face-face and Microsoft Teams sessions for staff unable to attend in person)
  - Targeted and specific communications with those affected user groups/clubs
  - Engage with key Specialist Interest Groups:
    - Disabilities (DCC Disabilities Forum)
    - Older People (Both an existing customer and external reference group)
    - Young People (young person led engagement programme via youth parliament)
    - Families (Existing focused customer forum)
  - Website/ FAQ's / Online Survey
  - On-site face to face sessions delivered in each venue and varied at different times of the day.
  - Communications through Social Media/Apps/Digital Screens/Press
  - Comms Activities undertaken throughout to support and promote the conversation
- 34 The above approach will ensure a sufficient breadth of engagement activities and will be both proportional to the changes and reasonable in terms of duration and content to support the phasing of the capital programme.

## Conclusion

- 35 Overall, the leisure centre transformation programme is progressing and is still set to broadly deliver upon the initial plans and proposals, subject to further phases of leisure conversation and formal consultation. The programme is still working to the original budget envelope and despite challenges in this regard the programme team are taking care to manage this closely.

## Background papers

- Cabinet reports –
- January 2020  
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s117604/1%20Leisure%20Centre%20Transformation%20Part%20A%20002.pdf>
- March 2021  
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s133573/Leisure%20%20Cover%20Transformation.pdf>
- September 2021  
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s144918/Leisure%20Transformation%20report.pdf>

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The Council has the power under s19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to provide, and charge for recreational facilities.

Local authorities can recover all VAT it is legitimately charged and have special status in VAT law by virtue of Section 33 of the VAT Act 1994 (as amended). As a Section 33 body, the council can recover VAT on expenditure incurred in generating exempt income, subject to this not exceeding 5% of total VAT recovered.

### **Finance**

The council has set a £78 million pound budget for the programme and must also manage the expenditure on leisure in relation to the VAT position noted in the above legal implications section.

### **Consultation**

Consultation has been completed in a number of ways through the programme; through formal consultation on the new build site selection and supported by an activity and facility mix consultation exercise in December 2020.

The programme is now focussing on a range of consultation and engagement activities through both formal consultation and several leisure conversation phases centred upon site specific proposals.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

The programme will have a positive impact on the Council's equality duty. An equality impact assessment (EIA) was conducted as part of the cabinet report in March 2021, regarding site selection preferences. This identified 3 key areas of focus, including young people, older people, and disabled people. Using the insight from this initial EIA the ongoing engagement activities will include dialogue with key special interest focus groups to ensure that sufficient feedback is included in the designs as they progress.

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable

### **Climate Change**

The Leisure Centre Transformation Programme should provide a contribution towards corporate carbon reduction targets of the Council's Climate Emergency Response Plan.

## **Crime and Disorder**

Although not specifically detailed in this report, it is still expected that the Leisure Centre Transformation Programme will have a positive contribution to overall social value, which will include crime and disorder, but also a much broader and holistic impact across a number of dimensions.

## **Staffing**

Although not directly referenced in this report, the programme does have the potential to create an increase FTE in order to deliver the improvements identified across the leisure centre venues. This is all wrapped into financial considerations across the programme and subject to further detailed work.

## **Accommodation**

Although not directly detailed in this report, the leisure transformation programme will of course have an impact upon council buildings, namely the leisure centre venues. However there is the possibility that with possible opportunities for colocation and shared services, that this programme may have a broader impact overall.

## **Risk**

There are a number of programme level risks identified as there are with any significant programme of this nature. These are being managed through the programme and individual project governance mechanisms.

## **Procurement**

All procurement in relation to this programme will be undertaken under the Council's contract procurement rules and with advice of the corporate procurement team.

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# Leisure Transformation



1. Background
2. Proposals
3. Consultation & engagement
4. Next steps

# Background

- Key Decision points with Cabinet in January 2020, March 2021, September 2021
- March 2021: agreed in principle preferred sites for new build leisure venues and reaffirm commitment to the leisure transformation programme
- September 2021: confirmed final sites for new leisure venues in Bishop Auckland and Chester-Le-Street
- Leisure Transformation is a key programme within the overall Towns and Villages strategy
- Reports to ESC OSC in March 2021 and October 2021
- Feedback from ESC OSC captured as part of Cohort 1 leisure conversation
- Cohort 1 complete and Cohort 2 to be scheduled.

# Expected Benefits

- An Increased social value and a considerable social return on investment
- Increased levels of physical activity and an emphasis on key groups
- Improving the physical, mental and social wellbeing of residents
- Contributing towards the regeneration of our towns and villages
- Supporting recovery from the pandemic with investment in County Durham
- Creating places, spaces and experiences for residents and visitors of the county
- Supporting the delivery of the council's climate emergency response plan
- Assisting towards the council's carbon reduction targets
- Achieving BREEAM accreditation for our new leisure centres
- Reduced maintenance and condition liability
- Reduced subsidy for the leisure services

# Confirmed Plans: Refurbishments – Cohort 1

TEESDALE	ABBEY	PETERLEE	SPENNYMOOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing room refurbishment</li> <li>• Pool Changing village</li> <li>• Wellbeing Suite</li> <li>• General maintenance and customer environment improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Café</li> <li>• Soft Play</li> <li>• TAG Active</li> <li>• Fitness Suite</li> <li>• Wellbeing provision</li> <li>• Sauna</li> <li>• Group Exercise Studios</li> </ul> <p><i>*changing room refurb to reflect the change in the activity mix – to include a sauna</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Café</li> <li>• Soft Play</li> <li>• Cyber Towers</li> <li>• Adventure Climb</li> <li>• Ten Pin Bowling</li> <li>• Fitness Suite</li> <li>• Group Exercise Studios</li> <li>• Wellbeing provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Café</li> <li>• Soft Play</li> <li>• Water Play</li> <li>• Library service</li> <li>• Central reception</li> </ul>

# Proposals: Refurbishments – Cohort 2

LOUISA STANLEY	Meadowfield	Newton Aycliffe	Riverside
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Café</li> <li>• Soft Play</li> <li>• TAG Active</li> <li>• Cyber Towers</li> <li>• Adventure Climb</li> <li>• Wellbeing provision</li> <li>• Group Exercise Studios</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitness Suite extension</li> <li>• Group Ex Studio</li> <li>• Wellbeing provision</li> <li>• Outdoor changing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Maintenance</li> <li>• Sauna and Steam refurbishment</li> <li>• Public Toilet refurbishment</li> <li>• Programme review</li> </ul>	<p>Sporting Hub Site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletics refurbishment</li> <li>• Daytime education use</li> <li>• X2 new Football Pitches</li> <li>• Floodlighting improvements</li> <li>• Partnership project</li> </ul>

# Proposals: Refurbishments

Shildon*	Consett	Wolsingham	Freemans Quay
<p>Athletics Track refurbishment already completed.</p> <p>Further plans are to be confirmed, but may include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General maintenance improvements</li> <li>• Expansion of the outdoor sports offer</li> </ul>	<p>Reinstating the pool</p> <p>Programme review</p> <p>Café provision</p>	<p>Essential maintenance to the building, car parking and pool has already been completed as well as improvements to the Digital offer.</p> <p>Further plans are to be confirmed, including a programme review</p>	<p>Immersive Group Exercise alterations</p> <p><i>*proceed depending on contract arrangements</i></p>

# Finance

- Current construction industry market conditions are fluctuating
- Current budgets set using upper quartile of BCIS rates to apply some level of inflationary protection
- Risk allocations and contingencies included in the overall cost envelope
- Prudent approach to risk within the programme budget envelope.
- Programme will be subject to the findings of site surveys, material availability, supply chain and sub-contractor availability and capacity.

# Consultation & Engagement

- Current plan, but subject to ongoing design progress

	2021				2022											
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Leisure Transformation Communications &amp; Engagement plan</b>																
<b>Cohort One (Sept – Nov 2021)</b>																
Refurbishments: Abbey, Peterlee, Spennymoor, Teesdale		■	■													
Consett (Independent communications)		■														
<b>Cohort Two (Spring 2022)</b>																
New builds: Bishop Auckland and Chester-Le-Street							■	■	■							
Refurbishments: Louisa Centre, Meadowfield, Newton Aycliffe, Riverside								■	■							
<b>Cohort Three (Late summer/autumn 2022)</b>																
Seaham - TBC													■	■	■	
Wolsingham, Shildon, Freeman's Quay - TBC													■	■		

# Consultation & Engagement

- Press Release / E Shot for Social Media/Apps/Digital screens
- Brief Members / MPs
- Reports to ESC OSC
- Internal DCC publications (Durham Buzz & Intranet)
- Engage with AAP Groups
- Engage with external reference groups: County Durham Partnership, Physical Activity Strategy Group, Sport England, Football Foundation
- Engage with Specialist interest Groups: Youth Parliament, Disabilities Group, Older People and Families
- Engage with Town & Parish Council's
- Engage with Leisure Members/Cubs/Stakeholders
- Drop in sessions at leisure venues – morning/ afternoon and evening
- Staff Face to Face briefing sessions
- Health Impact Assessment
- Equalities Impact Assessment

# Cohort 1 Outputs

Activity	Engagement
Digital survey	421
Specialist User Groups	294
Venue Drop-in Sessions	62
Media Stats (Website visits)	5,918
Media Stats (Socials)	39,844

Digital Survey	Frequency	% of total
Abbey Leisure Centre	176	41.8%
Peterlee Leisure Centre	123	29.2%
Spennymoor Leisure Centre	64	15.2%
Teesdale Leisure Centre	58	13.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- The first cohort leisure conversations was a valuable exercise – there was overall positivity towards the planned investments
- The feedback received suggests that plans for each venue should proceed as planned, given the overall support of residents.
- Minor points which were noted and will be considered in the final design developments
- Those users & clubs directly affected will continue to be engaged and where necessary mitigating arrangements put in place
- We plan to include more information on programme and activities in future communications.
- The reach of our digital engagement was good with a high number of visits to the councils consultation website and social media channels.

## 2022 Next Steps

- Complete the second Cohort of Leisure Conversations
- DCC Cabinet to consider site location and options for Seaham LC proposals
- Designs to progress for all schemes
- Budget position to be evaluated and submitted with further Cabinet report
- Plan for the delivery of subsequent consultation stages
- Commence refurbishment project delivery in 2022 on relevant projects

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



**28 March 2022**

**Draft Physical Activity  
Strategic Delivery  
Framework**

**Report of Amy Harhoff – Corporate Director for Regeneration  
Economy and Growth**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the draft Physical Activity Strategic Delivery Framework (PASDF) for Durham County Council’s Culture Sport and Tourism Service and to seek input on its development.

**Executive summary**

- 2 Part of the Durham County Council Vision is to enable the people of County Durham to live long and independent lives. The evidence to support physical activity as a key component in achieving a good standard of health and wellbeing is overwhelming (Public Health England *'Everybody active, every day'*, Sport England *Uniting the Movement*).
- 3 The county is predominantly rural, with the Pennines in the west, a heritage coast in the east and one third of the county accessible green space. There are 14 council managed leisure facilities, 49 playing pitches, a large park and countryside estate and an extensive network of walking and cycling routes. Using these natural and purpose-built assets holistically and strategically to make positive physical activity lifestyle changes is the key purpose of the strategic delivery framework.
- 4 Durham County Council has a commitment to support everyone in the county to be active but, as inactivity levels in the county, and nationally,

have continued to increase post pandemic, there is a recognition that a new approach is needed to have a long-term impact on inactivity.

- 5 We have therefore reviewed our activity and strategic approach across sport, leisure and wellbeing delivery, and the strategies and drivers that inform it. This review has formed the basis of the draft PASDF.
- 6 The strategic delivery framework will support and provide delivery activity for the County Durham Physical Activity Strategy (PAS) currently in the development stage and scheduled for completion in June 2022. This is an overarching strategy led by Public Health with an alliance that includes the County Sports Partnership, Culture Sport and Tourism service and the Clinical Commissioning Groups. It will be developed in co-production with a number of community stakeholders to develop a whole systems approach to tackle inequalities in relation to physical activity and to develop effective and sustainable solutions.
- 7 The draft PASDF identifies the need to review and evaluate service priorities using Durham Insight and consultation to understand local needs, to look at gaps in provision, barriers to engagement and to ensure that everyone in the county can access quality and appropriate leisure services.
- 8 The benefit of physical activity supports the wider strategies within Durham County Council. The key strategies within the scope of the framework are:
  - County Durham Vision 2035 - to enable the priorities around More and Better jobs, People live long and independent lives, Connected communities.
  - Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy - ensuring all organisations and services within the county consider wellbeing as a common currency.
  - Inclusive Economic Strategy – influencing the commercial element of the service, the contribution towards employment, the saving to the county in relation to sickness absence and the long-term savings to the NHS.
  - Poverty Action Plan 2022-26 - to address the socio-economic factors associated with inequalities that prevent people from accessing our services.
  - Built Facilities Strategy – The County will make significant investment as part of a Leisure Transformation Programme. This will make our facilities fit for purpose, instilling a culture change around public perceptions of leisure facilities being a place to go when you are already fit and healthy, placing them at the centre

of a wellbeing community offer that is accessible, affordable and has an offer for everyone.

- Playing Pitch Strategy – setting out the priorities to improve playing pitch quality and access across the county

9 Nationally the framework also supports a number of cross cutting strategies and policy drivers to support people to get more active:

- DCMS Sporting Futures - The cross-government strategy to drive policy to contribute towards supporting people to get more active.
- UK Active more people more active more often - Campaign to improve the health of the nation through promoting active lifestyles.
- Sport England Uniting the Movement - A 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.
- Public Health England '*Everybody active, every day*' - A framework to provide a *national*, evidence-based approach to support all sectors to embed physical activity into the fabric of every lives.

10 The service aim is to support everyone in County Durham to be active every day.

11 This will be underpinned by objectives to redefine our service priorities:

- Develop new approaches to tackling inequalities, removing barriers to engagement by adapting services and finding solutions for our different target groups
- Engage communities in key decision making on programmes and activities for their local area through co-production
- Develop and deliver a diverse range of physical activity opportunities using local ambassadors to act as advocates
- Provide positive experiences by ensuring that we have a suitable trained workforce to engage and support inactive communities
- Contribute towards a partnership approach to develop a whole systems evidence-based approach to raise the importance of physical activity as a tool to change lives
- Work with partners, clubs and sports governing bodies to maximise resources linked to grass root sport and physical

activity and ensure that everyone is supported to reach their potential

- Promote both formal and informal physical activity close to home; investing in facilities and green spaces to maximise the potential of our environment
- Develop a campaign to support behaviour change promoting all aspects of a healthy, happy, and active life
- Provide robust systems to evaluate schemes, using a test and learn approach and to ensure that we can follow the customers journey to provide ongoing support

12 The next stage will be to develop a number of action plans, involving our communities to support their development and empowerment and to ensure that we are designing and developing services and initiatives with the people who need them the most.

13 Local insight will also be used to look at the patterns of activity and inactivity at each life stage and to develop targeted interventions:

- Start Well: Developing a positive attitude to physical activity from an early age, codesigning activities and programmes to engage early years and their parents
- Develop Well: Assisting school age children to achieve their full activity potential and to meet their recommended 60 mins a day
- Live Well: Putting physical activity at the heart of everyone's agenda to support and promote positive behaviour change
- Age Well: Tailoring activities and services to support resilience, reduce social isolation and to meet the needs and abilities of the adult population

14 A place-based approach will be used in areas of social and health deprivation to recognise different community needs and to ensure that residents are key influencers on all key decisions. Tested national models including This Girl Can and We are Undefeatable will be used to target and engage the key target groups or women and girls and those with long term health conditions that are the most disproportionately impacted.

15 The final stage will be to develop a range of measures, tools and indicators to ascertain the budget and resources needed to deliver the framework and to develop the sequence of actions that will allow us to progress.

- 16 The strategic framework will be finalised in June alongside the County Durham Physical Activity Strategy.

## **Recommendation**

- 17 That Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives the report, notes its content and comments accordingly.

## **Background**

- 18 The county has a population of over 533,000 (ONS, 2020). It is predominantly rural, with the Pennines in the west, a heritage coast in the east and one third of the county accessible green space. It is a county of great contrast with a post-industrial legacy that has created a complex social and cultural heritage. The county suffers from significant social, economic and health-related challenges and there is a 19-year difference in the number of years residents can expect to live in good health, depending on where they live in the county (ONS, 2009-2013). Two in five people in County Durham have a limited income, and 24% of the population report a limiting illness or disability which affects their day-to-day activities (Census, 2011).
- 19 31.2 % of the adult population in County Durham fail to achieve the minimum physical activity threshold of 150 minutes of moderate activity per week (Active Lives May 2019-20 which includes period affected by covid-19). The choices people make in relation to their activity is not solely based on individual preferences; it is influenced by where they live, their life skills and opportunities, by organisations, employment, society, policy makers, education and inherent inequalities.

### **Baseline:**

- County Durham is in the top 40% most deprived upper-tier local authorities in England, ranking as the 48th most deprived of 151 upper tier local authorities in England. Nearly half of our population live in the 30% most deprived areas nationally. For children this rises to 54%
- 60% of people with a long- term health condition are aged over 60 years
- 64.8% of adults are overweight or obese compared to 62.8% in England
- 1 in 10 (10.7%) reception children and 1 in 5 (22.7%) Year 6 children are obese. Levels are 1.5% higher in Year 6 age in our most deprived wards compared to the least deprived wards

## Activity levels:

- 31.2% of adults are inactive (doing less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week which includes people doing some activity but not enough to benefit their health)
- 18% of adults are doing no physical activity at all which is higher than the national average at 17%
- Women with a limiting illness or disability are much more inactive than men with the same condition (47% compared to 38%).
- Activity levels in children and young people are almost 5% lower than the national average.

20 Regular physical activity provides a range of physical and mental health, and social benefits, many of which are increasing issues for individuals, communities and society. It can also contribute to a range of wider social, environmental and economic benefits for individuals, communities and the county, such as reducing air pollution and increasing social and community cohesion.

21 The Chief Medical Officers guidelines for physical activity, published in 2019, identified 3 elements of physical activity that people should incorporate into their lives:

- Strengthening activity - muscle strengthening or balance at least 2 days a week
- Cardiovascular activity - a combination of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity activities that can be done at different intensities like cycling. They can be differentiated by the 'talk test': being able to talk but not sing indicates moderate intensity activity, while having difficulty talking without pausing is a sign of vigorous activity physical activity is an activity that noticeably accelerates the heart and breathing rate
- Minimising inactive and sedentary behaviours such as sitting, reclining or lying posture during waking hours (e.g. sitting) and breaking up long periods of inactivity with at least light physical activity.

22 Culture, Sport and Tourism offers the following services:

- Leisure Facilities. The County has invested £80m as part of a Leisure Transformation Programme which will refurbish facilities in existing facilities and build three new facilities at Bishop Auckland, Chester Le Street and Seaham. This will make our facilities fit for purpose and the aim is to instil a culture change around public perceptions of leisure facilities being a place to go when you are already fit and healthy, placing them at the centre

of a community offer that is accessible, affordable and has an offer for everyone. This will include a diverse digital physical activity offer, a wellbeing offer and a recreational offer targeted at families and children and young people.

- **Outdoor Spaces.** In line with the Playing Pitch Strategy, Durham County Council is investing in the 49 council owned pitches to improve the standards and the offer available to local sports clubs. This will help to grow field-based team sports across the county, promoting community cohesion and helping many children and young people to establish a fitness focus from an early age. The service also works closely with internal partners to promote active travel, parks and countryside, heritage coast and our Rights of Way and cycle paths.
- **At Home.** The My Wellness Technogym app is available to everyone in County Durham to access support to get active in the home. This includes On Demand, live and hybrid exercise classes at all levels all led by our wellbeing coaches. It also provides tips and programmes to exercise in your own time such as the Couch to 5k. The library books on wheels service to those who need extra support offers an exercise DVD and the service is currently piloting daily gentle exercise classes on Freeview TV.
- **Targeted Interventions.** In partnership with Public Health the service directly delivers, supports and facilitates a range of preventative and universal community-based programmes including walking, running, cycling and community exercise classes. County Durham is one of 10 national pilot sites for 'We are Undefeatable' to support people with long term health conditions to build physical activity into their everyday lives. The service has a comprehensive children's offer from babies to teens including Ready Set Go supporting physical literacy in nurseries and Splash Tots to start you on your swimming lesson journey, through to Young Lifestyles gym memberships and Rookie Lifeguards. The service is a partner in 'Fun and Food' to offer free activities such as swimming, theatre trips and sports camps with a meal or snack to children on free school meals and their families during the school holiday periods.
- **Supporting the voluntary sector.** Volunteer Durham is a service led scheme which has supported 3000 individuals to develop a diverse range of skills, experience, and knowledge and links them to volunteer opportunities in their local community. Club Durham

provides sport and physical activity voluntary organisations with access to advice, information and grant funding.

- Active Places, a place based, partnership approach to improving activity levels. This is currently being piloted as Active Shildon which benefits from strong local partnerships and Active Valleys supporting the rural former mining area of Esh Winning and Ushaw Moor West, Bearpark and Witton Gilbert and Langley Park Cornsley and Satley.

The council also manages a network of parks and open spaces and walking and cycling routes including 150 miles of railway paths. Many of the service activities use these assets.

23 The service aims will be achieved through the following outcomes:

- Active People: ensuring that everyone can access provision and is encouraged to be active
- Active Places: providing a physical environment that enables and encourages activity in our facilities and our green open spaces
- Active Society: promoting the importance of physical activity towards achieving health and wellbeing. Involving residents in developing local services to suit their needs.
- Active Systems: working together with physical activity networks and partners to embed physical activity into everyday lives.
- Active Enablers: developing a diverse and suitably trained workforce. Using local insight and intelligence to understand local needs. Providing a robust Marcoms plan to ensure that we reach people to engage them into positive activities.

## Conclusion

24 Inactivity is a complex issue, there are no quick solutions to changing people's behaviour and in modern society people are battling priorities that often don't include keeping active. The inequalities gap associated with health deprivation is widening, and Durham County Council has set out a vision to support people to live long and independent lives.

25 Physical activity is a recognised contributing factor in achieving this vision and the County Durham Physical Activity Strategy will aim to provide a whole systems approach to have a long-term impact on inactivity and behaviour change. The PASDF has an important role to play in achieving this and will set a new direction that will ensure our readiness in contributing to the County Durham PAS and that we reach and engage local communities and break down the barriers to maximise our indoor and outdoor assets, making a positive contribution to

improving the lives of our residents at every stage, whatever their age, gender or background.

## **Background papers**

None

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**Contact:** Alison Clark  
Head of Culture Sport and  
Tourism

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

Not applicable

### **Finance**

Activity will be delivered within existing service budgets and through external fundraising.

### **Consultation**

Not applicable to the framework but the next stage will involve conversation activity with communities and stakeholders.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Equality is at the heart of the framework. EIA screening will be undertaken as the framework is finalised.

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable

### **Climate Change**

The framework supports the active travel, green transport, climate emergency plan.

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable

### **Staffing**

Not applicable

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable

### **Risk**

Not applicable

### **Procurement**

Not applicable

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



**28 March 2022**

**Neighbourhoods & Climate Change –  
Quarter 3: Forecast of Revenue and  
Capital Outturn 2021/22**

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**Report of Corporate Directors**

**Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources**

**Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director Neighbourhoods & Climate  
Change**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide details of the forecast outturn budget for this service area highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget, based on the position to the end of Quarter 3 (31 December 2021).

**Executive summary**

- 2 This report provides an overview of the updated forecast of outturn, based on the position at Quarter 3 for 2021/22. It provides an analysis of the budgets and forecast outturn for the service areas falling under the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and complements the reports considered and agreed by Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- 3 The updated position is that there is a forecast cash limit underspend of £1.006 million, against a revised budget of £109.255 million.
- 4 The service is forecast to require funding of £5.651 million to support budgets where income is lower or costs higher due to the impact of COVID. This is the net position after also taking account of savings resulting from the impact of COVID.

- 5 The revised service capital budget is £45.405 million with expenditure to 31 December of £29.636 million.
- 6 Details of the reasons for under and overspending against relevant budget heads are disclosed in the report.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- 7 Environment & Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

### **Background**

- 8 County Council approved the Revenue and Capital budgets for 2021/22 at its meeting on 24 February 2021. These budgets have subsequently been revised to account for changes in grant (additions/reductions), budget transfers between service groupings and budget re-profiling between years (in terms of capital). This report covers the financial position for the following budgets of the services within the scope of this committee;
  - (a) Revenue Budget - £109.255 million (original £105.731 million)
  - (b) Capital Programme – £45.405 million (original £58.740 million)
- 9 The summary financial statements contained in the report cover the financial year 2021/22 and show: -
  - (a) The approved annual budget;
  - (b) The forecast income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's financial management system;
  - (c) The variance between the annual budget and the forecast outturn;
  - (d) For the revenue budget, adjustments for items outside of the cash limit (outside of the Service's control) to take into account such items as capital charges and use of / or contributions to earmarked reserves.

### **Forecast Revenue Outturn 2021/22**

- 10 The service is reporting a cash limit underspend of **£1.006 million** against a revised budget of **£109.255 million**.

- 11 The table below compares the forecast outturn with the budget by Head of Service. A further table is shown at Appendix 2 analysing the position by Subjective Analysis (i.e. type of expense).

### Analysis by Head of Service £'000

	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Items Outside Cash Limit	Earmarked Reserves	Net COVID adjustment	Cash Limit Variance
Head of Service	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Environmental Services	54,229	58,926	4,697	0	242	(5,168)	(229)
Technical Services	13,218	14,156	938	0	(1,004)	(345)	(411)
Community Protection	4,786	4,643	(142)	0	(138)	(20)	(300)
Partnerships & Comm Engagement	7,551	7,147	(404)	0	493	(118)	(29)
NCC Central Costs	29,470	29,434	(37)	0	0	0	(37)
<b>Total</b>	<b>109,255</b>	<b>114,306</b>	<b>5,051</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(407)</b>	<b>(5,650)</b>	<b>(1,006)</b>

- 12 The cash limit underspend of £1.006 million takes into account adjustments for sums outside the cash limit such as redundancy costs that are met from corporate reserves and use of / contributions to earmarked reserves.
- 13 The main reasons accounting for the outturn position are as follows:
- Environmental Services is forecast to be £0.229 million underspent. This is mainly resulting from staffing underspends of £99,000 in Neighbourhood Wardens where staff are not yet at the top of the grade, £0.107 million increased income for trade waste, £0.105 million increased income for commercial waste at the waste transfer stations and £0.106 million savings due to staff turnover. These have been offset by additional transport costs of £0.188 million due to additional vehicles being retained in the service for staff health and safety reasons, until social distancing is phased out
  - Technical Services is underspent by £0.411 million. Strategic Highways is £0.503 million underspent, which is mainly due to

electricity savings in streetlighting, and there are savings of £136,000 associated with the vacant Head of Service post. These savings are partially offset by an overspend in revenue maintenance to cover additional work on gullies, drainage, structures and emergency action work, and an overspend in trading areas due to reduced income

- (c) Consumer Protection is forecast to underspend by £0.300 million. There is a net underspend on employees of £0.161 million mainly due to vacant posts which are planned to be filled next financial year, and additional fees and charges income of £99,000. The outturn for this service also includes planned expenditure of £1.353 million on COVID-19 Outbreak Management activities, which is offset by specific government grant
  - (d) Partnerships & Community Engagement is forecast to underspend by £29,000, mainly due a net underspend on employees. The outturn for this service also includes planned expenditure of £2.263 million on COVID-19 Outbreak Management funded activities. The budgets in this area have been augmented with £2.240 million of funding drawn down from the Towns & Villages Reserve to increase Members' budgets by £1.26 million, and AAP budgets by £0.980 million. This year there also an additional £1.400 million being provided to AAPs for Community Recovery that is being funded from the Local Council Tax Support Grant.
- 14 The forecast outturn position has been adjusted by £0.407 million relating to contributions to and from reserves and £5.651 million net COVID adjustment. **Appendix 3** provides a more detailed breakdown of variance explanations at Head of Service level.
- 15 The forecast Cash Limit Reserve position at 31 March 2022 is £1.900 million after taking the latest outturn position into account.

### **Capital Programme**

- 16 The Neighbourhoods & Climate Change capital programme was revised at year-end for budget re-phased from 2020/21. This increased the 2021/22 original budget to a level of £58.740 million. Since then, reports to the MOWG have detailed further revisions, for grant

additions/reductions, budget transfers and budget re-profiling into later years. The revised budget now stands at £45.405 million.

17 Summary financial performance for 2021/22 is shown below.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Revised Annual Budget 2021/22 £000</b>	<b>Actual Spend to 31 Dec £000</b>	<b>Remaining Budget 2021/22 £000</b>
Community Protection	246	157	89
Environmental Services	12,827	6,788	6,039
Technical Services	30,275	21,671	8,604
Partnerships & Community Engagement	2,057	1,020	1,037
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,405</b>	<b>29,636</b>	<b>15,769</b>

18 Officers continue to carefully monitor capital expenditure on a monthly basis. Actual spend for the first 9 months amounts to **£29.636 million**. **Appendix 4** provides a more detailed breakdown of spend across the major projects contained within the capital programme.

19 The key areas of spend during the year to date are on Highways and Bridges (£21.543 million), Environmental Schemes (£3.404 million) and Crematoria Schemes (£1.357 million). Other areas of the programme are profiled to be implemented during the remainder of the year and at year end the actual outturn performance will be compared against the revised budgets and service and project managers will need to account for any budget variance.

### **Background papers**

- Cabinet Report (16 March 2022) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/22 – Period to 31 December 2021.

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**Contact:** Phil Curran

Tel: 03000 261967

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Council's Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements. This report shows the forecast spend against budgets agreed by the Council in February 2021 in relation to the 2021/22 financial year.

### **Finance**

Financial implications are detailed throughout the report which provides an analysis of the revenue and capital outturn position alongside details of balance sheet items such as earmarked reserves held by the service grouping to support its priorities.

### **Consultation**

Not applicable.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Not applicable.

### **Climate Change**

Not applicable.

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable.

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable.

### **Staffing**

Not applicable.

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable.

### **Risk**

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Councils Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements.

### **Procurement**

The outcome of procurement activity is factored into the financial projections included in the report

**Appendix 2: NEIGHBOURHOODS & CLIMATE CHANGE Forecast  
Outturn at Q3 – Subjective Analysis**

<b>NCC Subjective Analysis</b>	<b>Revised Annual Budget</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Items Outside Cash Limit</b>	<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>Net COVID adjustment</b>	<b>NCC Cash Limit Variance</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Employees	60,685	59,820	(865)	0	(199)	(637)	(1,701)
Premises	7,842	7,706	(136)	0	100	(22)	(58)
Transport	18,420	21,288	2,868	0	(193)	(685)	1,990
Supplies & Services	24,626	24,432	(194)	0	(23)	10	(207)
Third Party Payments	46,994	46,119	(875)	0	(264)	(3,734)	(4,873)
Transfer Payments	6,238	7,019	781	0	0	0	781
Capital	21,404	21,404	0	0	0	0	0
Central Costs	10,469	10,705	236	0	(4)	0	232
DRF	2,905	3,748	843	0	0	0	843
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>199,583</b>	<b>202,241</b>	<b>2,658</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(583)</b>	<b>(5,068)</b>	<b>(2,993)</b>
Grant	(6,946)	(7,693)	(747)	0	179	(118)	(686)
Contributions	(2,081)	(2,366)	(285)	0	197	0	(88)
Sales	(624)	(607)	17	0	0	0	17
Charges	(12,664)	(13,430)	(766)	0	0	(65)	(831)
Rents	(91)	(95)	(4)	0	0	0	(4)
Recharges	(66,480)	(61,459)	5,021	0	200	(399)	4,422
Other Income	(1,442)	(2,285)	(843)	0	0	0	(843)
<b>Gross Income</b>	<b>(90,328)</b>	<b>(87,935)</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>(582)</b>	<b>1,987</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>109,255</b>	<b>114,306</b>	<b>5,051</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>(5,650)</b>	<b>(1,006)</b>

### Appendix 3: Head of Service Analysis – Environmental Services

	Variance	Explanation
<b>Head of Environment</b>	(6)	Minor variance
<b>Environment &amp; Design</b>	109	<b>£156k</b> approved overspend on Crimdon Dene Coastal Hub capital build <b>(£10k)</b> underspend on solar panel maintenance <b>(£28k)</b> underspend on staffing due to phased retirement and a part time post <b>(£9k)</b> underspend on various supplies and services
<b>North Penines AONB</b>	0	No variance
<b>Clean &amp; Green</b>	188	<b>£188k</b> overspend on transport mainly due to additional Covid vehicles being retained for staff health and safety reasons
<b>Depots</b>	(185)	<b>(£255k)</b> managed underspend to part fund additional costs on the Morrison Busty workshop capital project in 22/23 <b>£65k</b> overspend on electricity following installation of electric heaters at Meadow field <b>£5k</b> overspend on supplies
<b>Fleet</b>	(72)	<b>(£38k)</b> underspend on staffing due to management vacancies <b>(£34k)</b> overachieved income
<b>Neighbourhood Protection</b>	(25)	<b>(£25k)</b> underspend on supplies across the service
<b>Refuse &amp; Recycling</b>	(111)	<b>(£111k)</b> overachieved income on trade waste
<b>Strategic Waste</b>	(127)	<b>(£105k)</b> overachieved income on private trade waste <b>(£22k)</b> underspend on general maintenance
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(229)</b>	

## Appendix 3: Heads of Service Analysis – Partnerships & Community Engagement

Service	Over / (Under) £000s	Reason for Variance
Head of Service	11	£10k overspend on Management and Support £1k minor variances
CCU & Corporate policy	(34)	(£3k) Employee saving - 1 x Term time employee Corporate Policy (£34k) Employee saving - Temporary vacancy Civil Contingencies £17k under achievement of income on CCU (£14k) underspend - minor variances across both cost centres
Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme	(0)	(£179k) Underspend - (£13k) Employees, (£15k) Premises, (£10k) Transport, (£141k) Supplies, (£10k) Agency, £50k Management, (£40k) Income Balance to reserve at year-end.
Partnerships Team	(15)	Partnerships Team - (£3k) Employee saving - Maternity cover at lower SCP Underspends of (£1k) Transport and (£10k) Supplies  Partnership Venue - (£1k) underspend on Supplies
Strategic Partnerships	10	£10k Employee costs - efficiency saving and Other expenses. Additional £941k COMF grant and matched expenditure. Covid Wardens - Estimated costs to Mar-22 of £118k outside cash limit, after £48k use of reserve at Q2.
Funding Team & Other AAPs	0	£16k overspend on Employee costs - £13k to met from reserve. Additional £1,302k COMF grant and matched expenditure. Additional £2,240k Towns & Villages income and matched expenditure. Additional £1,400k Local Government Support Grant and matched expenditure.
AAPs South & East	1	(£172k) Employee costs - Mainly due to staff costs transferred to Towns and Villages Scheme. Underspends to be transferred to reserves.  Management - £4k overspend on Employees (staff turnover savings). Offset by underspend on Transport (£2k) and Supplies (£1k)
AAPs North & east	(2)	(£91k) Employee costs - Mainly due to staff costs transferred to Towns and Villages Scheme. Underspends to be transferred to reserves.  Management - £2k overspend - Minor variances on Employees, Transport and Supplies.
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>(29)</b>	

## Appendix 3: Head of Service Analysis – Technical Services

Service	Over / (Under) £000s	Reason for Variance
Head of Technical Services	<b>(£136)</b>	Underspend on Employees of (£134k) and Transport of (£2k) re HoS vacancy
Highways Services Trading	<b>136</b>	Trading £81k overspend. Reduced cost of sales of (£5,924k) on Employees, Transport, Supplies and Agency by the trading activities in Highways, Street Lighting and Commercial Group, leading to lower sales of £6,005k. Outturn includes (£200k) from reserves and (£358k) outside the cash limit. Management & Admin overspend of £54k - Driven by £85k overspend on Transport less (£31k) on Supplies
Highways Services Non-Trading	<b>93</b>	Overspend of £90k on Highways Revenue maintenance work, including cyclic works, drainage, bridges and emergency action works. Overspend includes £700k of costs to be transferred capital and met from additional investment monies. Also additional £350k for drainage. Underspend of (£129k) on employees Overspend of £8k on Premises and S&S - Minor variances Overspend of £223k on Agency Over achievement of Income (£12k)
Strategic Highways	<b>(£503)</b>	Street Lighting - Underspend of (£350k) Underspend of (£31k) on employees - Vacant post Underspend of (£279k) on Premises - Electricity budget Underspend of (£17k) on Supplies Underspend of (£5k) on Agency Overachievement of income (£15k)
		Highways Permit Scheme - Nil variance Surplus anticipated from Permit fees. Nil outturn reflects transfer of any surplus into receipts in advance(3 years to manage fee levels with surpluses)
		Technical Team - Underspend of (£132k) Underspend of (£82k) on employees - Other Pay budget Overspend of £43k on S&S - Advertising Over achieved Income of (£89k) - Road Closure and TRO's
		Asset Management - Underspend of (£69k) Underspend of (£80k) on employees - Vancancies Overspend of £12k - Minor variances on Premises, transport, Supplies and Agency Overspend of £35k on Mgt & Support Services - Ian Harrison Recharge Over achieved Income of (£35k) - Roundabout Sponsorship
		Drainage & Coast Protection - Underspend of (£2k) Underspend of (£50k) on employees - Vancancies Overspend of £100k on Agency & Contracted works - Additional drainage works. £40k of exp being funded from grant, reflected in (£45k) additional income. Underspend of (£8k) - minor variances on Transport and Supplies
		Structures - Overspend of £45k Overspend of £39k on employees - 2 x apprentices (1 degree, 1 level 3) Overspend of £7k on S&S - Includes £10k Annual fee for Network Rail from 20/21 Overspend of £5k - minor Premises and Transport variances Additional income of (£5k).
		Public Right of Way - Overspend of £53k Overspend of £46k on employees - Definitive Map Officers x 2 Remainder minor variances on S&S and income
		Enforcement & Inspections - Underspend of (£89k) Underspend of (£3k) on employees, (£4k) Transport and (£1k) Supplies Over achieved Income of (£82k) - Over-recovered income Fixed Penalty notices and Section74 over-runs
		Highways Adoptions - Overspend of £39k Overspend of £22k on employees - staff turnover savings not met Overspend of £17k on S&S - Professional fees Waterman Aspen
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>(£410)</b>	

## Appendix 3: Heads of Service Analysis – Community Protection

Service	Over / (Under) £000s	Reason for Variance
Head of CP	<b>£37</b>	£20k overspend on staffing budget £28k overspend on Supplies (£11k) - Overachievement of Income
Consumer Protection	<b>(£162)</b>	(£188k) underspend on staffing due to vacancies and COVID cover (£8k) overspend across Premises and Transport - minor variances £34k overspend on supplies, of which £13k relates to legal/court expenses and costs
Health Protection	<b>£28</b>	£71k overspend on staffing mainly due to additional posts for succession planning (£3k) underspend on Transport and Supplies - minor variances £6k overspend on Agency (£47k) overachieved income. Includes (£32k) from COMF
Strategic Regulation	<b>£16</b>	£65k overspend on staffing (£3k) underspend on Transport and Supplies - minor variances (£86k) overachievement of income. Includes (£47k) COMF £8k to NETSA reserve
Environmental Protection	<b>(£24)</b>	(£41k) underspend on staffing due to vacancies £5k overspend on Transport £51k overspend on Supplies, of which £55k relates to works in default for legal and other expenses £21k overspend on Agency/Sub contractors of which £20k is works in default £15k of debt written off on works in default (£75k) over achievement of income.
Neighbourhood Interventions	<b>(£106)</b>	(£96k) net underspend on staffing due to vacancies, offsetting staff turnover savings on Nuisance Action Team (£5k) underspend on Transport and (£4k) underspend on Supplies
Safer Communities	<b>(£56)</b>	£138k overspend on staffing. £160k relates to staffing on Horden MEAM, to be funded from reserves and reflected in income. Therefore (£22k) under on staffing not funded from reserves. £2k over across Premises and Transport - minor variances £11k overspend on Supplies (£14k) underspend on Agency offset by £22k overspend on Management recharges (216k) overachievement of income, which includes (£18k) COMF and (£146k) from reserves for Horden MEAM
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>(£300)</b>	

## Appendix 4: Neighbourhoods & Climate Change Capital 2021/22

NCC	Revised Annual Budget	Profiled Budget	Actual Spend	Remaining Budget
	2021/22	2021/22	31/12/21	
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Community Protection</b>				
Community Protection	193	123	123	70
AAP Schemes-EHCP	53	27	34	19
<b>Community Protection Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Environmental Services</b>				
AAP Schemes - REAL-Environmental Services	223	137	59	164
Street Scene	981	645	769	212
Vehicle and Plant	2,120	1,590	526	1,594
Crematorium	1,434	762	1,357	77
Environment & Design	7,431	5,408	3,404	4,027
Waste Infrastructure Capital	638	377	673	(35)
<b>Environmental Services Total</b>	<b>12,827</b>	<b>8,919</b>	<b>6,788</b>	<b>6,039</b>
<b>Technical Services</b>				
Highway Operations	449	169	128	321
Strategic Highways	23,510	19,243	16,898	6,612
Strategic Highways Bridges	6,316	5,062	4,645	1,671
<b>Technical Services Total</b>	<b>30,275</b>	<b>24,474</b>	<b>21,671</b>	<b>8,604</b>
<b>Members Neighbourhood Fund</b>				
Members Neighbourhood Fund	1,634	-	805	829
<b>Members Neighbourhood Fund Total</b>	<b>1,634</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>829</b>
<b>Community Buildings</b>				
Community Buildings	94	-	-	94
<b>Community Buildings Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>AAP Capital Budgets</b>				
AAP Capital Budgets	267	-	188	79
<b>AAP Capital Budgets Total</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>AAP Initiatives</b>				
AAP Initiatives Other	8	-	3	5
Witton Park Memorial Garden	24	22	24	-
<b>AAP Initiatives Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Consett Comm Facilities</b>				
Consett Comm Facilities	30	-	-	30
<b>Consett Comm Facilities Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>NCC Total</b>	<b>45,405</b>	<b>33,565</b>	<b>29,636</b>	<b>15,769</b>

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

**28 March 2022**

**Quarter Three, 2021/22  
Performance Management Report**



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**Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide.

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To present an overview of progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework and highlight key messages to inform strategic priorities and work programmes.
- 2 The report covers performance in and to the end of quarter three, October to December 2021.

**Performance Reporting**

- 3 The performance report is structured around the three components.
  - (a) High level state of the County indicators to highlight areas of strategic significance. These are structured around the [County Durham Vision 2035](#).
  - (b) Council initiatives of note against the ambitions contained within the vision alongside a fourth 'excellent council' theme contained within our [Council Plan](#)<sup>1</sup>.
  - (c) A long list of key performance indicators against the themes of the Council Plan.
- 4 It also includes an overview of the continuing impact of COVID-19 on council services, our staff, and residents.

**More and Better Jobs**

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<sup>1</sup> approved by full council October 2020

- 5 Although our tourism and cultural sector was particularly hard hit by the pandemic, respondents to the latest survey by Visit County Durham are reporting increases in enquiries and bookings – albeit with short booking periods. Lumiere, the biggest outdoor event in the North East since lockdown, attracted an estimated 180,000 visitors over four days in November – a more detailed analysis of its impact will be available in the year-end performance report.

### **Connected Communities**

- 6 We are continuing to collect household waste in greater volumes. This, combined with planned maintenance at the energy from waste plant, means a smaller proportion of waste was diverted from landfill – 90% compared to the 93% for the same period last year. In addition, contamination of kerbside recycling bins continues to increase and is currently 35% (from a pre-COVID rate of 29%).

### **The impact of COVID-19**

- 7 The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented health emergency across the globe. [Restrictions](#) to contain the virus, minimise deaths and prevent health and social care systems being overwhelmed remain in place, and are continuing to impact our everyday lives, our health, and the economy.
- 8 However, roll-out of the UK’s vaccination programme, which has reduced both hospital admissions and deaths, allowed the government to implement plans for a [gradual and phased route out of lockdown](#).
- 9 Working with government organisations and within the context of national developments, we continue to protect our communities, support those affected by the pandemic, and develop plans for future recovery.
- 10 The COVID-19 surveillance dashboard can be accessed [here](#).

### **Risk Management**

- 11 Effective risk management is a vital component of the council’s agenda. The council’s risk management process sits alongside our change programme and is incorporated into all significant change and improvement projects. The latest report can be found [here](#).

### **Recommendation**

- 12 That Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter three performance, the impact of COVID-19 on performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of underperformance

including the significant economic and well-being challenges because of the pandemic.

**Author**

Andy Palmer

Tel: 03000 268551

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

Not applicable.

### **Finance**

Latest performance information is being used to inform corporate, service and financial planning.

### **Consultation**

Not applicable.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Equality measures are monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

### **Climate Change**

We have declared a climate change emergency and consider the implications of climate change in our reports and decision-making.

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable.

### **Crime and Disorder**

A number of performance indicators and key actions relating to crime and disorder are continually monitored in partnership with Durham Constabulary.

### **Staffing**

Performance against a number of relevant corporate health indicators has been included to monitor staffing issues.

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable.

### **Risk**

Reporting of significant risks and their interaction with performance is integrated into the quarterly performance management report.

### **Procurement**

Not applicable.



# Durham County Council Performance Management Report

## Quarter Three, 2021/22



## **More and Better Jobs**

- 1 The ambition of More and Better Jobs is linked to the following objectives:
  - (a) A broader experience for residents and visitors to the county.

## **National, Regional and Local Picture**

- 2 Just under half of respondents to the latest COVID impact survey by Visit County Durham reported receiving many enquiries and bookings. Of these, most had a short booking period of less than a month. Therefore, although accommodation forward bookings for October 2021 to February 2022 remain below average, these could increase nearer the time. Just over 40% of respondents reported an increase in national visitors. The most frequently reported challenge was recruitment, closely followed by supply chain issues and the lack of demand. There were also concerns over a further wave of the pandemic in the next six months.

## **Council Services**

### **A broader experience for residents and visitors to the county**

- 3 Lumiere took place in November, the biggest outdoor event in the north east since lockdown with an estimated 180,000 visitors attending the four day event. The learning and participation programme worked with 685 individuals across 25 schools and six BRILLIANT artists. The new county programme, Marks in the Landscape, was very well received across the six locations (Raby Castle, Peterlee Apollo, Seaham Harbour), Ushaw College, Finchale Abbey and Penshaw Monument) with estimated attendance at Raby, Finchale and Ushaw over the four nights being around 12,500.
- 4 Due to unforeseen issues to the listed building which involved additional works on the stonework and roof, the History Centre has been delayed, this will extend the construction programme beyond the original completion date of October 2022, new timescales are currently being reviewed.
- 5 Visitors to Hardwick and Wharton Parks over the last 12 months have exceeded 600,000.
- 6 With the reduction in COVID-19 restrictions our volunteers have been able to get back to supporting our services. During the last quarter, six volunteers provided over 570 hours support to historic environment projects including the Historic Environment Record and over 100 volunteers provided more than 2,800 hours of support to the Countryside and Parks service.

## Long and Independent Lives

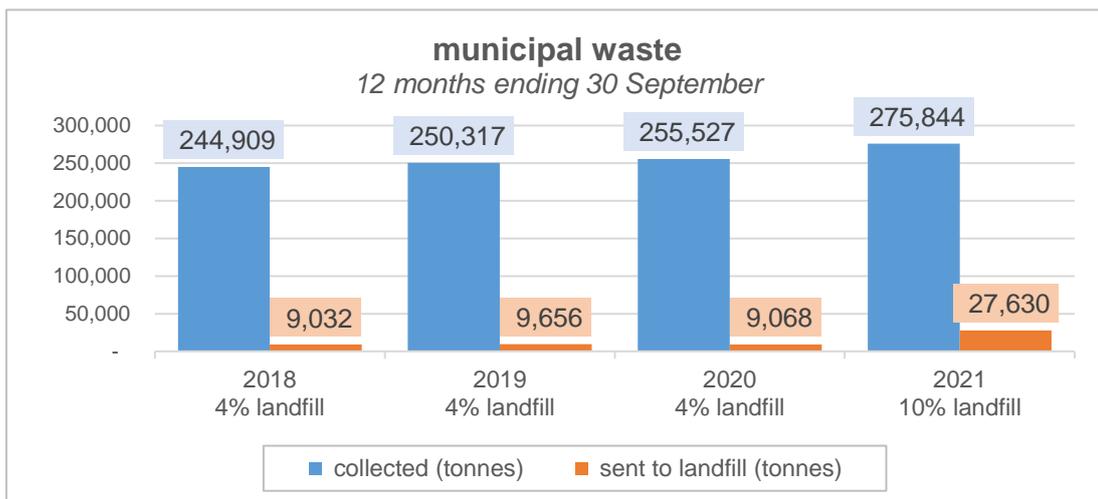
7 The ambition of Long and Independent Lives is linked to the following key objectives:

- (a) County Durham will have a physical environment that will contribute to good health.

## Council Services

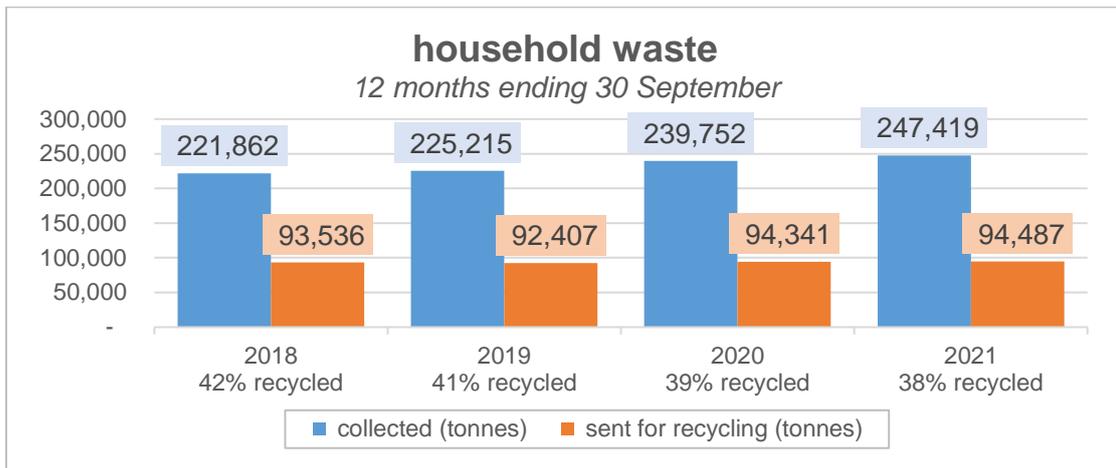
### A physical environment contributing to good health

8 During the 12 months ending 30 September 2021, almost 276,000 tonnes of municipal waste was collected and disposed of, 8% more than the previous year. The increased volume of waste reduced the spare capacity within the waste disposal system so when planned maintenance at the energy from waste plant was required, more waste had to be sent to landfill. This decreased our landfill diversion rate to 90%, less than the 93% of last year.

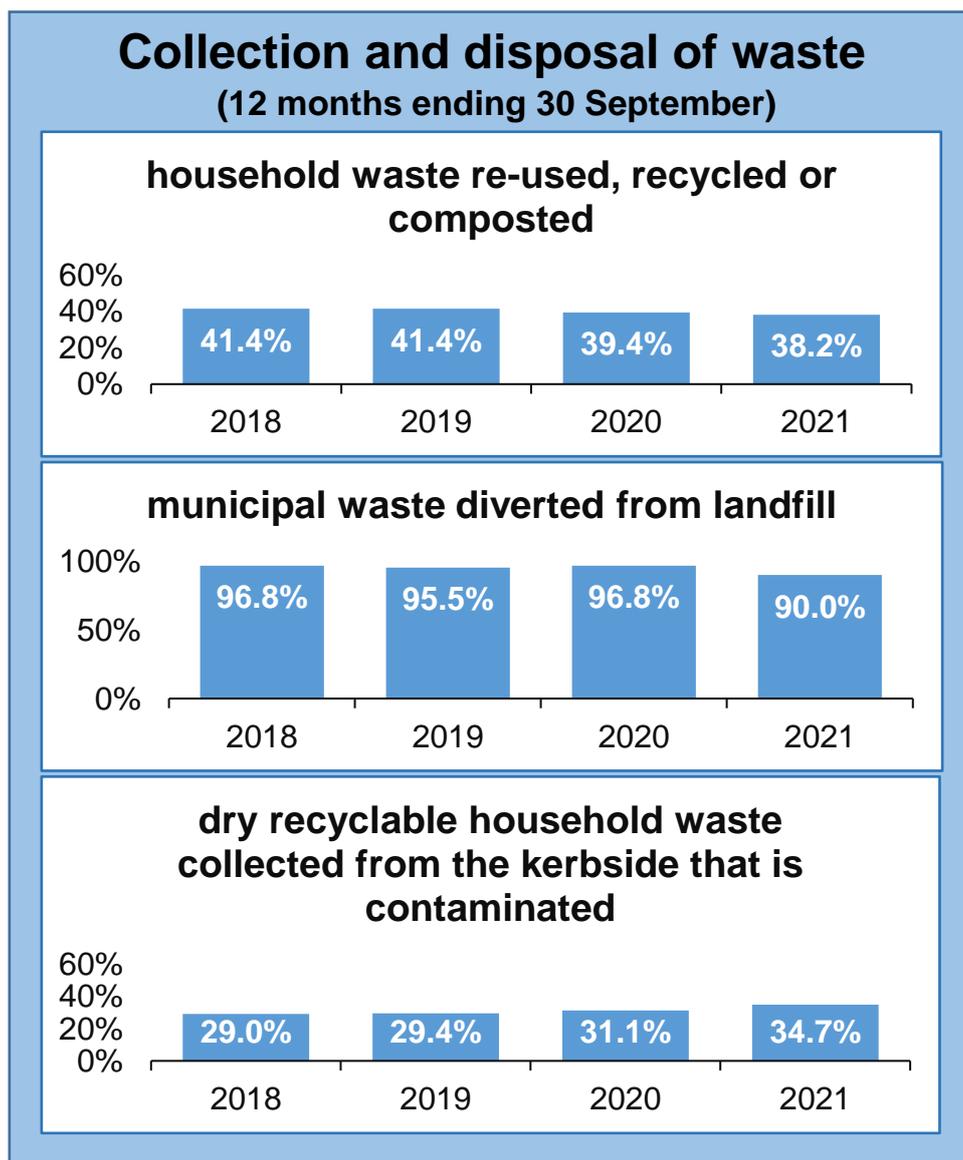


9 During the same period, just over 247,000 tonnes of household waste was collected and disposed of, a 3.2% increase on the previous year and 10% higher than the same period pre-COVID.

10 The biggest contributor to the increase in waste is people spending more time at home and generating more waste. Another factor is that across the county, the housing stock has increased by 1.2%, which equates to around 3,000 houses.



11 Around 15% of household waste is collected through our kerbside recycling scheme, and this proportion has remained steady over the last three years. However, the amount of waste which is contaminated with items such as black bags, wood, food waste, nappies and textiles has increased by 30% when compared to the same period pre-COVID. As contaminated tonnage is rising faster than overall tonnage, the rate of contamination in our kerbside recycling collections has increased from 29% in 2019 to 35% in 2021.



- 12 We continue to tackle contamination with more than 7,600 contamination notices issued in the last 12 months and a number of waste campaigns during quarter three. These campaigns included a general what goes where / recycling matters messages, food waste, small electrical recycling project, junk mail, Halloween, COP26, Christmas messages and recycling.
- 13 The small electrical recycling project continues to grow. 70 collection points are already located in community buildings and schools across the county and additional funding has been received to increase the number. Approximately six tonnes of small electrical and battery-operated items have been collected to date.
- 14 More than 66,800 residents have subscribed to garden waste collection service for 2021/22, and between April and September 2021, over 14,000 tonnes of green waste was collected and sent to the Joint Stocks composting site.

## Connected Communities

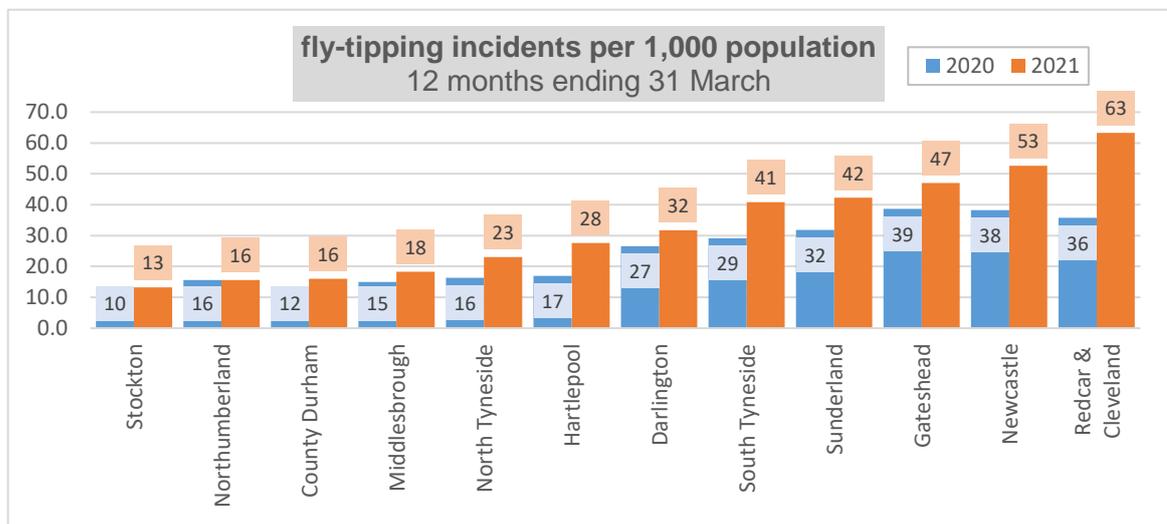
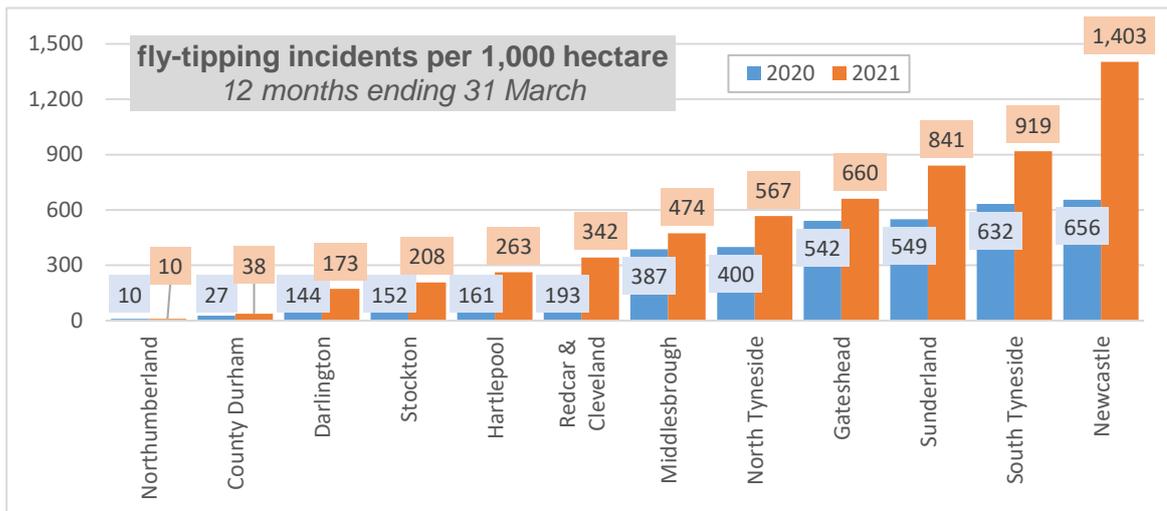
- 15 The ambition of Connected Communities is linked to the following key objectives:
  - (a) Our towns and villages will be vibrant, well-used, clean, attractive and safe.

## National, Regional and Local Picture

- 16 During the 12 months ending December 2021, reported fly-tipping incidents reduced by 12.8% compared to the 12 months ending December 2020. The in quarter figure of 1,203 is 28% less than the same period last year. Fly-tipping levels are currently 5.3% higher than the pre-covid levels in 2019-20.



- 17 The latest national fly-tipping benchmarking data for 2020/21 show County Durham is below the national and regional averages based on local authority size and population. Comparison between 2019/20 and 2020/21 shows all north east local authority areas have seen an increase in the levels of fly-tipping.



## Council Services

### Our towns and villages will be vibrant, well-used, clean, attractive and safe

- 18 2,550 fly-tipping enforcement actions were undertaken during 2021, This included further investigations, deployment of cameras, stop and search operations and the use of Fixed Penalty Notices. The proportion of incidents that had an enforcement action during this period is 37%, an increase on the previous 12 month period (26%).
- 19 During quarter three, our Find and Fix programme continued to clear shrubs and vegetation, plant, edge pavements, paint street furniture, repair and replace fences and bins, and clean and refurbish bus shelters. The team also worked with local community projects and volunteers at 15 sites to support the wider clean-up following Storm Arwen, removing fallen trees, repairing fencing and tidying affected areas.

20 During quarter three, our Community Action Team worked at Dean Bank, Ferryhill dealing with rubbish accumulations, preventing anti-social behaviour and improving housing standards and the management of privately rented properties. 295 issues were logged and 77 legal notices were served on 26 properties. Activities undertaken included:

- warden patrols focusing on fly-tipping and taking action on untidy yards and gardens: 38 community protection warnings; 21 community protection notices; 12 fixed penalties; four noxious matter notices; and two multiple community protection notices were issued,
- removing abandoned bins from rear lanes,
- recycling door knocks made at 798 properties,
- six referrals were made to community peer mentors to get support for vulnerable residents,
- 20 empty homes were brought back into use,
- safe and wellbeing visits by the fire service
- litter pick arranged by Groundwork with children at Dean Bank Primary

## Key Performance Indicators – Data Tables

There are two types of performance indicators throughout this document:

- (a) Key target indicators – targets are set as improvements can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the council and its partners; and
- (b) Key tracker indicators – performance is tracked but no targets are set as they are long-term and/or can only be partially influenced by the council and its partners.

A guide is available which provides full details of indicator definitions and data sources for the 2020/21 corporate indicator set. This is available to view either internally from the intranet or can be requested from the Strategy Team at [performance@durham.gov.uk](mailto:performance@durham.gov.uk)

### KEY TO SYMBOLS

	Direction of travel	Benchmarking	Performance against target
GREEN	Same or better than comparable period	Same or better than comparable group	Meeting or exceeding target
AMBER	Worse than comparable period (within 2% tolerance)	Worse than comparable group (within 2% tolerance)	Performance within 2% of target
RED	Worse than comparable period (greater than 2%)	Worse than comparable group (greater than 2%)	Performance >2% behind target

### National Benchmarking

We compare our performance to all English authorities. The number of authorities varies according to the performance indicator and functions of councils, for example educational attainment is compared to county and unitary councils however waste disposal is compared to district and unitary councils.

### North East Benchmarking

The North East figure is the average performance from the authorities within the North East region, i.e., County Durham, Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-On-Tees, South Tyneside, Sunderland.

More detail is available from the Strategy Team at [performance@durham.gov.uk](mailto:performance@durham.gov.uk)

## MORE AND BETTER JOBS

### How well do tourism and cultural events contribute to our local economy?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
11	No. visitors to County Durham (million)	11.39	2020	Tracker	20.13 (red)					No
12	No. jobs supported by the visitor economy	6,794	2020	Tracker	12,133 (red)					No
13	Amount (£ million) generated by the visitor economy	506.75	2020	Tracker	980.72 (red)					No

## CONNECTED COMMUNITIES – SUSTAINABILITY

### How clean and tidy is my local environment?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
95	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of litter that fall below an acceptable level	5.17	Oct-Dec 2021	Tracker	6.4 (green)					Yes
96	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of detritus that fall below an acceptable level	8.99	Oct-Dec 2021	Tracker	10.68 (green)					Yes
97	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of dog fouling that fall below an acceptable level	0.45	Oct-Dec 2021	Tracker	1.35 (green)					Yes
98	Number of fly-tipping incidents	6,895	2021	Tracker	7,908 (green)					Yes

## Are we reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change?

Page Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
99	% reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> emissions in County Durham (carbon neutral by 2050)	54	2019	Tracker	52 (green)					No
100	% reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> emissions from local authority operations compared to the 2008/09 baseline, 80% by 2030	58	2020/21	Tracker	51 (green)					No

## How effective and sustainable is our collection and disposal of waste?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
101	% of municipal waste diverted from landfill	90.0	Oct 2020-Sep 2021	95 (red)	93.5 (red)	91.5 (red)	94.4 (red)		2019/20	Yes
102	% of household waste that is re-used, recycled or composted	38.2	Oct 2020-Sep 2021	Tracker	39.0 (red)	43.8 (red)	35.5 (green)		2019/20	Yes

### Other additional relevant indicators

## CONNECTED COMMUNITIES – SUSTAINABILITY

### Is it easy to travel around the county?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
110	% of A roads where maintenance is recommended	3.1	2020	Tracker	3.0 (red)	4.0 (green)	3.0 (red)		2020/21	Yes
111	% of B roads where maintenance is recommended	3.0	2020	Tracker	3.3 (green)	6.0 (green)	4.0 (green)		2020/21	Yes
112	% of C roads where maintenance is recommended	2.6	2020	Tracker	2.3 (red)	6.0 (green)	4.0 (green)		2020/21	Yes

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
113	% of unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended	22.5	2020	Tracker	21.3 (red)	17.0 (red)	17.0 (red)		2020/21	Yes

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