



Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date **Friday 21 July 2023**

Time **9.30 am**

Venue **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham**

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 Special meeting held on 5 May 2023 and the meeting held on 12 May 2023 (Pages 3 - 20)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Items from Co-opted Members and other Interested Parties
6. Management of Durham County Council's Woodland Estate
 - a) Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change (Pages 21 - 32)
 - b) Presentation by the Landscape Delivery Manager (Pages 33 - 40)
7. Durham County Council's Tree Policy
 - a) Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change (Pages 41 - 70)
 - b) Presentation by the Principal Landscape Officer (Pages 71 - 90)
8. Performance Management Quarter 4 2022/2023 - Report of the Chief Executive Officer (Pages 91 - 112)
9. Refresh of the Work Programme 2023/2024 - Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 113 - 134)

10. Overview and Scrutiny Response to the Climate and Emergency Response Plan 2 Workshop - Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 135 - 150)
11. Environment and Climate Change Partnership - Minutes of the Partnership Board Meeting held on 8 March 2023 (Pages 151 - 160)
12. 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
13 July 2023

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, R Crute, C Kay, C Lines, B McAloon, I McLean, D Nicholls, D Oliver, J Purvis, J Quinn, A Reed, P Sexton, A Simpson, T Stubbs, D Sutton-Lloyd, S Townsend and R Yorke

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Cramond and Mr P Walton

Contact: Jill Hogg

Tel: 03000 269711

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

**SPECIAL JOINT
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
AND
ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At a **Special Joint Meeting** of the **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** and the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 5 May 2023** at **9.30 am**.

Present:

Councillor K Robson in the Chair

Members of the Committees:

Councillors E Adam, P Atkinson, L Brown, B Coult, L Fenwick, I MacLean, C Martin, J Purvis, J Quinn, A Reed, I Roberts and S Townsend

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris and Mr E Simons

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors J Charlton, J Elmer, A Jackson, C Marshall, D Nicholls, D Sutton-Lloyd, R Ormerod and Mr T Cramond and Mr P Walton (co-optees).

2 Substitute Members

Councillor Deinali was in attendance for Councillor Nicholls.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items from Co-opted Members and other Interested Parties

There were no items reported.

5 Regional and Local Transport: Policy and Delivery Update

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which provided an update on transport policy and delivery in County Durham and the wider region (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

The Committee welcomed Mark Jackson, Head of Transport and Contract Services who introduced the presentation, outlining the scope and scale of the work of the teams, namely Transport and Infrastructure Projects, Integrated Passenger Transport and Strategic Traffic Management. He explained that current national transport policy has a focus on plans for decarbonisation and the government's 'Bus Back Better' strategy aims to deliver better bus services for passengers. Sub-regional work with Transport for the North on the Strategic Transport Plan reflects the direction of travel in terms of reducing carbon outputs and improving air quality. Regionally, the north east has a North East Transport Plan and the Committee noted that it is anticipated that the North East Mayoral Combined Authority (NEMCA) will bring forward a revision of the North East Transport Plan.

The Head of Transport outlined plans being delivered locally including the County Durham Plan, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and plans for EV charging and improvements in relation to air quality and carbon reduction as part of the Climate Emergency Response Plan.

The Committee received information on the powers and principles of the devolution deal and the Head of Transport explained the pipeline of interventions that Durham would like to see included within the North East Transport Plan. The Chair then invited questions and comments from the Committee.

Mrs Morris asked what assurance could be given that timescales, targets and infrastructure will be in place to support the ambitious plans, in particular, in relation to electric vehicles. The Head of Transport acknowledged that EV ownership is increasing at pace and he pointed out that targets are in place in relation to the number of EV charging points and highlighted that the evolving picture is not a 'step change' in relation to EVs and that EVs is one solution that is available. He also referred to the work being done to fully evaluate the transport network in advance of the devolution process. He continued that the network needs to provide connectivity with the correct frequency and that a simplified pricing system will, it is hoped, attract more users.

The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager explained that, in the current deregulated environment, bus operators may choose when and where to operate services and they bear the financial risk when passenger numbers decline.

Councillor Adam referred to the North East Mayoral Combined Authority and asked what action Durham was taking to ensure its plans have equal weighting alongside those of the other six authorities in the Combined Authority. Councillor Adam also commented on the lack of funding for Durham from the City Regional Sustainable Transport Fund and he asked whether this would impact on Durham's plans. The Head of Transport and Contract Services pointed out that the devolution deal will shift power from central government in terms of funding and responsibility, which will enable the Council to pursue its ambitions for growth. He also explained that devolution will provide more certainty on longer term funding, for example the multi-year settlement for the highways funding block and the integrated transport block. He added that, in terms of transport, there was not expected to be a great deal of change as the functions of the Joint Transport Committee will remain the same. He highlighted that the City Regional Sustainable Transport Fund is one funding stream and Durham will work with the other six authorities to look at the funding opportunities to bring forward the pipeline of projects which are ready to feed into the various funding rounds. The Head of Transport and Contract Services highlighted that he represents the authority on various workstreams, which ensures Durham's voice is heard.

Councillor Deinali raised concern that rural parts of the county which currently suffer problems with regard to public transport may be left behind and she also raised the point that if Durham lacks funding, its schemes may lag-behind those of the other authorities. The Head of Transport reiterated that whilst Durham does not have access to the City Regional Sustainable Transport Fund, significant funding is available through the Bus Service Improvement Plan which is aligned to County Durham, as well as funding in respect of highway maintenance, integrated transport and active travel.

The Committee then welcomed Victoria Lloyd-Gent, Senior Active Travel Officer to deliver a presentation on active travel, which, she explained, had been an area of investment by government, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The government had established the Active Travel England Inspectorate to work with local authorities to deliver on standards required for local walking and cycling links.

The Senior Active Travel Officer highlighted key policy documents, in particular, the LTN (Local Transport Note) 1/20 which sets out standards for infrastructure. She explained the vision and aims of the work included in the County Durham Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan.

The Committee noted the work on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPS) and the development of LCWIPS for 12 main towns. The officer also explained the projects LCWIP Lite and Routes Within 5 Miles of Durham City which were being developed to address gaps in the network.

Councillor Townsend commented on the success of the 'Borrow a Bike' scheme in Shildon and spoke anecdotally of residents' concerns regarding the lack of street lights on walking and cycling routes. The Senior Active Travel Officer responded that street lighting was a key factor considered within LCWIPS in terms of the safety of routes and she agreed to pass Councillor Townsend's comment to the relevant team.

Councillor Adam expressed the view that he would expect some road space to be repurposed in order to ensure that active travel routes are safe and he expressed concern that some local walking routes are inaccessible. The Senior Active Travel Officer pointed out that the Active Travel Strategy aimed to change how the public take short journeys and the more recreational aspects of the strategy were the remit of the Rights of Way team. The Head of Transport and Contract Services highlighted that in some circumstances, it will be necessary to repurpose road space for active travel modes or bus priority and this may be a requirement of some funding streams. He assured the Committee that the aim is to balance provision and plans going forward will include investment in footway maintenance and improvements to rights of way to ensure that they are inclusive for those individuals with mobility issues. He also confirmed that all schemes are subject to consultation.

In response to a question from Councillor Coult as to how the Council encourages walking to school, the Senior Active Travel Officer highlighted the work of the Road Safety team which had engaged with approximately 90 schools on walking bus routes. He continued by highlighting a project in Newton Aycliffe, which involved Durham County Council and the Police working with the school and parents to educate in relation to safe walking routes to school.

The Chair observed that a number of short journeys in cars are made by commuters driving to and from local shops and he asked what could be done to change their behaviour. The Senior Active Travel Officer referred to recent talks with developers regarding mobility hubs which could deliver shopping to communities. In addition, opportunities for active travel are increasing and cargo and electric bikes are becoming more popular.

Councillor Deinali asked whether the work on the development of walking and cycling routes aligned with work done by public health in terms of levels of deprivation and obesity.

The Senior Active Travel Officer replied that areas of health deprivation score highly in terms of funding for LCWIPs and the LCWIP Light and Routes within 5 Miles of Durham City offer opportunities to adapt schemes to target specific areas.

The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager, Cathy Knight, introduced the presentation relating to bus services. She referred to the adverse impact on the service throughout the pandemic which had significantly reduced patronage. The Committee noted the service had worked with operators on recruitment campaigns and recent evidence suggested improvements, locally and nationally. The Committee heard that local bus services operate in a deregulated environment and circa 90% of bus services operate without financial support from the Council, however, the remaining 10% were supported by the County Council. Whilst bus passenger numbers had returned to 80% of pre-Covid levels, operators had reviewed their networks, some journeys had been withdrawn, with the Council supporting some journeys.

The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was published in 2021 in response to the Government's National Bus Strategy and the North East BSIP was selected to receive funding upon the condition of the implementation of an enhanced partnership. The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager outlined the projects to be delivered, including the introduction of a multi-operator fare cap, enhancement of the network and improved information on bus services. BSIP funding will also be used to introduce new services and increase frequency of existing services.

Councillor McLean expressed concern at the damage to the environment resulting from the manufacture and transportation of vehicle parts from overseas and he suggested that more could be done in relation to tracking the total carbon footprint of these parts and highlighted the need to use parts produced in the UK.

The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager responded that steps have been taken to encourage the Department for Transport to consider the 'Well to Wheel' approach.

Councillor Adam questioned how the public could be encouraged to 'talk up buses', as, whilst services had improved since the pandemic, they remained unreliable, information on Apps was inaccurate and bus interiors were often dirty. Councillor Adam also asked whether funding was currently available or whether it was conditional on implementation of the plan. The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager confirmed that the funding was being accessed and she acknowledged that bus operators had work to do, however, evidence suggests that services are improving. There had been engagement with the Department for Transport to address issues such as the shortage of drivers.

The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager highlighted that the Bus Service Improvement Plan includes plans to upgrade to new zero emission vehicles however the current BSIP funding could not be used for vehicle improvements. She added that work is taking place with operators regarding fleet replacement plans and she also referred to funding available through the Department for Transport's ZEBRA (Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas) funding to support the introduction of zero emission buses.

Mr Simons referred to the aim to increase patronage and questioned how performance could be measured and what targets could be imposed on bus operators if targets were not being delivered. The Integrated Passenger Transport Manager explained that the Bus Service Improvement Plan includes a number of key performance indicators including patronage, reliability and punctuality. She pointed out that the majority of the funding will be used for passenger benefits such as fare initiatives and capital improvements. Penalties could be imposed through contracts however, she noted that the work is very much a partnership and there may be valid reasons for underperformance which are beyond bus operators' control. She highlighted that it is a partnership approach working together to address problems.

Craig MacLennan, Transport and Infrastructure Projects Manager, delivered the presentation relating to current and future infrastructure projects including the Toft Hill Bypass, projects on the A19 corridor and Jade Enterprise Zone. Referring to rail opportunities, the officer highlighted that Durham was successful in three expressions of interest in respect of the 'Restoring Your Railways' fund at Ferryhill, Consett to Newcastle and Weardale. There are further policy ambitions for rail enhancement at the Leamside Line, Chester le Street and the Durham Coast Line.

Mrs Morris asked whether a cost estimate was available for the proposals for the Consett to Newcastle opportunity to reintroduce a rail passenger service. The Transport and Infrastructure Projects Manager explained that both options would cost approximately £750 million and Mrs Morris pointed out the cost in terms of the environment. The Transport and Infrastructure Projects Manager commented that feasibility studies would be carried out which would consider all issues, including environmental issues and he clarified that no announcement on funding had been made at that time.

In response to a question from Councillor Atkinson as to whether the new Bus Station at Durham was on schedule for completion in July, the Transport and Infrastructure Projects Manager replied that he expected that Members will be updated on progress in the near future.

The Committee then welcomed the Electric Vehicles Project Officer, Tracy Millmore who delivered a presentation on electric vehicle infrastructure. Introducing the presentation, the Project Officer reminded the Committee that the government will ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and in 2035 all new vehicles must be zero emission vehicles. Providing background, she explained that in 2019 funding was secured for the SOSCI (Scaling On Street Charging Infrastructure) project, for 100 EV chargepoints and further funding was secured for two on-street residential charging projects in 2020. In 2021 an EV community group was established with residents of Durham. 'Rev-up' project funding was gained in 2022 to investigate the approach to EV charging installation and successful project delivery led to the Council being awarded funding to deliver the LEVI (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) project. The project will test approaches for EV infrastructure which will support the Council's work to install new charge points at another 250 sites across the county. The team also supports 3 car clubs which provide an EV car to support communities.

Councillor Adam referred to the role of social landlords in relation to the installation of EV chargepoints and asked how they were being engaged. The officer highlighted that a meeting had been held recently with social housing providers and all had expressed an interest in working with the team. It is hoped that supportive evidence from the housing providers will help to gain capital funding to progress the work.

Mrs Morris asked whether the service had considered integrating EV charging points into existing street lighting columns and the officer explained that this had been considered however there may be issues with regard to trailing cables and the charging rate would be relatively slow.

In conclusion, the Head of Transport and Contact Services commented that it is hoped that the new Mayoral Combined Authority will encourage future funding opportunities and collaborative working.

Resolved:

That the information in the report be noted.

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Committee Room 2** on **Friday 12 May 2023** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Coult in the Chair

Members of the Committee:

Councillors E Adam, L Brown, J Elmer (Vice-Chair), L Fenwick, G Hutchinson, C Kay, I MacLean, R Potts and S Townsend.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors P Atkinson, J Charlton, C Martin, D Nicholls, J Purvis, Cllr J Quinn, T Stubbs, D Sutton-Lloyd and Co-opted members Mr T Cramond and Mr P Walton.

2 Substitute Members

The following substitute members were present:

Councillor P Jopling for Councillor D Sutton-Lloyd
Councillor B Kellett for Councillor D Nicholls
Councillor E Peeke for Councillor J Quinn
Councillor M Simmons for Councillor C Martin

3 Minutes

With an amendment to the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2023 to add Councillor Hutchinson's apologies, the minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The minutes of the Special joint meeting held on 14 April 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Items from Co-opted Members and Interested Parties

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee, that four questions were received from Mr Walton, Co-opted Member, two in relation to agenda item 6 and two questions in relation to agenda item 7. The questions would be forwarded to colleagues within the relevant service grouping for a response to be prepared and the questions and the response, when received, will be forwarded to Mr Walton and the members of the Committee for information.

6 Environment and Climate Change Partnership Update

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change which provided background information in advance of a presentation from Jim Cokill, Director of Durham Wildlife Trust, and Chair of the County Durham Environment and Climate Change Partnership (ECCP) (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

The Committee welcomed the Chair of the ECCP to deliver the presentation which provided information on the activity of the partnership over the past year and plans for the future. The Committee noted the strategic priorities included the Climate Emergency Response Plan and that Durham County Council is responsible for delivering the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

The Chair of the ECCP referred to the importance of collaborative working with the major institutions of the county, the business sector and community organisations in order to promote inclusive environment action. Two knowledge sharing events had taken place recently with Durham University to develop joint working opportunities and meetings had been held with regional local authority colleagues, the Wildlife Trusts and the Tees Valley Local Nature Reserve Partnership on cross-boundary coordination of the LNRS. Members noted the important role that the natural environment plays in terms of place, health and communities and that work is also conducted with community based partners in relation to projects to promote walking and cycling across the county.

The Committee received information on how the ECCP partnership had contributed to the Inclusive Economic Strategy, to address the green economy within the strategy and it had also been involved in the County Durham Community Engagement consultation on areas of interest.

The Climate County Durham website was a new initiative to promote local climate action and social media promotion of the website will be undertaken in the near future.

The partnership had also worked with the Northern Echo to encourage households to reduce energy use, in light of the cost of living crisis and it had joined in the Food for Planet campaign to promote the adoption of low carbon diets.

The Chair of the ECCP described the three workstreams, Climate Emergency, Place Health and Communities and the Ecological Emergency and he highlighted that future work would support the delivery of the ECCP Plan for 2022-25 including projects such as the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Project (LEVI), Project Greenscape and the Gull-e trial. He requested Members to encourage residents to engage in the development of the countywide local heritage list of non-designated heritage assets.

In conclusion, the Chair of the ECCP commented that the production of the LNRS was merely the start of the process and whilst some funding would be available, it may be necessary to seek further resources in the future.

The Chair thanked the officer for the presentation and invited comments and questions from the Committee.

Councillor Elmer referred to the Government's aim to restore 30% of landscape for nature by 2030 and he expressed the view that it would require a step-change in behaviour, adding that there was more work to be done to engage with communities on the value of the natural environment.

Councillor Adam welcomed the Committee's recent visit to nature reserves and open spaces, observing that more resources will be required to take forward approaches such as rewilding contained in the LNRS and he asked whether the Cabinet had held discussions regarding the resources required. The Chair agreed to make enquiries with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change, for information to be provided to the Committee.

Councillor Adam continued by requesting further information on the amount of funding that was predicted to be required to deliver the LNRS. Stuart Priestley, Principal Ecologist, explained that funding had been secured for the statement of priorities and mapping elements of the strategy, however, it was not clear, at this stage, whether Defra funding would be available in respect of the consultation process. The Principal Ecologist also pointed out that it was not known how regularly the Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be required to be reviewed and that will also have financial implications. In addition, monitoring and actions to deliver the LNRS will also require funding.

Councillor Adam referred to the plans being put forward in terms of the response to the climate emergency and asked what work was being done to increase the number of new homes being built with solar panels. Ellie Grimes, Low Carbon Development and Partnerships Officer explained that close work takes place with social housing providers and housing colleagues in respect of retrofit work. She also informed the Committee that work was taking place in relation to District Heat Networks, to identify funding available through the Heat Networks Delivery Unit. Information is also provided to householders on the schemes available to help to make properties more energy efficient.

In response to a question from Councillor Adam as to whether lobbying of government takes place, officers highlighted that Durham is part of the Net Zero Hub which feeds regional issues into central government and that dialogue is increasing with regard to the new devolution deal, to ensure Durham's voice is heard.

Councillor Potts observed the difficulties that can be encountered when engaging with parish and town councils to persuade them to reduce the frequency of grass cutting. He recognised the importance of educating the public and that Countryside Rangers are an integral part of the engagement work. He suggested that if the Council were to reduce the amount of grass cutting, the money saved on the purchase and maintenance of the equipment for that purpose could be used to recruit additional Countryside Rangers.

Councillor Potts then asked for an explanation of the greening benefits in relation to solar car ports. The Chair of the ECCP explained that this aimed to incorporate natural features and introduce habitats into projects of this nature.

Councillor Peeke commented that the number of people signing up to the Climate Change and Carbon Reduction pledge on the Climate County Durham website was low and she asked how long the website had been live and how it was promoted. The Low Carbon Development and Partnerships Officer responded that the website was launched in 2021 and she acknowledged that there was more work required in terms of promotion and plans were in place for a social media page which it is hoped will increase the reach. She highlighted that although the number of people who had signed the pledge was relatively low, many more people had visited the site. There had been increased engagement work with town and parish councils through webinars, which had received positive feedback and the Low Carbon Development and Partnerships Officer agreed to circulate the links to the webinars to members of the Committee.

The Chair suggested that placing an article in the County Durham News publication may be an effective way to promote the Climate County Durham website.

In response to a comment from Councillor Peeke who expressed concern at the number of planning developments being approved which lack sustainable development measures such as the installation of solar panels The Low Carbon Development and Partnerships Officer commented that policy within the County Durham Plan encourages developers to consider sustainability.

Councillor Jopling expressed interest in the mine water project and asked what plans are in place to expand the project. Officers highlighted that work takes place with the Durham Energy Institute to support the work. Referring to the projects at Seaham Garden Village and Horden, the Low Carbon Development and Partnerships Officer explained that water was pumped to the surface by the water authority and therefore the risk and cost to the Council had been minimised.

Councillor Jopling also commented on the support in the community to enhance the natural environment through tree planting, however, the planning application process in relation to tree planting on council land was complicated and could be discouraging. The Chair highlighted that an item on tree management will be considered at the July meeting of the Committee and she welcomed Councillor Jopling to attend the meeting.

Councillor Brown asked whether the hydro turbine at Freemans Reach generated electricity and, if so, how much electricity was generated and for what it was used. The Low Carbon Development and Partnerships Officer agreed to provide a response for circulation to the members of the Committee.

Councillor Fenwick commented on the support locally for rewilding and she added that she would like to see it further promoted. The Chair of the ECCP recognised that elected members play a significant role within their communities to be positive influencers, to encourage and influence change.

Councillor Fenwick spoke of the number of complaints received regarding the use of chemical herbicides and members also questioned whether they were being used correctly. The Chair agreed to raise this with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder.

The Principal Ecologist explained that the Clean and Green team were currently conducting trials of alternative herbicides to determine their effectiveness and work was ongoing to develop an overarching biodiversity intervention strategy.

Cllr McLean made reference to the former pit site at Horden and the planting of trees on the site and he highlighted that the proposal related to only a quarter of the total site and he suggested that the scheme could be extended to include more of the site. Steve Bhowmick, Environment and Design Manager agreed to take up the proposal and he added that he would follow it up with appropriate colleagues in connection with the Town and Villages Programme.

Councillor Elmer referred the Climate Change and Carbon Reduction pledge and he observed that it was important to generate interest from those who have a strategic countywide interest in nature and he pointed out that engagement requires capacity in terms of staff and resources.

Councillor Adam commented that mine water projects had been discussed at Committee meetings over many years, however, little progress had been made and he added that he would like to see action to develop the work. The Low Carbon Development and Partnerships Officer replied that the mine water heat project at Horden was made possible through successful funding for £110,000 of which £25,000 was allocated to East Durham Trust for community engagement and the remaining sum was used for a technical feasibility study. She explained that community and commercial horticulture refers to community interventions which encourage the public to use green spaces and that the feasibility study will explore various ways to use mine water heat to benefit the people of Horden.

In Conclusion, the Chair of the ECCP noted that it had continued to support the delivery of the countywide elements of the Climate Emergency Response Plan and promote environmental messages. Partners were now looking forward to developing the ambitions set out in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Resolved

- a) That the information provided within the report and presentation be noted.
- b) That a further update from the Environment and Climate Change Partnership be included in the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2023/24.

7 Quarter Three 2022/23 Performance Management Report

The Committee considered the quarterly report of the Chief Executive Officer which detailed performance for quarter three of 2022/23, from October to December 2022 (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Committee welcomed Gemma Wilkinson, Strategy Team Leader, to present the report and provide an overview of progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the Council's corporate performance framework.

Referring to performance in respect of the economy, the Strategy Team Leader highlighted the continuing recovery of tourism, following the pandemic. A number of successful cultural events had resulted in a combined economic impact of £850,000 and whilst theatre ticket sales increased by 14% in quarter three compared to the previous year, the number of people attending cultural venues had decreased since quarter two. Seasonality was considered to be a contributing factor.

In terms of the environment, it was reported that 6% less waste tonnage was collected compared to the previous year as an increasing number of people returned to their place of work, resulting in less waste entering the domestic waste stream. The contamination rate was below the same period last year, however it had increased slightly on the previous quarter. Up-to-date information indicated an improvement and further details would be provided to the Committee in the forthcoming quarterly report.

With regard to the environment, renewable electricity capacity increased across the county, with wind power being the largest contributor. 546 properties benefited from energy efficiency measures which was 31% less than the previous quarter, this was due to the Local Authority Delivery Scheme Phase 2 ending in September 2022. In terms of Selective Licensing, the Committee noted that work continues to increase the number of properties licensed within the scheme, which stood at 24% of properties and further information on enforcement will be provided in future reports. The rate of anti-social behaviour in the designated selective licensing areas increased by 14%, compared with 16% countywide.

The Strategy Team Leader concluded by informing the Committee that the performance report will be presented in a more visual format in the future, to align with the newly adopted Council Plan.

Councillor Peeke commented on the slow progress with regard to the number of properties licensed under the Selective Licensing scheme and she asked whether more work was required to improve performance.

The Strategy Team Leader explained that a three-year area based delivery plan was in place to encourage and enforce landlords and work was being undertaken to gather census data in order to ensure knowledge on private landlords was up-to-date.

Members pointed out that when bin crews refuse to empty recycling bins which contain contaminated items, this may lead to recycled items being placed in the general refuse bin. It was suggested that it may be better practice for crews to use powers of discretion in order to remove contaminated items rather than rejecting bins outright. Councillor Adam expressed disappointed that the contamination rate had increased on the previous quarter, despite the countywide contamination campaign and he highlighted that the report stated that the second phase of the campaign involved rejecting and removing contaminated bins and he questioned whether the strategy would be counter-productive.

The Strategy Team Leader explained that the contamination rate data was subject to a 3 month lag and, whilst the data being considered in the report was up to September 2022, the contamination campaign began in summer 2022. Therefore, the improvement over a six-month period would be seen in the next quarterly report. The campaign had produced a You Tube video which the Strategy Team Leader undertook to circulate to Committee members, for information.

Members highlighted that other local authorities use Material Recycling Facilities to separate and process recyclable materials.

The Chair agreed to pass members' comments to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and to share the response with the Committee.

Councillor McLean complimented the refuse crews who had acted quickly and efficiently to deal with bin contamination issues which were reported in Horden.

Councillor Potts referred to the increase in the anti-social behaviour rate in the county of 16% and he pointed out that the true rate was likely to be higher as approximately 20% of calls 101 calls were abandoned due to the long waiting time for the call to be answered and he asked what action was being taken to address the issue. It was suggested that the Strategy Team Leader should speak to colleagues and provide a response for circulation to the Committee.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 Such other business

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked all the officers involved in hosting the visit to various nature reserves and open spaces in the county which took place on 10 May.

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**Environment Sustainable Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

21 July 2023

**Management of Durham County Council
Woodland Estate - update**



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

Electoral division(s) affected:

All

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an update on the management of council-owned woodland and tree planting programmes.
- 2 To highlight the challenges and opportunities for woodland management and creation.

Executive summary

- 3 The Council owns approximately 1800ha of woodland across 86 sites throughout the county, which is 10% of the County's total woodland resource. Over 300ha of this woodland is ancient. These woodlands have generally existed since 1600 and have considerable wildlife and historical value, which if lost is irreplaceable (see appendix 2).
- 4 Appropriate management of all these sites offers a major opportunity for improving the carbon performance of woodlands and their role in tackling climate change. It will also increase amenity value, benefit wildlife conservation and enhance the quality and range of timber products and other ecosystem services that woodlands can provide.
- 5 The Council has an excellent track record in woodland creation, with nearly a million trees planted since 2000 as well as planting 2300 street trees and planting or restoring over 320km hedgerow. Furthermore, we are one of few local authorities nationally that have a Forestry Authority approved management plan for its woodland sites, along with Woodland Improvement Grants towards a five-year improvement programme.

- 6 There are several programmes and initiatives in place that continue to build on this work including Durham Woodland Revival (DWR), the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf), Durham Woodland Creation (DWC), Trees for Children, the North East Community Forest (NECF) and comprehensive management of council-owned woodland through Forestry Commission led initiatives.
- 7 This focus on woodlands over recent years has highlighted inconsistencies in how the Council approaches woodland management. It has also emphasised the need to look at woodland certification options and management of deer populations to promote healthy and sustainable woods that have economic viability.
- 8 The DWR team has successfully sought an extension by National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) until April 2024. This provides the opportunity to set up a system which maximises the benefits of community woodland volunteers for the environment and local communities.
- 9 The role of the DWR Community Engagement Officer will be extended for 2 years beyond the end of the DWR programme in April 2024. This is to allow the continuation of support for community interest in volunteering within council-owned woodland whilst addressing the practical and legal implications of such activity.
- 10 Working with Corporate Property and Land (CPaL), sites have been identified for tree planting under the DWC scheme. To date, 46,500 trees have been established across over 45 ha of land. Further sites will go to Corporate Property Board in August that will go some way towards meeting the target of 10,000 trees in each AAP.
- 11 There is funding available from North East Community Forest to extend the DWC programme manager post for a further 12 months. This will enable the management of planted sites and their grant programmes, along with achieving planting targets for NECF and to benefit from the Trees for Climate grant scheme.

Recommendations

- 12 The Committee is recommended to:
 - (a) Note the content of the report and presentation and comment accordingly.
 - (b) Receive a further update on the management of the council's woodland estate in the next work programme.

Background

Management of existing council-owned woodland

- 13 The council owns and manages over 1800ha of woodland throughout the county, about 10% of the county's total woodland resource. Appropriate management of these woodland sites offers a major opportunity to secure timber production, renewable energy/biomass, wildlife conservation and amenity use and provide a valuable and sustainable resource for years to come.
- 14 There are 86 woodlands spread across the county with a combined total of just over 1800 ha. Many of these are typically located on, or include in part, reclaimed and restored land resulting from the coal mining industry during the 1960s through to the 1990s. This is reflected in their distribution which occur mainly through central and eastern areas with very few to the west in the North Pennines and south in the Tees Lowlands.
- 15 The council own 308 ha of ancient woodland which accounts for 6% of the county's resource. These woodlands have generally existed since 1600 and have considerable wildlife and historical value, which if lost is irreplaceable. This type of woodland mostly occurs on the denes of the West Durham Coalfield along the Twizel, Deerness, Browney and Causey with isolated pockets along the Rivers Derwent, Tees and Wear.
- 16 Responsibility for this woodland within the Council is split between departments and teams. Management across these teams varies and is not cost effective or consistent in terms of staff time and resources.
- 17 In recognition that these woodlands needed positive management, action started in 2013 to develop a series of Forestry Commission (FC) approved management plans and a programme of thinning has been in place since 2013. The plans allowed the woodlands to be entered into a Woodland Improvement Grant Scheme (WIGs) - an FC grant which funds a five-year work programme to bring neglected woodlands back into management and improve the condition of ancient woodland. This positive initiative will unlock over £775,000 of funding in total and more importantly, secure improved woodland management throughout the estate. A temporary staff member is in post to coordinate the work.
- 18 Management of trees and woodlands on council-owned land is now being coordinated by an internal cross-service Trees and Woodland

Workstream chaired by the Head of Environment. This helps to provide direction and coordination of woodland management and operations across the council.

19 These woodland management, creation and restoration initiatives have been a very positive development for the council, the environment and local people. Whilst it has brought about greater collaboration between teams, it has highlighted certain inconsistencies in how the council approaches woodland management;

- (a) The need to consolidate woodland management and operations across the council. Management approaches across teams vary, which is not cost effective in terms of staff time, contracts, consistent standards and economies of scale. Greater clarity of direction and coordination from a single team could effectively achieve this, whilst aligning the needs and activities of the various departments and teams.
- (b) Deer density and distribution have dramatically increased over the last century and current levels in the county pose a significant risk to our woodlands and other animals that rely on them. This pressure needs to be reduced to allow woodlands to flourish. Populations will be monitored but it is anticipated that a deer management strategy will need to be considered in the future.
- (c) The UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) certification process is a recognised means of assuring sustainable woodland management and is widely recognised by the processing and retail sectors. It also provides access to timber markets and there is often a favourable price premium for certified timber. Part of the council's woodland estate has been certified in the past, but the associated benefits have been outweighed by the resources needed to administer ongoing certification and therefore we have had to cease registration since March 2022.

The circumstances are about to change with a council-based renewed programme of thinning and greater volumes of timber going to market. The question of certification needs to be considered again, along with resource implications to be able to join and comply with the scheme.

Durham Woodland Revival

- 20 The DWR programme aims to restore and reconnect woodlands in County Durham. Led by the council and supported by National Lottery Heritage Fund, partners include the Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission, Northwoods, Living Woods NE and Wear Rivers Trust. The programme was established in 2019 and was initially for three years.
- 21 Because of restrictions during the pandemic, some projects had to be put on hold, so an extension was applied for and granted. The programme will now run until April 2024, with final completion in July 2024 when the current apprenticeship comes to an end.
- 22 A dedicated team has been working to give landowners, contractors and people opportunities to learn about, enjoy and manage their woodlands. Highlights to date include the establishment of over 30 ha of woodland on land transferred to the Woodland Trust, with a further 30ha planned; one traineeship completed and one apprentice now in place at Beamish Museum; tree planting and woodland management plans afoot for estates at Ushaw College and Beamish Museum; support for existing/new community woodland groups working in council-owned woods.
- 23 DWR is supporting more than ten community groups who are undertaking a range of woodland management tasks in council-owned woodlands. While these groups carry out important work, resulting in both savings to the council and benefits to communities and woodlands, there are issues with the current arrangement. Groups report to different departments of the council, each with their own agreement type. Some agreements are out of date and some groups have no formal documentation.
- 24 DWR has been working with colleagues across service areas to find a solution that allows groups to help manage sites without leaving volunteers at risk of liability whilst ensuring that the council's liability as a landowner is considered.
- 25 The final solution will require staff to support community interest in volunteering within council-owned woodland in order to satisfy the practical and legal implications of such activity.
- 26 For this purpose, the DWR Community Engagement post will be extended for a further two years from the end of the DWR programme.

Urban Tree Planting Programme

- 27 The council was successful in Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCFF) rounds 1,2 and 3, with over £800,000 being awarded. Planting is targeted at towns and villages with low canopy cover. This year, urban trees have been funded by the Trees for Climate grant, administered by the North East Community Forest. 366 trees have been planted with a grant award of £208,000.
- 28 The Council's Clean & Green team is responsible for planting the trees, along with a maintenance programme for 3 years until they become established. The total number of large standards planted in towns and villages since 2020 is now at 2300. A planting programme for winter 23/24 for 750 trees is currently being prepared.

Durham Woodland Creation

- 29 The Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) is supporting a four-year countywide Woodland Creation Programme to establish 10,000 trees in each of the 14 AAPs. As part of this, a Woodland Creation officer was appointed in August 2020 to work with CPaL and local communities to identify and plant up suitable council-owned sites.
- 30 Around 45 ha of new woodland has been created to date. Most of these sites are council owned, others are owned by parish and town councils. Staff have secured Trees for Climate Grant and other funding for establishment costs for the first three years and maintenance for the first 15 years, worth almost £600,000 in total.
- 31 Further sites are scheduled to be considered by the Corporate Property Board in August which should help to secure the target of 10,000 trees in each AAP.
- 32 There is funding available from North East Community Forest (NECF) and the Trees for Climate programme to extend the DWC programme manager post for a further 12 months. This will enable the management of planted sites and their grant programmes, along with achieving planting targets for NECF and to fully capitalise on the Trees for Climate grant scheme.
- 33 The opportunity to generate carbon income from the sale of carbon credits has been pursued in partnership with local firm, Forest Carbon. An initial five-year agreement is in place to provide a range of services including registration and validation with the Woodland Carbon Code, verification and sale of carbon credits.

- 34 Unfortunately, none of the woodlands to date qualify for this scheme due to the additionality rules. This requires that the planting scheme would only be able to go ahead with the additional income that carbon credits can provide. Due to the generous grant support from Trees for Climate funds, and recent changes in additionality rules, our schemes are unlikely to qualify, but we will continue to assess on an individual basis.

Trees for Children

- 35 The 'Trees for Children' programme is the council's commitment to plant a tree for each of the 70,000 school aged children in the county and is running in conjunction with the Durham Woodland Creation Scheme.
- 36 OASES is delivering this element of the programme. OASES is a charity based in Esh Winning, that has been successfully delivering and promoting outdoor learning and global sustainability for over 20 years with excellent links with County Durham schools. It is developing educational resources and educational programmes of practical tree planting events to enable pupils to appreciate their contribution towards meeting the carbon reduction target of the CERP. To date, approximately 5400 trees have been planted by 4315 pupils from 45 schools.

North East Community Forest (NECF)

- 37 The NECF is one of England's 13 Community Forests, collectively forming the largest environmental regeneration initiative in England, delivering urban, economic and social renewal through planting trees and bringing woodlands back into use for people and wildlife. Newcastle City Council is the lead partner, along with Durham, South Tyneside, North Tyneside, Gateshead and Sunderland councils.
- 38 NECF administers Defra's 'Trees for Climate' fund. This is £640 million in total, from the national Nature for Climate Fund for a five-year programme of planting which will secure £17k/ha for new woodland within Community Forests. As stated earlier, this fund is already being accessed to create new woodland in County Durham.
- 39 The planting target for County Durham is 320ha. This includes both public and private sector woodland. Almost 150 ha has been planted or is planned. As the NECF gathers pace and the team expands, more schemes are likely to come forward from the private sector. As contributing partner to the programme, the council will continue to assess land and make available for meaningful woodland creation.

- 40 There are two more planting seasons left to take advantage of this fund. It could be a one-off opportunity that allows us to cover costs of planting, establishment and maintenance of new woodlands with community involvement.
- 41 The Woodland Creation Officer post has been extended using funds from, and to align with the Trees for Climate fund as explained in paragraph 31.

Conclusion

- 42 The council has an excellent track record in woodland creation, with nearly a million trees planted since 2000. Furthermore, we are one of few local authorities nationally that have a Forestry Commission approved management plan for our woodland sites, along with Woodland Improvement Grants towards a five-year improvement programme.
- 43 The council has had success in obtaining a large amount of funding for a range of schemes including Durham Woodland Revival (with support from National Lottery Heritage Fund), the Urban Tree Challenge Fund and Trees for Climate Fund.
- 44 Responsibility for woodland estate within the council is split between departments and teams. Given the current alliance of trees with climate and nature agendas, along with an increasing woodland asset, a review into how best to consolidate the current management of council-owned woodland is required.
- 45 Deer density and distribution have dramatically increased over the last century and current levels in the county pose a significant risk to our woodlands and other animals that rely on them. It is essential that this pressure is reduced to allow woodlands to flourish, in line with Forestry Commission best practice. Following monitoring of populations, a deer management strategy will be developed that considers a range of measures which address the situation that takes account of the sensitivities of public perception and awareness of the issue.
- 46 The UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) Certification is a recognised means of assuring sustainable woodland management and widely recognised by the processing and retail sectors. It also provides access to timber markets and there is often a favourable price premium for certified timber.
- 47 Part of the Council's woodland estate has been UKWAS certified in the past, but resources deployed to administer ongoing certification

outweighed the benefits and has been paused since March '22. This is about to change with a renewed programme of thinning and greater volumes of timber to market. The benefits of certification will need to be reviewed, along with an assessment of resource implications to be able to join and comply with the scheme.

- 48 The extension of the DWR Community Engagement post until April 2026 provides the opportunity to set up a system which maximises the benefits of community woodland volunteers for the environment and local communities, without leaving volunteers at risk of liability whilst ensuring that the council's liability as a landowner is considered.
- 49 Identifying suitable areas of land, applying for consent and funding for planting schemes is a complex and specialised area of work. The Woodland Creation Officer post only has one more season left and without this post, further schemes will be difficult to resource, and the Council will struggle to contribute to NECF targets. It will also mean that the Council are unable to fully benefit from the Trees for Climate grant scheme. Extending this post will enable the management of planted sites and their grant programmes, along with achieving planting targets for NECF and to fully capitalise on the Trees for Climate grant scheme.

Background papers

None

Other useful documents

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None

Finance

Establishment and maintenance costs of woodland and tree planting are met through various grant programmes.

Consultation

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

No impact

Climate Change

Tree planting is an integral part of the Authority's Climate Emergency Response. New planting can absorb carbon dioxide whilst managing existing woodland can improve resilience to climate change and make them more carbon efficient.

Human Rights

The right to life is threatened by Climate Change.

Crime and Disorder

No direct implications.

Staffing

There is one full time permanent forestry post within the council. This will need to be expanded longer term.

Accommodation

None

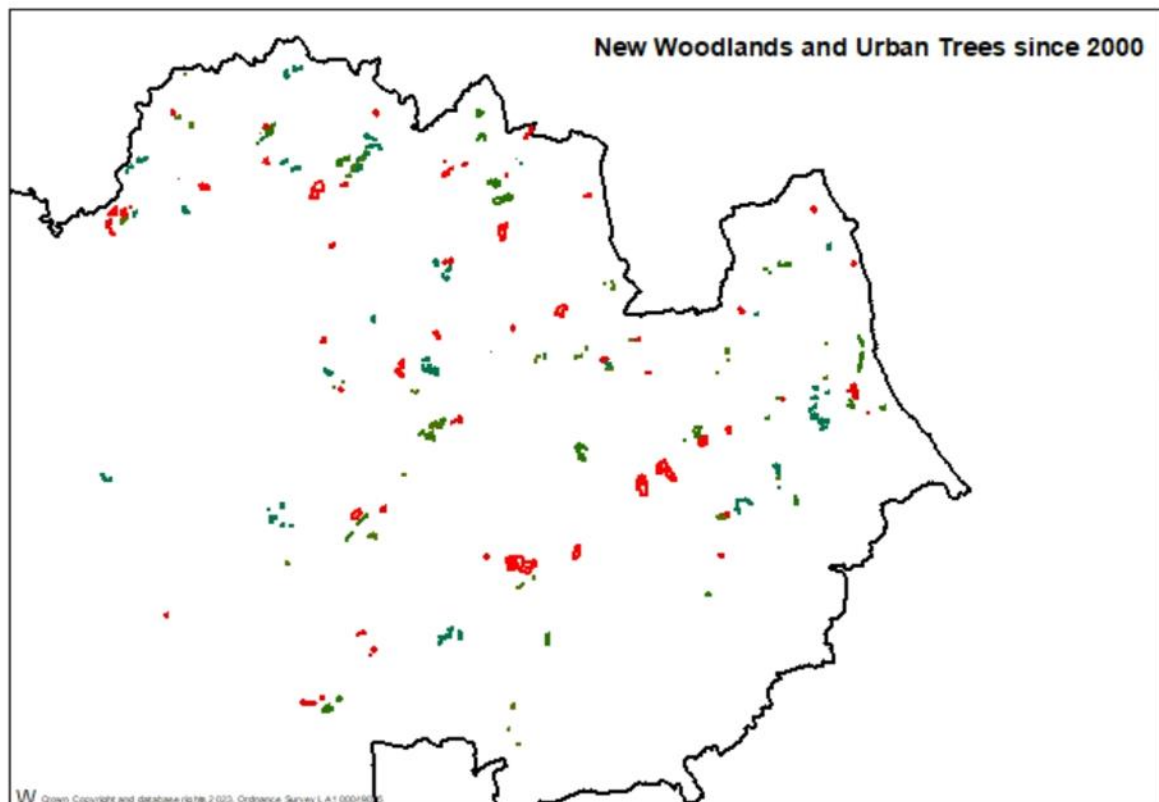
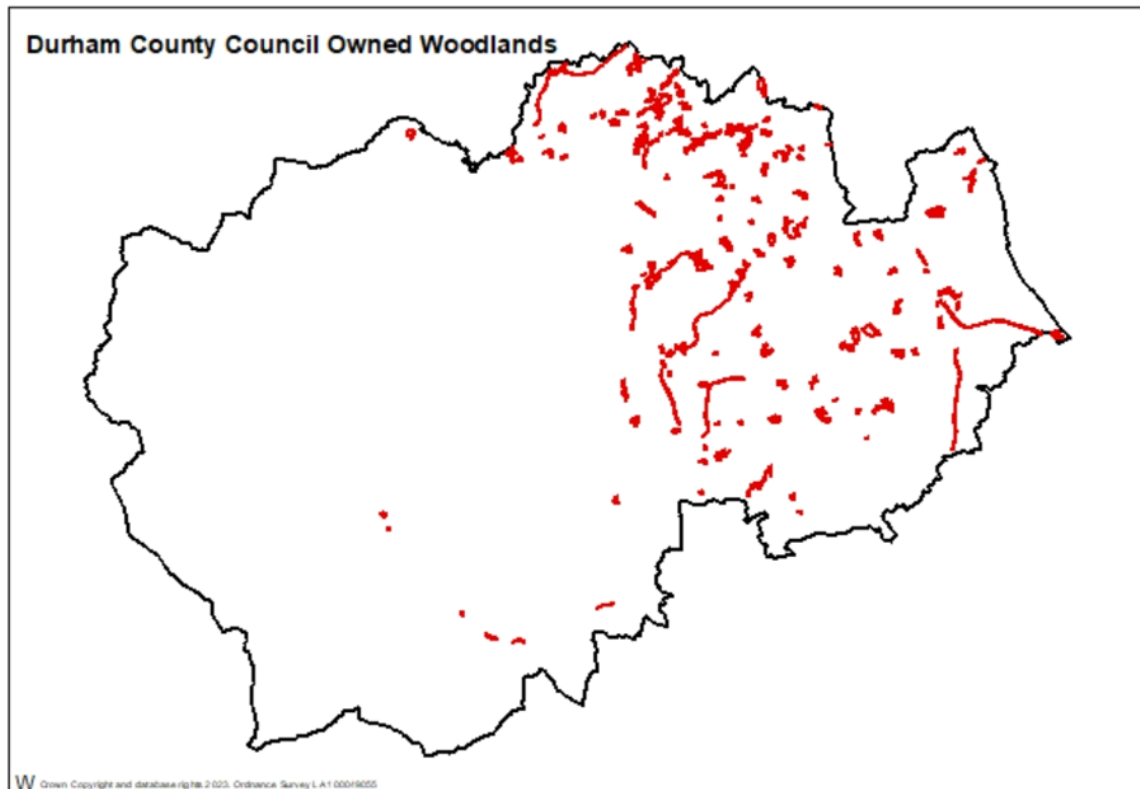
Risk

Adverse effects of not managing the woodland estate.

Procurement

Appointment of contractors for planting and managing woodland creation sites will be ongoing in line with Council's contract procedure rules.

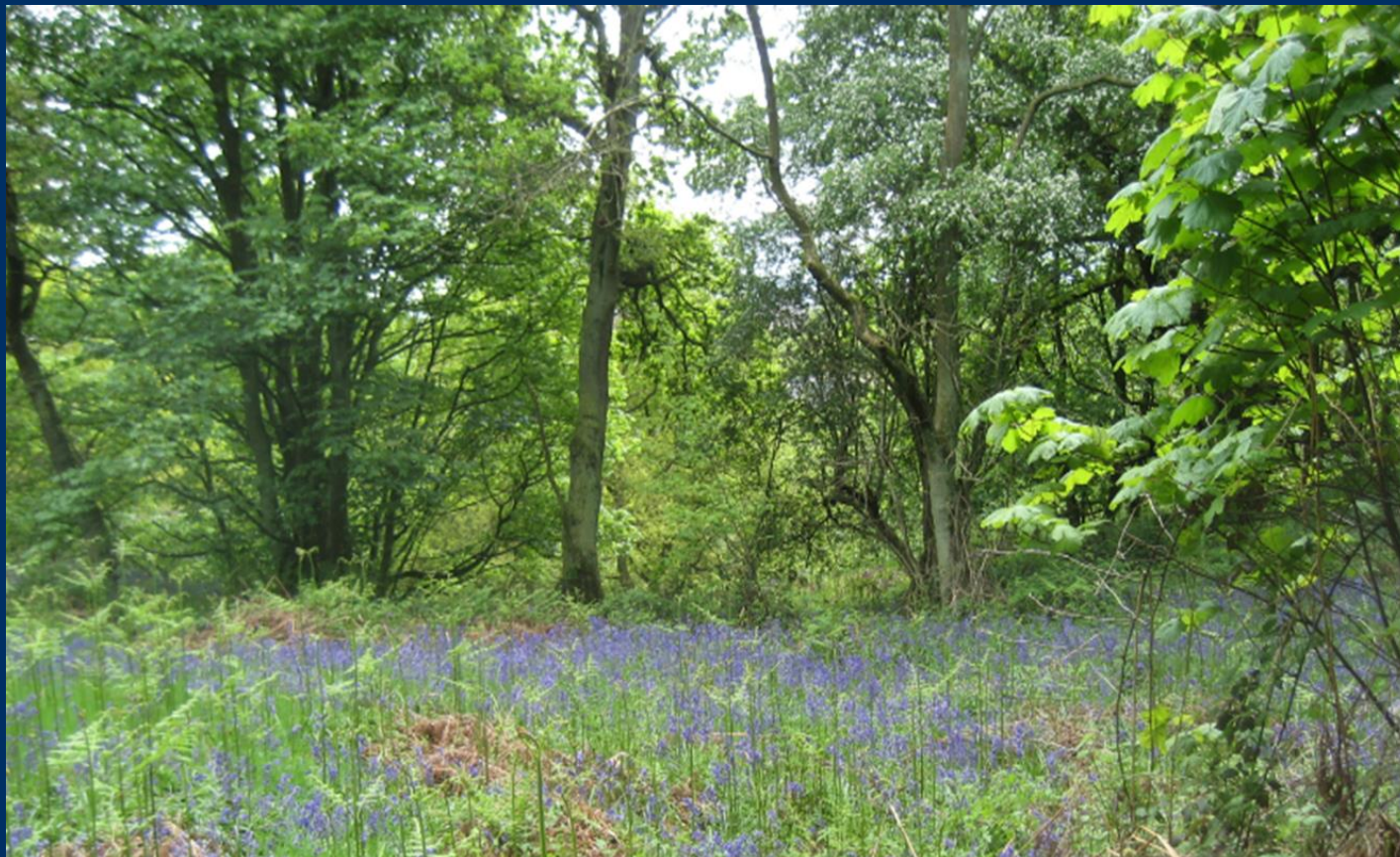
Appendix 2 Plan of woodlands



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**Management of
DCC Woodland Estate
&
Expanding Tree Cover**

**Sue Mullinger
Landscape Delivery Manager**

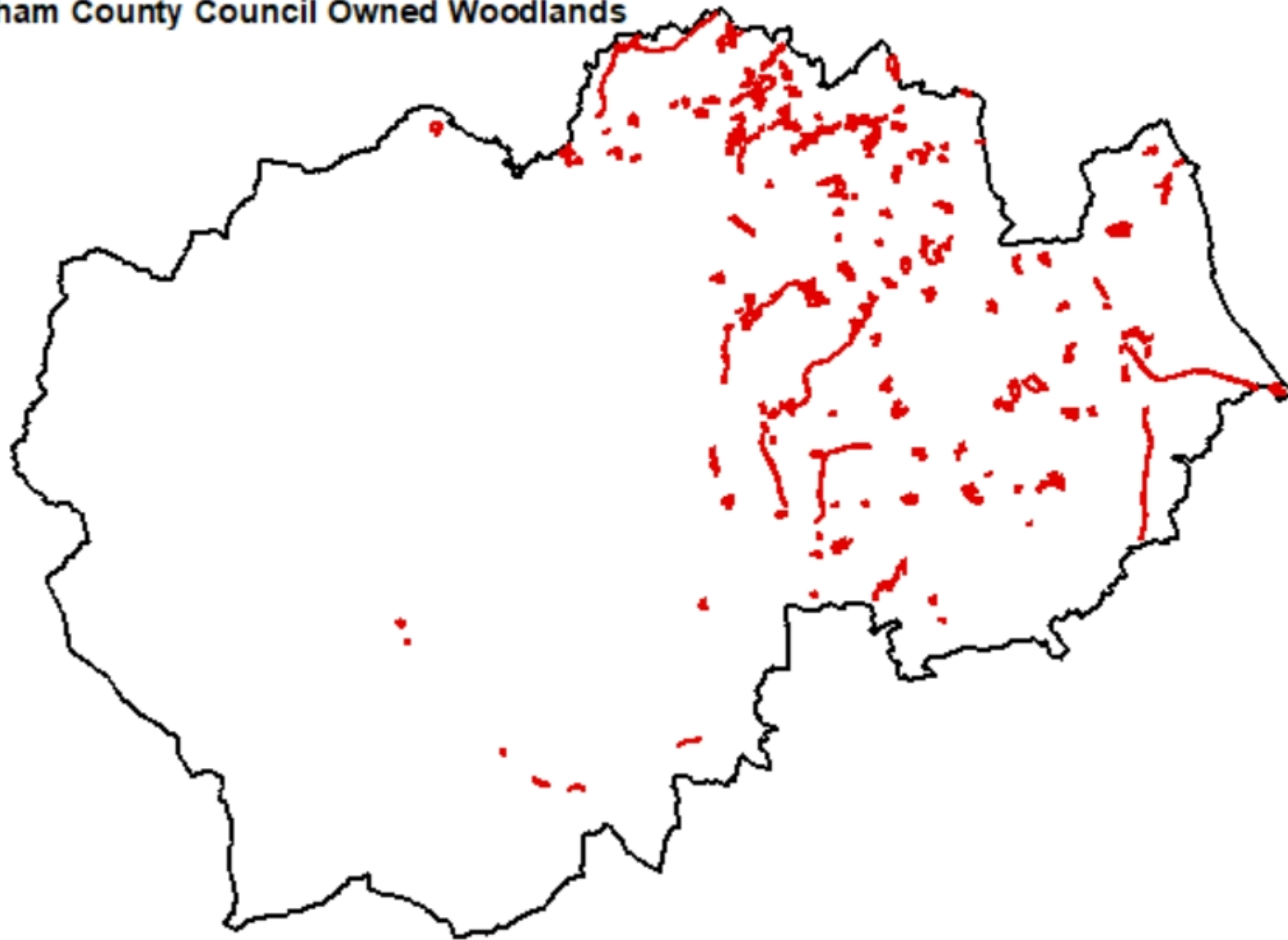




Managing existing woodlands

- The Council owns around 1800 ha of woodland across 86 sites
- This is 10% of County Durham's total resource
- Over 300 ha of this is ancient woodland

Durham County Council Owned Woodlands



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Issues & Challenges

- Review management with a view to consolidating operations
- Systems to maximise benefits of community woodland volunteers
- Deer Management strategy
- Woodland Certification



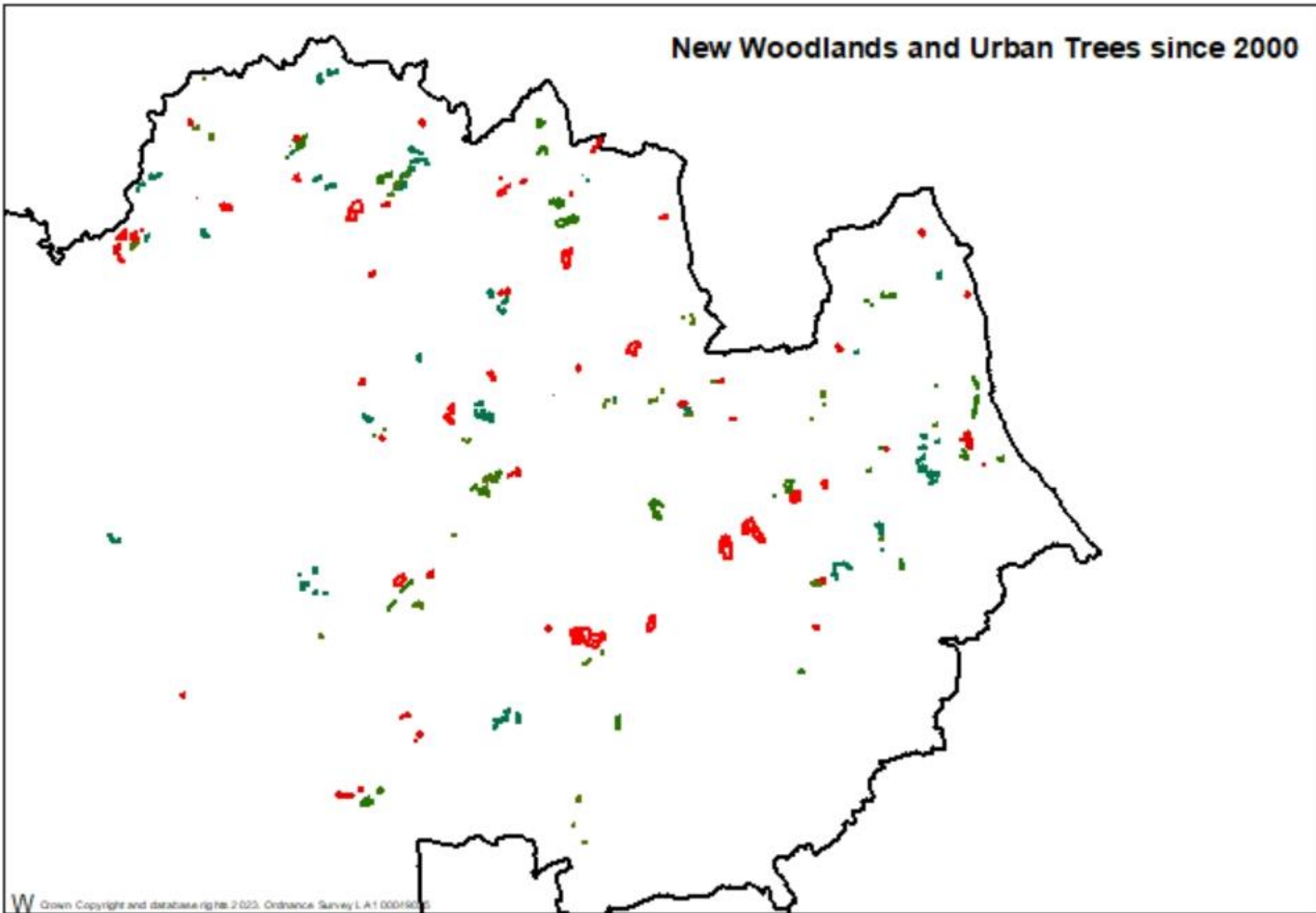
Expanding Tree Cover



Expanding Tree Cover



New Woodlands and Urban Trees since 2000



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Thank you

Sue.Mullinger@durham.gov.uk

**Environment Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

21 July 2023

Tree Management Policy - update



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

Electoral division(s) affected:

All

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an update on the Council's Tree Management Policy.

Executive summary

- 2 The council's Tree Management Policy sets out the council's approach to managing trees in its ownership, or under its management, and trees in private ownership that pose a safety risk to the public. It was approved by Cabinet in July 2014 following a public consultation exercise.
- 3 The Policy has proved to be a useful document since its introduction, providing information to the public on tree-related matters and helping to provide a consistent approach to dealing with customer enquiries. It was programmed for review in July 2023 and that review is now underway.
- 4 The purpose of the review is to update the document to reflect changes in national or local policies, proposed changes to internal procedures within the council relating to tree inspections, and the relationship of the Policy with other publications produced by the council. It will also seek to clarify existing policies where necessary and to provide additional information on topical issues such as ash dieback.
- 5 The review will be carried out in the period July-September 2023. An updated version of the Policy will be reported to Cabinet for approval.

Recommendations

- 6 The Committee is recommended to:

- (a) Note the content of the report and presentation and comment accordingly.
- (b) Receive a further update on the Tree Management Policy in the next work programme.

Background

- 7 The council's Tree Management Policy (see Appendix 2) sets out the council's approach to managing trees in its ownership, or under its management, and trees in private ownership which pose a safety risk to the public. It is informed by statute law, common law and arboricultural best practice
- 8 The Policy was approved by Cabinet on the July 16th 2014 (Key decision NS/25/13) following a public consultation exercise. Minor amendments were made in July 2017 and July 2020.
- 9 The Policy describes the council's approach to the inspection and maintenance of trees in its care (sections 6 and 7) and sets out how it deals with common tree care issues, and damage caused by trees, which are the subject of service requests, customer complaints or insurance claims (sections 9 and 10).
- 10 It sets out how the council uses its powers to deal with trees on private land affecting public safety under the Highways Act 1980 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, and the council's role in dealing with high hedges under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (sections 11, 12 and 13).
- 11 It provides information on Tree Preservation Orders and trees in Conservation Areas, and on trees in relation to development (sections 14 and 17).
- 12 It provides information on replacement tree planting and biosecurity (sections 16 and 19) and on tree pruning techniques based on arboricultural best practice (section 20).
- 13 The Policy has proved to be a useful document since its introduction, providing information to the public on tree-related matters and helping to provide a consistent approach to dealing with customer enquiries.
- 14 The Policy was scheduled for review in July 2023 and this review is currently underway. The purpose of the review is to update the document to reflect changes in national or local policies, proposed changes to internal procedures within the council relating to tree

inspections, and the relationship of the Policy with other publications produced by the council. It will also seek to clarify existing policies where necessary and to provide additional information on issues such as ash dieback.

Key considerations for review

- 15 The introductory sections of the policy need to be updated to reference recent national policy documents such as the England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024 and Keepers of Time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England. They also need to be updated to reference the County Durham Climate Change Strategy and Emergency Response Plan and the Ecological Emergency Action Plan and to set out what implications they have for how we manage our tree resources.
- 16 The way the Policy deals with inspections and tree maintenance need to reflect developments in how the council deals with these issues. The Council's approach to tree inspection and maintenance in the past has been largely reactive. It is currently developing a proactive programme of tree inspections covering trees on land that it owns or manages. An additional Senior Tree Officer was appointed in 2022 to assist in the development and implementation of that programme. The new inspection procedure will be detailed in a separate document currently being prepared which will be reported to Cabinet for approval. The Tree Management Policy will need to embed that procedure.
- 17 The sections of the Policy dealing with tree care and damage are the most regularly referred to parts of the Policy. The principles set out in these sections are well founded and reflect those adopted by other local authorities. It isn't proposed to review these comprehensively although there might be some benefit from clarification in wording or additional information in some cases. There are new topic areas such as effects of vegetation on horses that could usefully be added and more information provided on how claims are dealt with by our insurers.
- 18 The Policy currently deals with protected trees and trees on development sites. The council is producing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Trees, Woodlands and Hedges as part of the County Durham Plan. This was published as a consultation draft in spring 2023 and a revised document will go out to final consultation later this year. The SPD covers issues relating to trees on development sites and protected trees in considerable detail. It is unnecessary for the Policy to duplicate this information.
- 19 County Durham Plan Policy 40 states that where applications are made to carry out works to trees in Conservation Areas or that are covered by a Tree Preservation Order, they will be determined in accordance with the council's Tree Management Policy (or any subsequent revisions).

Any revisions made in relevant sections of the Policy will need to be reflected in the SPD.

- 20 Ash dieback (ADB) is a disease caused by a fungal pathogen which is likely to result in mortality rates on between 50% and 75% of the county's ash population. Information on how the council deals with protected ash trees or ash trees on development sites is contained within the SPD. The revised Tree Management Policy will need to set out the council's approach to ADB on trees in its care.
- 21 The Policy doesn't currently reference to woodland management and this is an area that might usefully be included.

Process

- 22 The review will be carried out in the period July-September 2023. An updated version of the Policy will be reported to Cabinet for approval.

Conclusion

- 23 The Tree Management Policy has proved to be a useful document since its introduction in 2014. The review being undertaken will ensure that the Policy is up to date and reflects best practice in tree care and risk management.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The review of the document will help ensure that the council meets its legal responsibilities in respect of trees and exercise its duties effectively.

Finance

None

Consultation

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

No impact

Climate Change

An effective and up to date Tree Management Policy will form part of the council's response to the climate emergency.

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

No direct implications.

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

A well-founded and up-to-date Tree Management Policy is needed to support the council in meeting its legal obligations in relation to trees and public safety

Procurement

None

Appendix 2 DCC Tree Policy 2020

Attached as a separate document



Durham County Council

Tree Management Policy

July 2020

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1. Summary

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

2. Policy Scope

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

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

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

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

4. Legislation

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

- 4.1** The Forestry Act (1967) requires certain permissions and licences to be granted where felling of trees is proposed within a woodland setting. Durham County Council will ensure that any proposed felling is fully compliant with the requirements of the Forestry Act.
- 4.2** We, as the Local Planning Authority are able to create Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), in respect of trees or woodland, which is considered to have a significant impact on the amenity of a local area.
- 4.3** In addition to those trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order, the Town & Country Planning Act (1990) also makes special provision for trees in conservation areas.
- 4.4** The Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981, as amended CROW Act 2000) states that it is illegal to intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. For Schedule 1 (Wildlife and Countryside Act) bird species it is also an offence to disturb birds whilst they are building or using a nest.
- 4.5** Many bat species use holes, cracks and crevices in trees as roosts. Bats are a European Protected Species and are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Causing damage to or destroying a roost site, preventing access to a roost site and killing bats are all criminal offences which can lead to imprisonment or a fine. A roost cavity is considered to be a roost even if bats are not currently using it. Felling trees with bat roosts for health & safety reasons without first consulting Natural England may still be an offence under the Regulations.

- 4.6 The Hedgerow Regulations (1997) introduced powers allowing important rural hedgerows to be protected.
- 4.7 We have no authority to intervene in a dispute between neighbours regarding trees; Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Order Act (2003) gives Local Authorities the powers to deal with complaints or disputes about high hedges affecting residential properties.

5. Trees on Durham County Council Owned / Managed Land

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

6. Inspection of Trees

- 6.1 We work to a risk-based approach to tree management: a programme of inspection identifying and prioritising potential hazards. The cycle of inspection for trees will be set according to their location and area of risk. Relevant guidance relating to new and existing bio-security threats will be included in the inspection method.
- 6.2 Highways trees are considered to be a high priority. They include both trees on land owned by the Council and trees on land owned by other parties. Roads are inspected on a regular basis. The inspection cycle is determined by a number of factors including road category, traffic use, incident history, local knowledge and the presence and frequency of trees. Tree defects likely to cause a hazard are identified. In the case of trees on land owned or adopted by the Council the appropriate work is undertaken to remove the hazard. In the case of trees on land owned by other parties, the land owner is contacted and requested to remedy the situation (see 11.0 below).

7. Tree Maintenance

- 7.1 Tree maintenance is currently mostly 'reactive' in nature and conducted in response to reports received by the council concerning specific trees. In future, our aim is that a greater level of tree maintenance work will be conducted as a result of information gathered during proactive inspections in order to reduce future problems occurring. We have limited resources to manage our trees so we need to ensure we can manage them efficiently to achieve the greatest benefit and minimise the problems we need to deal with.

However, reactionary tree maintenance will always form a key element of overall tree maintenance operations and normally originates from the following:

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

7.2 Request for tree works of a nature that we consider would be detrimental to the trees, or that conflict with the principles of this Policy will be refused, either at the initial point of contact or following inspections. The customer will be advised of the reasons for the decision not to proceed with the request and, if required, be advised of the two-stage review procedure:

- Initial review will be to the Clean & Green Area Supervisor / Manager, in conjunction with the Senior Tree Officer as necessary, who will determine if the right decision has been made in accordance with this Policy.
- Should the customer fail to be satisfied following the initial review procedures, the decision may be referred to the County Clean & Green Manager, in conjunction with the Senior Tree Officer as necessary, for final review.
- Complaints regarding the administration or management of the request will be referred to the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure

7.3 Following inspection, a priority system will be utilised to ensure the correct use of resources and to target works where required most urgently. The following categories will be used by Clean & Green when prioritising tree works:

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

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

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

(Note: If the tree is in a minor public access area, it could be considered to have non-reactive status and left as is)

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

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

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

8. Publicising Tree Felling / Pruning

8.1 Minor works involving pruning or removing smaller trees will not be publicised.

- 8.2** Where large scale tree works are intended to be undertaken, we will consult with as wide a range of community representatives as practicable and where necessary undertake a public consultation / information exercise to ensure widespread understanding and awareness of the actions to be taken.
- 8.3** Where a competent officer has determined that the tree should be felled on public safety grounds there will be no public consultation and no right of objection.

9. Dealing with Tree Care

- 9.1** While we recognise the need to conserve the present tree cover, we also recognise that removal of trees is sometimes justified for sound arboricultural reasons and that pruning works are sometimes necessary to ensure that trees are in a safe and healthy condition.
- 9.2** We receive many requests and complaints regarding trees. It is important that individual issues are dealt with consistently and that decisions are balanced against the positive contribution that trees make to the environment and enjoyment of the County by local residents and visitors.
- 9.3** In all cases, consideration will be given as to whether the tree in question is worthy of retention and protection. Particular care will be given to proposals affecting ancient or veteran trees.
- 9.4** In some cases, where trees are approaching the end of their natural life or are an inappropriate species in the wrong place we will look at progressive removal and replacement on an estate by estate basis, in consultation with the local community, as part of a phased replacement over a number of years.
- 9.5** To ensure that requests for works to trees are dealt with efficiently, consistently and fairly, our policy in relation to the more common types of request is outlined below.

9.6 Obstructing / Overhanging Tree Branches

- 9.6.1** Tree branches can cause obstructions to roads, footways, public rights of ways, signs, streetlights and open spaces. Appropriate pruning to eliminate hazards caused by obstructive branches will normally be acceptable, providing efforts are made to retain the shape of the tree.
- 9.6.2** We will attempt to undertake work to trees in council ownership / management to maintain a minimum 5 metres clearance over roads, 2.4 metres over footpaths / public rights of way and 3 metres over railway paths.
- 9.6.3** We will not prune trees that overhang neighbouring properties unless the trees are dangerous or causing an actionable nuisance

by creating a risk of damage to the neighbour's property or his enjoyment of the property (e.g. touching the walls, roofs, windows, gutters, garage etc.)

- 9.6.4 Adjacent Landowners do have a common law right to prune back tree branches to their boundary, providing that the tree in question is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or situated

within a Conservation Area. The works should be carried out in accordance with good arboricultural practice.

9.7 Shading and Loss of Light

- 9.7.1 Trees are often perceived to block light to nearby properties. However, pruning or removal of trees will often have a negligible impact on the amount of light reaching a house or garden. Therefore, tree works to improve light levels will not normally be considered. However, we will consider acting (pruning or felling) in exceptional circumstances.

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

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

9.8 Loss of View

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

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

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

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

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

9.10 Overhead Cables / Telephone Wires

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

9.11 General / Minor Nuisances

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

9.11.3 Falling leaves, sap, blossom, fruit, nuts, bird and insect droppings are not readily controllable by pruning and cleaning of affected surfaces can be considered to be routine maintenance. Pruning will not normally be considered solely as a way of alleviating problems with these issues alone.

9.11.4 We would not normally prune or fell a tree under our ownership / management that bears poisonous fruit / foliage (such as laburnum or yew). However, where it is known that unsupervised young children are likely to be exposed to berries or foliage that will make them ill if eaten, we will investigate on a case by case basis and take action, where appropriate.

9.12 Trees considered too big / too tall

9.12.1 We will not prune or fell a tree under council ownership / management because it is considered to be 'too big' or 'too tall' for its surroundings. The height of a tree does not in itself make it dangerous. In assessing risks posed by trees the council will have regard to their height and relationship with buildings, but in many cases the most important factors will be their health and condition. Reducing the height of a tree by a substantial amount is rarely practical as it will generally introduce decay into the canopy and make it less stable, increasing rather than reducing risks in the longer term (see 'Crown reduction', 'Topping' and 'Pollarding' in 20.3 below).

9.13 Personal Medical Complaint

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

10. Damage and Tree Roots

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

10.2 Root invasion in gardens

10.2.1 Tree roots in gardens are a natural occurrence and root presence is unlikely to be affected by tree pruning or removal. Landowners do have a common law right to prune back tree roots to their boundary, providing that the tree in question is not

protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or situated within a Conservation Area.

10.2.2 Most species of deciduous tree will re-sprout from the stump when cut down. Many species will produce a new growth shoot from a root if it becomes exposed to sunlight through ground erosion. Some species readily produce shoots from their buried roots as a way to regenerate and this is often stimulated by stresses, such as heavy pruning or felling. Numerous tree species (including Cherry and Poplar) are therefore likely to

produce vigorous root suckers as a response to being felled. Poisoning a stump to prevent such suckering is not always successful since application of herbicide onto a stump face often only affects the stump and the upper roots.

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

10.3 Damage to walls and fences

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

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

10.4 Damage to paths

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

10.5 Damage to drains or water pipes

If a tree on County Council owned land is proven to be the cause of damage to an existing pipe or drain on a neighbouring property, we will consider pruning or removal of the tree where such action is reasonable and appropriate.

10.6 Trip Hazards

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

10.7 Installation of drop kerbs

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

10.8 Subsidence

10.8.1 Where an allegation is made that a tree in our ownership / management has caused, or is likely to cause damage to a third party structure through subsidence or other mechanisms,

council officers will initially visit the site and make a general assessment of any damage or the foreseeability of damage occurring and take any reasonable action.

10.8.2 Where there is insufficient evidence of damage, or no clear and unambiguous correlation between the alleged damage and the effects of the tree(s), we would expect evidence in support of a request to remove a tree(s) or any claim for damages/repairs. This evidence will normally include:

- Root analysis (presence, condition and identification)
- Crack/level monitoring (showing greater than expected seasonal movement)
- Details of the nature, extent and type of damage
- Two trial pits (one remote one at point of damage)
- Soil analysis (soil type, moisture level)
- Depth of foundations

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

10.9 Heave

10.9.1 When a tree is removed in a clay sub-soil, the soil will rehydrate and swell in volume. The expansion may lift the foundations

and cause cracking to the property. This is known as 'heave'. This is more likely to occur if the removed tree was mature and had a high water demand such as an oak tree.

11. Trees on Private Land Causing A Danger / Obstruction to The Public Highway

If a privately owned tree is causing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12.5 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 does not enable us to become involved with private trees causing a nuisance to a

neighbouring property by causing shade, blocking views or dropping leaves, flowers or fruit etc. unless the trees are imminently dangerous.

13. Anti-Social Behaviour

13.1 Trees

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

13.2 High Hedges

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

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

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

13.2.3 In doing so, we must take account of all relevant factors and must strike a balance between the competing interests of the complainant and hedge owner, as well as the interests of the wider community.

13.2.4 If we consider that the circumstances justify it, a formal notice will be issued to the hedge owner, which will set out what they must do to the hedge to remedy the problem, and when by. Failure to carry out the works required is an offence which could lead to a fine.

13.2.5 More details can be found on Durham County Council's website.

www.durham.gov.uk/article/3949/High-hedges

14. Protected Trees

14.1 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's)

14.1.1 A TPO is a legal document made, administered and enforced by the local planning authority, to protect specified trees and woodlands with public amenity value.

14.1.2 A TPO prevents cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or destruction of trees (including cutting roots) without our permission.

Works on Protected Trees

- 14.1.3 If you intend to carry out any works to protected trees, you must apply for consent from the council first.
- 14.1.4 If you do not own the tree you must obtain the owner's permission before carrying out the works.
- 14.1.5 You may also need to submit supporting technical information if the reason for your application relates to the condition of the tree - for example due to the presence of pests, diseases, fungi, or structural defects affecting the safety of the tree. Written evidence from an appropriate arboricultural professional may be required to support your application. For a list of arboriculturalists who are members of the Arboricultural Association, visit their website for details.
- 14.1.6 If the reason for your application relates to suspected structural damage caused by the tree, please submit a report from a structural engineer/surveyor together with technical advice to support your application.
- 14.1.7 Once an application has been submitted, we may either grant or withhold consent for works on a tree with a TPO or we may give a conditional consent. In determining whether to grant consent the Council will have regard to the amenity value of the tree and the considerations set out in sections 9 and 10 above. Permission to fell a preserved tree usually carries a condition to plant a replacement, which will automatically become the subject of the TPO.
- 14.1.8 If there are trees which you think should be protected or if you have seen work being carried out on a protected tree and want to know if the owner has permission, please contact one of our tree officers (see Further Information section below)

Penalties

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

Rights to appeal

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

Which trees are covered by a TPO?

- 14.1.10 Any tree, group of trees or woodland may be protected. There are currently around 700 TPOs in County Durham and whilst many are on individual trees there are some groups of trees. You can find out if your tree is covered by a Tree Preservation Order by contacting one of our tree officers (see 'Further Information' section below).
- 14.1.11 When you are buying a property, the presence of a TPO should be revealed by the search of the local land charges register.
- 14.1.12 The Council will make new TPOs where appropriate. In deciding whether or not to make an order we will take into account the amenity value of trees, their potential life expectancy, and the level of threat posed to them.
- 14.1.13 The Council may at any time review an existing TPO to assess whether it is still appropriate to provide protection in circumstances which may be different to those when the Order was made. When it is considered necessary to make changes we will either revoke the order, revoke the order and make a new order, or vary the order in some detail.
- 14.1.14 Further information

More details can be found on our website:

www.durham.gov.uk/treemanagement

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

or Email: treeofficers@durham.gov.uk

14.2 Trees in a Conservation Areas

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

Work on trees within a Conservation Area

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

14.2.4

Contact **Customer Services** on 03000 26 1000

or Email: treeofficers@durham.gov.uk

Penalties

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

14.2.6 Is my Tree in a Conservation Area?

More details can be found on our website:

www.durham.gov.uk/treemanagement

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

or Email: treeofficers@durham.gov.uk

14.3 Forestry Commission (FC) Felling Licences

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

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-online-for-a-felling-licence>

or contact the Yorkshire and North East Area Office on 0300 067 4900 email: yne@forestrycommission.gov.uk

15. Other Factors Constraining Work to Trees

15.1 Birds

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

15.2 Bats

Bats are a European Protected Species and are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (also known as the Habitat Regulations) and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Causing damage to or destroying a roost site is

a criminal offence which can lead to imprisonment or fine. Trees with suitable features such as holes, cracks, crevices and dense ivy should be risk assessed for their ability to support bats, prior to any works commencing on the tree. Trees, in DCC ownership, displaying signs of roosting bats will be referred to our Ecology team before any work commences. Any trees supporting roosting bats will not be worked on until due process has been followed and a license acquired if necessary.

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

15.3 Planning Permission

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

15.4 Restrictive Covenants

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

16. Replacement Tree Planting

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

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

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

17. Trees and Development

17.1 We are committed to continuously improving the way that trees are considered in relation to planning applications for new development. We will ensure that full consideration is given to both the retention of existing trees and the planting of new ones. We will take into account the ultimate mature size of the tree, available space and the relationship to buildings when designing layouts to avoid causing future relationship issues.

17.2 Once the trees to be retained have been identified, their removal can be prohibited by a Tree Preservation Order, planning conditions or a

planning agreement. The aim of this policy is to ensure that trees are not unnecessarily lost and that the most suitable ones are retained.

18. Vandalism and Damage to Council Owned / Managed Trees

- 18.1** Vandalism is an increasing pressure on trees. Usually it is young newly planted trees that are damaged; however, mature trees are often damaged too. There are various ways in which vandalism can be counteracted, but none of these is 100% effective against determined attack.
- 18.2** There are cases where trees we own / manage have been irrevocably damaged or removed without permission. This is criminal damage. We will investigate any reports of vandalism / damage to trees in our ownership / management and try to repair any damage where we can. Where possible, we will take legal action against the person(s) causing the damage.
- 18.3** We will remove rope swings from trees in our ownership / management where we are aware of them.
- 18.4** Structures / attachments such as signs, bird boxes, tree houses and other such items should not be attached to Durham County Council owned trees without permission.

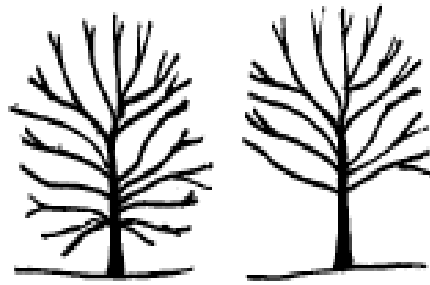
19. Biosecurity / Pest and Epidemic Management

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

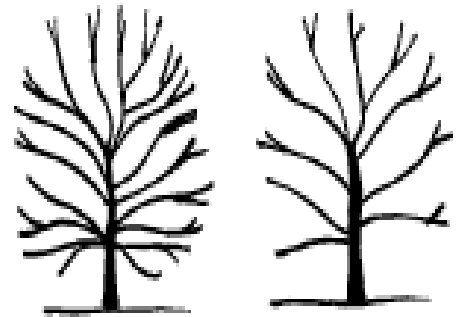
20. Tree Pruning Techniques

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

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

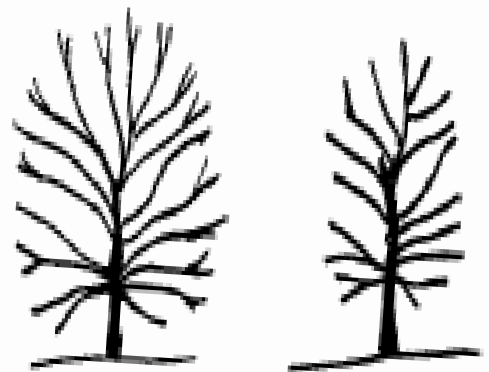


- **Crown thinning** – The removal of a specified proportion of branch material from the interior of the crown without affecting the shape of the tree. This operation is usually undertaken to reduce crown density; form a healthy branch structure by removing dead; diseased, damaged, crossing and rubbing branches, and allow more light through the canopy. Many tree species evolve a canopy density for adaptive reasons and crown-thinning can increase turbulence and cause drought stress and branch failures. For this reason, crown thinning is usually only acceptable when carried out as part of crown cleaning or balancing works. *Image of an example of crown thinning is shown on the right.*



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

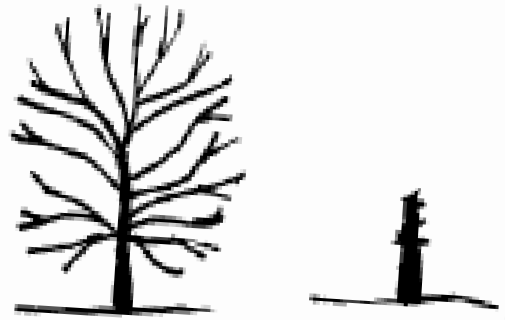
Crown reduction up to a maximum of 15-20% may be acceptable to semi-mature trees providing cuts do not exceed 5-7cm and where shaping and restricting size and spread is essential. Crown reduction of mature or older trees is not normally acceptable as it can severely affect tree health and may lead to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



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

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

- **Pollarding** – This severe operation entails the removal of the entire tree’s branch structure back to the trunk. Pollarding is an ancient way of maintaining trees that is sometimes necessary, particularly on trees that have been pollarded previously. Only certain species will tolerate this degree of pruning, and new growth may be weak and prone to tearing off. This method of management is not therefore normally acceptable. *Image of an example of pollarding is shown on the right.*



- **Dead Wooding or Crown Clean** – This operation is similar to a crown thin except that only dead, diseased, crossing and rubbing branches are removed to tidy up the appearance of the tree. No healthy, sound wood is removed. This operation is recommended to help maintain a healthy, safe tree.
- **Formative Pruning** – The removal of problematic or potentially problematic branches, ensuring good tree development.
- **Stump Grinding** – Stump grinding is the practice of removing a tree stump to below ground level by mechanical means. We will carry out stump grinding where necessary to enable new trees to be planted or to remove a significant hazard or for visual amenity. Where stump removal is

not necessary tree stumps will be removed close to ground level so as not to leave a trip hazard.

21. Document Control

| | Review date | Comment |
|-------------|----------------------------|--|
| Version 1 | July 2014 | Initial approval: Cabinet 16 July 2014 (key decision NS/25/13 – including public consultation) |
| Version 2 | July 2017 | |
| Version 3 | July 2020 | |
| Review date | July 2023 | |
| Contact | NSPolicyTeam@durham.gov.uk | |

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Tree Management Policy - update

Environment Sustainable Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 July 2023



Tree Management Policy

The council's approach to managing trees in its ownership, or under its management, and trees in private ownership which pose a safety risk to the public.

Informed by statute law, common law and arboricultural best practice.

Approved by Cabinet July 16th 2014 following a public consultation exercise



Durham County Council

Tree Management Policy

July 2020

Managing the council's trees

- Inspection of trees
- Publicising tree felling / pruning
- Dealing with tree care
- Damage and tree roots

Dealing with tree care

- Obstructing / overhanging tree branches
- Shading and loss of light
- Loss of view
- Trees affecting reception (television / satellite / solar panels)
- Overhead cables / telephone wires
- General / minor nuisances
- Trees considered too big / too tall
- Personal medical complaints

Damage and tree roots

- Root invasion in gardens
- Damage to walls and fences
- Damage to paths
- Damage to drains or water pipes
- Trip hazards
- Installation of drop kerbs
- Subsidence
- Heave

Other peoples trees

- Trees on private land causing a danger / obstruction to the public highway

Highways Act 1980

- Trees on private land causing a danger (other than to a public highway)

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- High Hedges

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

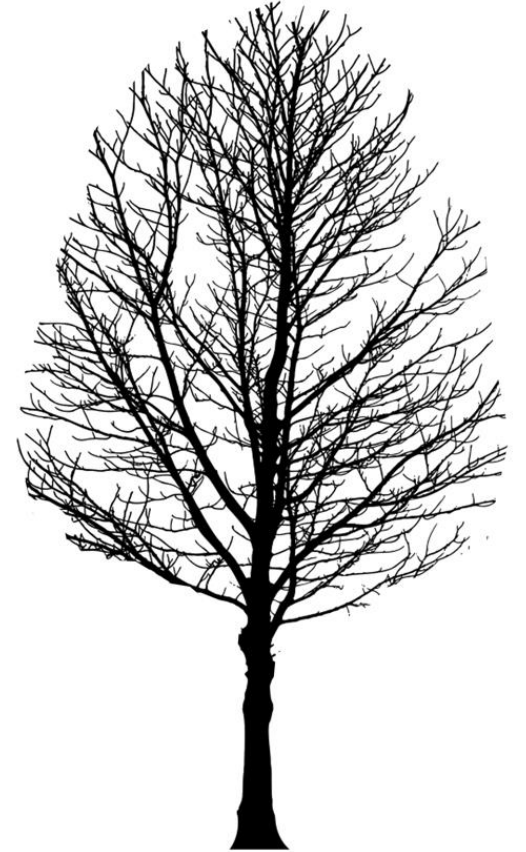
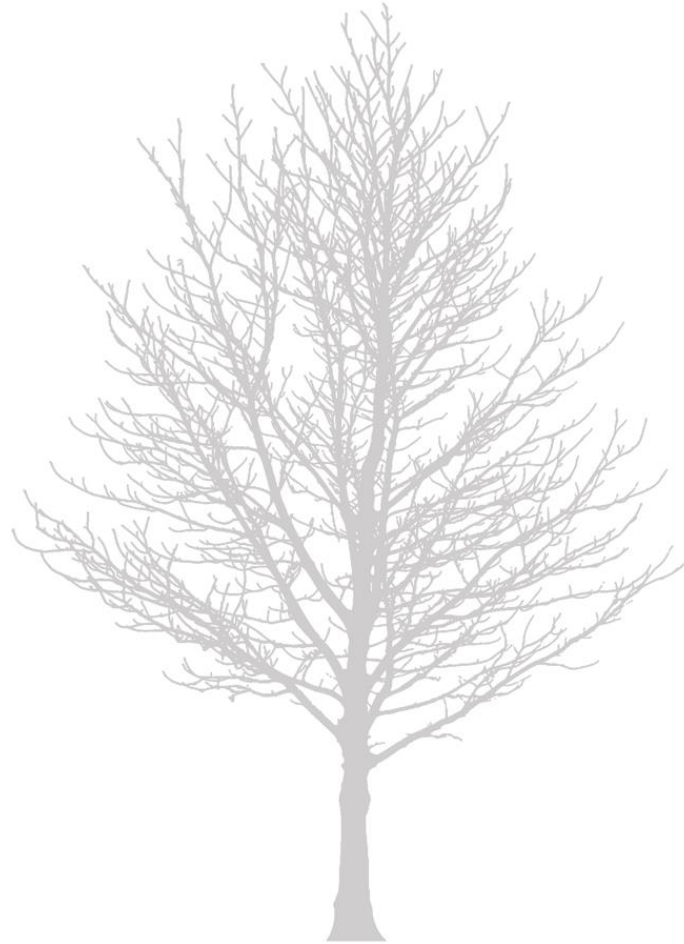
Protected trees and planning

- Tree Preservation Orders
- Trees in Conservation Areas
- Felling Licences
- Trees and development

- Other factors constraining work to trees
 - Birds
 - Bats
 - Planning permission
 - Restrictive covenants
- Replacement tree planting
- Vandalism and damage to Council owned / managed trees
- Biosecurity / Pest & Epidemic Management

Tree Pruning Techniques

- Crown lifting
- Crown thinning
- Crown reduction
- Crown cleaning
- Pollarding
- Formative pruning
- Stump grinding
- Topping



The Policy has proved to be a useful document since its introduction, providing information to the public on tree-related matters and helping to provide a consistent approach to dealing with customer enquiries.



Durham County Council

Tree Management Policy

July 2020

Review

The Policy was scheduled for review in July 2023 and this review is currently underway. The purpose of the review is to update the document to reflect:

- changes in national or local policies
- proposed changes to internal procedures within the council relating to tree inspections
- its relationship with other publications being produced by the council.

It will also seek to clarify existing policies where necessary and to provide additional information on issues such as ash dieback.

Review period July-September 2023

Changes in national / local policy

- England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024
- Keepers of Time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England.
- County Durham Climate Change Strategy and Emergency Response Plan
- Ecological Emergency Action Plan

Tree inspections

- Past approach has been reactive
- New approach will be proactive
- An additional STO was appointed in 2022

- The new Tree Inspection Procedure will be reported to Cabinet for approval
- This needs to be embedded in the Tree Management Policy

Tree maintenance and damage

- Existing policy is based on well founded principles
- Very similar to those adopted by other local authorities
- Has proved itself in use

- Some areas would benefit from greater clarity in wording or additional information
- New topic areas need to be picked up – such as effects of certain tree species on horses
- More information on how claims are dealt with by our insurers

Protected trees and development

- New SPD on Trees Woodlands and Hedges covers these issues in much greater detail
- Unnecessary to duplicate in the Policy

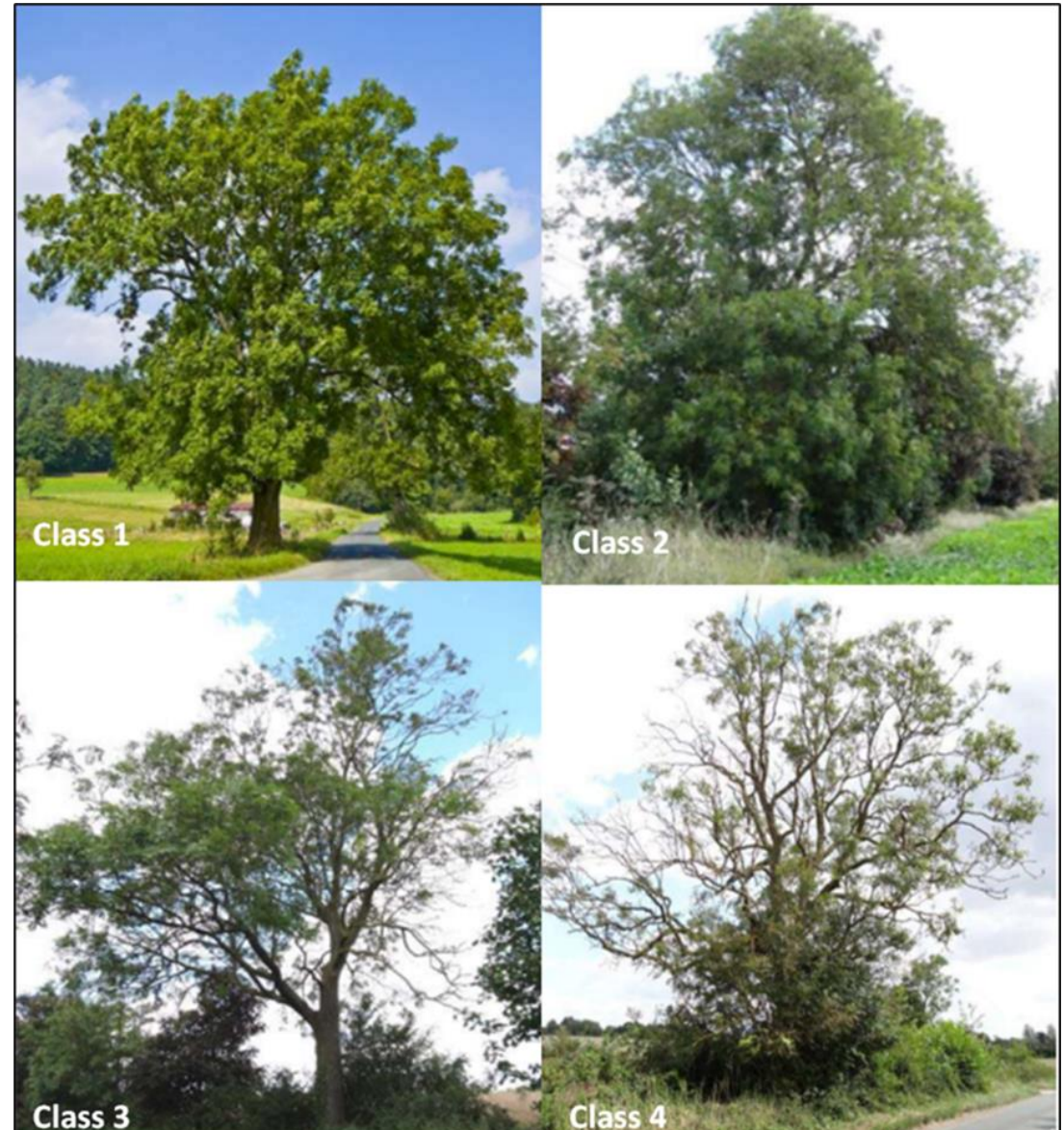
- Policy 40 of the County Durham Plan refers to the Tree Management Policy – revisions in the Policy need to be reflected in the SPD



Trees, Woodlands and Hedges Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - January 2023 Consultation Draft

Ash dieback disease

- Ash dieback (ADB) is a disease caused by a fungal pathogen which is likely to result in mortality rates on between 50% and 75% of the county's ash population.
- SPD gives advice on protected ash trees and trees on development sites.
- Policy position needed on how we deal with ash trees in our care



Woodland Management

The Policy doesn't currently reference to woodland management and this is an area that might usefully be included.



Programme

Review period July-September 2023

Timing of report to Cabinet will depend on progress / timing of Tree Inspection Procedure and SPD.



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Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 July 2023

Quarter Four, 2022/23

Performance Management Report



Report of John Hewitt, Chief Executive

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 four, 2022/23, January to March 2023.

Executive Summary

- 3 This report is structured around a performance framework which reflects our current [Council Plan](#) (2022-2026), and its format has been developed to provide greater focus on how the council is contributing to achieving the people's vision.
- 4 The performance report is structured around two main components.
 - (a) State of the County indicators to highlight areas of strategic importance and reflected in both the [County Durham Vision 2035](#) and the [Council Plan](#).
 - (b) Performance of council services and progress against major initiatives as set out in the [Council Plan](#).
- 5 Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages against the five thematic areas within the Council Plan 2022-2026: our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council. It is broken down into national, regional and local picture, things that are going well, areas which require attention and other areas to note.
- 6 The [Council Plan](#) has undergone its annual refresh and the plan for 2023-2027 was approved by Council on 22 February. The performance framework is now being adjusted accordingly and will form the structure of this performance report from quarter one, 2023/24.

Context

7 2022/23 continues to be a challenging period and this report sets out the council's continued strong performance. COVID-19, the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis have all impacted on our residents, our businesses and the council. The current cost-of-living crisis has steadily worsened over the last 12 months. High inflation, currently at 10.1%¹, has largely been driven by the rise in the cost of fuel and energy bills, which is being impacted significantly by world events, including the war in Ukraine. This is having a triple impact.

- (a) Impact on our residents. High inflation is outstripping wage and benefit increases, so income is falling in real terms. This is driving demand for services which support people facing financial hardship or who are in crisis, as well as services provided to vulnerable people such as social care for children and adults.

We are receiving more contact from households seeking financial assistance, with a continuing high volume of applications for Welfare Assistance. Both elements of our scheme increased during 2022/23, although the increase in claims for Daily Living Expenses² was more significant (10,812 this year, compared to 4,875 last year) than the increase in claims for Settlement Grants³ (1,576 claims this year, compared to 1,310 last year). We are continuing to support residents through the crisis with various initiatives and funds, including our Council Tax Reduction Scheme, food and fun initiatives, food surplus activity and 'cutting the cost of the school day' initiative.

- (b) Increased costs for the council. Premises and transport increased in line with higher energy costs and fuel prices, most noticeably across service areas such as waste and Home to School Transport. Contract prices were also affected, and more contracts reflected changes in demand.

We created a £10 million Budget Support Reserve to assist with inflationary pressures within 2022/23.

- (c) Reduced income for the council. Users of council services may seek to save money resulting in a fall in income from discretionary services such as leisure centres and theatres. We estimate that during 2022/23 our income will be under budget by £1.858 million.

8 The council's low tax raising capacity continues to place pressure on our budgets. If core spending power 'per dwelling' across the county was raised

¹ UK Consumer Price Index for 12 months to March 2023. Indicative [modelled consumer price inflation estimates](#) suggest that the CPI rate would have last been higher in October 1981, where the estimate for the annual inflation rate was 11.2%.

² helps people whose circumstances change unexpectedly and who do not have access to money. It provides help with daily living expenses (for up to seven days) – includes food, travel and some clothing (restrictions apply).

³ helps people stay in their home, or move back into housing, after living in supported or unsettled accommodation, e.g., when leaving care of having been made homeless. It includes help towards beds and/or bedding, furniture, white goods (for example, cooker, fridge, washing machine), kitchen equipment, floor coverings, curtains, removal costs.

to the England average of £2,360 (+£167), the council would receive an additional £42 million each year.

- 9 Budget pressures of around £79 million are expected during 2023/24. This is due to factors such as the 9.7% uplift in the National Living Wage, energy costs, pay awards, high levels of inflation and higher demand across social care services.
- 10 Pressures will be partly financed by the additional £57 million received from the Local Government Settlement and from council tax and tax base increases, with the remainder split £12 million from savings and by utilising £10 million from the MTFP Support Reserve.
- 11 Despite this challenging financial environment, the 2023/24 budget includes:
 - support for low-income households through our Council Tax Reduction Scheme
 - maximisation of health and social care funds for the benefit of our vulnerable clients
 - significant investment in capital expenditure with a £770 million capital programme, the most ambitious the council has ever agreed.

Recommendation

- 12 That Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes:
 - (a) the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter four performance;
 - (b) the continuing impact of COVID-19 pandemic recovery and the external international factors driving inflation and cost-of-living on the council's performance; and
 - (c) the actions being taken to address areas of underperformance including the significant economic and well-being challenges because of the pandemic and other external factors.

Analysis of the Performance Report

- 13 The areas identified in this section are contributory indicators linked to the priorities of the Council Plan. Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages against the five thematic areas within the Council Plan 2022-2026.

Our Economy

- 14 The aim of this priority is to create an inclusive economy with more and better jobs, major employment sites which cement our position as a premier place in the region to do business, a good tourism base and cultural offer, and employability support programmes which help people back into jobs or to start their own business. Our children and young people will receive the education and training required to access opportunities.

Going Well

- 15 Average ticket sales per screening/performance⁴ were higher than the same period last year (61 compared to 56), as were actual ticket sales (+5,204). 95% of survey respondents rated their 'whole experience' at the theatre or cinema as 'good' or 'very good'.

Our environment

- 16 The aim of this priority is to protect our natural environment, including biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. In 2019, the council declared a climate emergency with a commitment to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 and contribute towards a carbon neutral county by 2045. In April 2022, the council declared an ecological emergency and committed to address ecological decline wherever possible. Our county is of significant landscape value and supports unique combinations of plant and animal species.

Going Well

- 17 All carbon reduction works, including the solar farm, at Morrison Busty Depot to enable it to become the council's first low carbon depot are now complete. Decarbonisation works including heating and lighting improvements are nearing completion at Comeleon House and there are ongoing at three leisure centres (Peterlee, Newton Aycliffe and Teesdale).
- 18 We were successful with a bid for £389,000 in the latest round of the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to install a heat pump at Meadowfield Depot, we are identifying projects for the next bidding round which is expected to open in autumn 2023 with decisions expected early 2024.
- 19 The Business Energy Efficiency Programme 2 (BEEP2) funded through the European Regional Development Fund has closed, having supported 470 companies and awarded grants to 101 businesses in line with the anticipated outputs of the programme. It is expected that once all carbon savings have

⁴ For screenings/performances held during the quarter - Gala and Empire only

been submitted, 1,692 tonnes of CO₂ emissions will have been saved. 110 additional businesses are awaiting energy audits which will be picked up through BEEP3 which launched 1 April.

- 20 Following targeted action through our contamination campaign launched in the summer, we have seen the quarterly rate of contamination fall from 38.3% (June 2022) to 34.63% (December 2022). However, due to how the annual indicator is calculated on a rolling 12 month period and higher rates earlier in the year, the contamination rate for the period January-December 2022 (35.2%) has increased by 1.8pp on the previous year. We anticipate that the ongoing impact of our contamination campaign will continue to deliver sustained performance improvement in 2023.

Areas which require attention

- 21 In the 12 months to the end of December 2022, 89.6% of municipal waste was diverted from landfill, a decrease of 3.6pp on the previous reporting period (93.2%) and static against the previous 12 months (89.4%). This was driven by capacity issues at energy from waste facilities due to planned maintenance, renovation works and unplanned maintenance.

Our communities

- 22 The aim of this priority is to ensure our communities are well connected and supportive of each other, with vibrant and accessible towns and villages which are well-used, clean, attractive and safe. We will support our most vulnerable residents, particularly those isolated or financially vulnerable. We will maintain a strong focus on tackling poverty throughout the cost-of-living crisis.

Going Well

- 23 28% of properties covered by our selective licensing scheme (launched 1 April 2022) are fully licenced, and a further 5% have submitted applications.
- 24 The latest fly-tipping data shows that 5,614 incidents were resolved during 2022/23. Although similar to 2021/22 (5,645), it is the lowest volume in our history and around a third lower than a few years ago. In response, we carried out 20 prosecutions, seized five vehicles, issued 46 fixed penalty notices and undertook 2,615 further investigations. Benchmarking data for 2021/22 against the rate of fly-tipping per 1,000 population shows that through our continued education and enforcement activity County Durham's rate (10.94) is performing strongly against all our comparator groups (England 19.07; North East 26.53; nearest neighbours 15.82).

Areas which require attention

- 25 In our latest cleanliness survey 1.6% of surveyed areas did not meet the standard in relation to dog fouling, the target for dog fouling cleanliness is less than 1%. Over each year there are 3 surveys undertaken across different areas of the county the average of the 2022/23 surveys was 1.18%. Hot spot areas for dog fouling are recreation areas and other highways. We are responding with targeted patrols in the known problem areas and the

revising of The Public Space Protection Order for dog ownership which is expected to come into force at the end of May 2023.

Risk Management

- 26 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](#).

Background papers

- County Durham Vision (County Council, 23 October 2019)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s115064/Draft%20Durham%20Vision%20v10.0.pdf>

Other useful documents

- Council Plan 2022 to 2026 (current plan)
<https://www.durham.gov.uk/media/34954/Durham-County-Council-Plan-2022-2026/pdf/CouncilPlan2022-2026.pdf?m=637969523673600000>
- Quarter Three, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s171720/Item%205%20Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20Q3%202022-23.pdf>
- Quarter Two, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s166398/Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20Q2%202022-23%20v2.1.pdf>
- Quarter One, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s161902/Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20Q1%202022-23%20Revised.pdf>
- Quarter Four, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s157533/Year%20End%20performance%20report%202021-22.pdf>

Author

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Appendix 1: Implications

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 Four, 2022/23



1.0 Our Economy: National, Regional & Local Picture

- 1 As at March 2023, of the 15 main visitor attractions⁵ across County Durham, 10 are accessible by public transport⁶. This is in line with the 2019 baseline. Of those which are not accessible, three do not have a Sunday service (Diggerland, Raby Castle and Ushaw Historic House and Gardens), reaching Hardwick Park requires a one mile walk from Sedgfield and Killhope has no public transport service.

1.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Theatres: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire⁷

- 2 Average ticket sales per screening/performance⁸ were higher than the same period last year (61 compared to 56), as were actual ticket sales (+5,204). Although ticket sales were down by 45% (-33,238) compared to quarter three (39,934 compared to 73,172). The decrease was expected following a successful Panto season and maintenance work at the Gala halting live performances for two weeks. During quarter four, we trialled a new cinema offer with special events, senior screenings for 60+ and parent and baby screenings.
- 3 Across the three venues, respondents rated the following as 'good' or 'very good':

| | Overall | Gala | Bishop Auckland | Empire |
|---------------------------|---------|------|-----------------|--------|
| Ticket booking experience | 95% | 95% | 94% | 94% |
| Staff welcome | 94% | 94% | 97% | 94% |
| Food and drink facilities | 69% | 66% | 87% | 79% |
| Quality of event | 95% | 95% | 94% | 96% |
| Value for money | 96% | 96% | 94% | 96% |
| Whole Experience | 95% | 95% | 97% | 95% |

- 4 High levels of satisfaction were experienced in all venues, across all areas except food and drink facilities. This is consistent with previous reports.
- 5 There are planned improvements to café facilities at Abbey, Peterlee and other transformed leisure centres. These facilities will be the 'Thrive Kitchen' with its own look at feel. The menu, pricing and facilities are being developed as attractive places with affordable, quality, healthy choices in line with our wellbeing values.

⁵ 15 Main visitor attractions: Auckland Castle, Beamish Museum, Botanic Gardens, Oriental Museum, Palace Green Library, Bowes Museum, Locomotion, Chester-le-Street Cricket Ground, The 'Story', Seaham Sea Front, Diggerland, Raby Castle and Ushaw Historic House and Gardens, Hardwick Park and Killhope

⁶ Including a walk of ≤ 0.5 miles

⁷ Ticket sales are Gala Theatre and Empire Theatre only

⁸ For screenings/performances held during the quarter

- 6 We have also worked closely with procurement to secure local suppliers The café training will include cooking demonstrations to ensure that each plate is presented in a high quality and consistent way, and operations managers will undergo commercial hospitality training to support the business plan for each site.

Visits to council owned cultural venues during quarter four

- 7 There were 35,231 visits to our cultural venues during quarter four. There is currently no comparable data for this indicator however work is ongoing to develop more robust mechanism for future monitoring.

2.0 Our Environment: National, Regional & Local Picture

- 8 The carbon emission rate across the county is four tonnes per person (the Northeast is 4.7 and England is 4.3).
- 9 Since 2014, renewable electricity capacity across the county has increased by around 18%. Wind power is the largest contributor (almost 59%).

2.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Carbon Reduction

- 10 All carbon reduction works, including the solar farm, at Morrison Busty Depot to enable it to become the council's first low carbon depot are now complete. Decarbonisation works including heating and lighting improvements are nearing completion at Comeleon House and are ongoing at three leisure centres (Peterlee, Newton Aycliffe and Teesdale).
- 11 We were successful with one bid for £389,000 in the latest round of the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to install a heat pump at Meadowfield Depot, we are identifying projects for the next bidding round which is expected to open in autumn 2023 with decisions expected early 2024.
- 12 The Business Energy Efficiency Programme 2 (BEEP2) funded through the European Regional Development Fund has closed, having supported 470 companies and awarded grants to 101 businesses. 110 additional businesses are awaiting energy audits which will be picked up through BEEP3 which launched 1 April. It is expected that once all carbon savings have been submitted, 1,692 tonnes of CO₂ emissions will have been saved.

Energy Efficiency Property Improvements

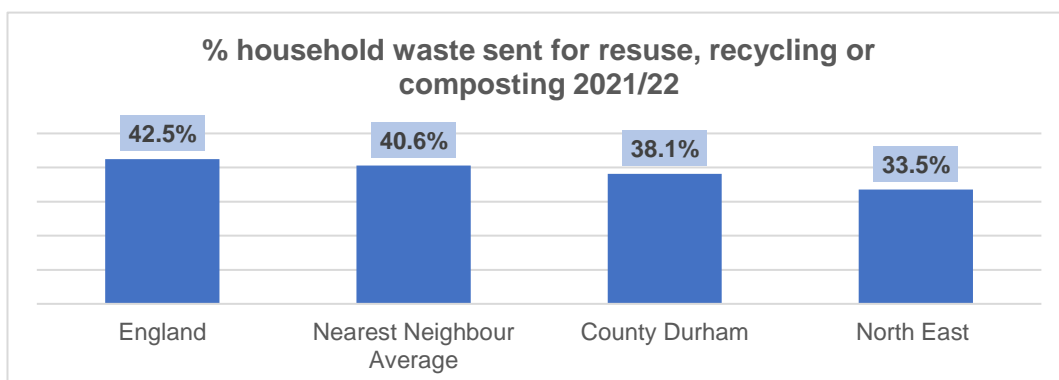
- 13 During quarter four, 633 properties benefited from an energy efficiency measure, 87 more than quarter three (+14%) and 27 fewer than the same period last year (-4%).

596 properties were via Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme and 37 via Energy Company Obligations (ECO4) Scheme.

- 14 Although ongoing schemes are drawing to a close, we continue to work with registered providers (using Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy funding) to improve the Energy Performance Certificate rating of 1,200 social housing properties. To date, work has been completed on 1,086 properties. We also continue to offer boiler repair and servicing via Warm and Healthy Homes.

Recycling, Re-use or Composting

- 15 During the 12 months ending December 2022, 37.5% of household waste was recycled. This is consistent with both the previous reporting period (37.7%) and the same period last year (38%).
- 16 However, it is lower than the pre-COVID level of 41.1%. The decrease followed the legislative change relating to the recycling of carpets (resulting in more carpets being managed as residual waste) and high levels of contamination.
- 17 We continue to promote recycling and re-use through:
- Small Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) collection campaign. More than 140 collection points has collected 21 tonnes of small WEEE to date
 - Garden waste collections. Having re-commenced on 28 March the scheme now includes the Teesdale area
 - On street recycling. Further trials are underway within Durham City.
- 18 The latest benchmarking data (2021/22) shows our performance in relation to the proportion of household waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting was stronger than our regional neighbours but weaker than our statistical neighbours and the England average.

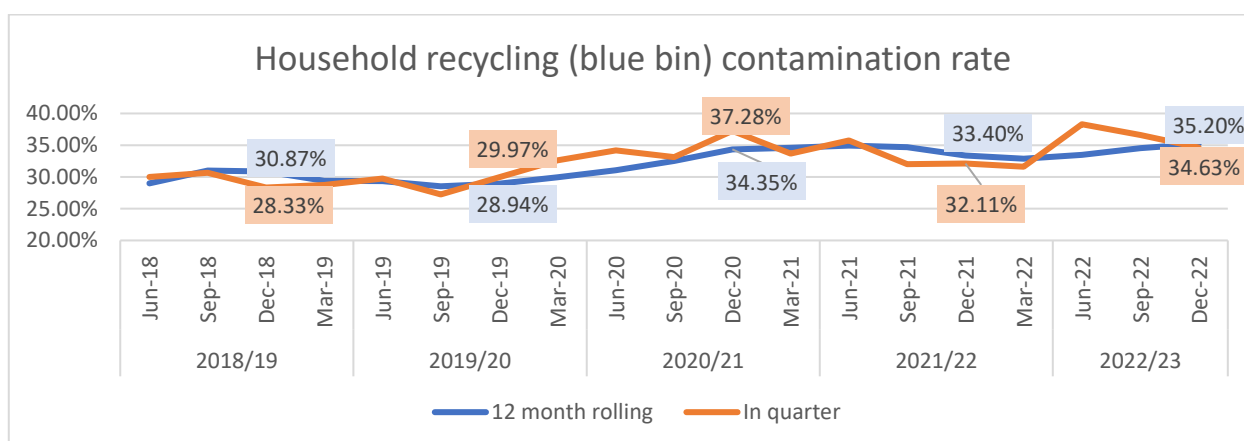


- 19 The increased volume of waste throughout the pandemic, combined with changes to legislation and the recyclates markets, have affected our performance. The impact on each local authority was dependent upon a combination of factors including contractual arrangements, and their waste policies and priorities.

Contamination of Recyclate Waste

- 20 During quarter four, we produced a [YouTube video](#) in support of the 'What Goes Where' campaign. Campaign action includes renewing bin stickers, rejecting / removing contaminated bins, door knocking and advising residents. 10,755 contamination notices were issued in the last 12 months, 39% more than the same period the previous year.
- 21 Looking at quarterly data, and following targeted action, the rate of contamination has fallen from 38.3% (June 2022) to 34.63% (December 2022).
- 22 However, looking at a rolling 12 month period, the contamination rate over the 12 months ending 31 December 2022 increased from the previous year (35.2% from 33.4%). This is due to higher contamination rates earlier in the year before the campaign started. The pre-covid contamination rate was 32.6%.

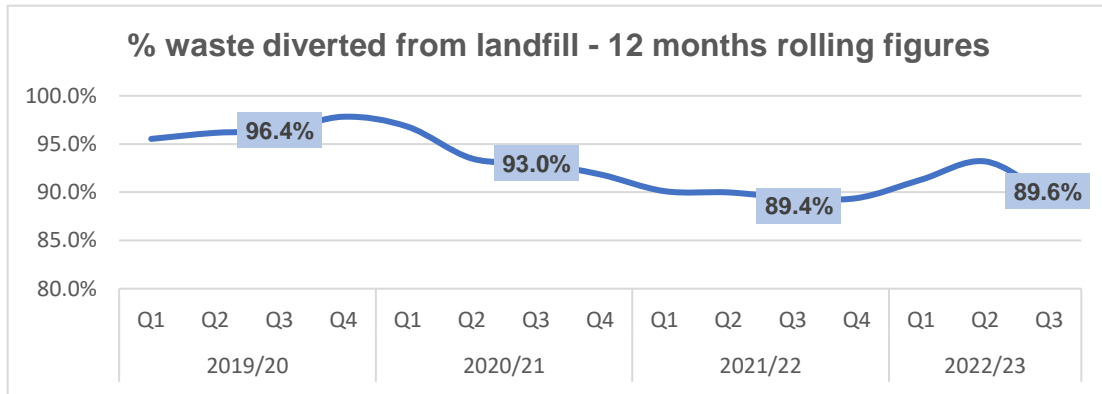
| Contamination Rate | 12 months ending | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Dec 22 | Sep 22 | Jun 22 | Mar 22 |
| 12 month rolling year | 35.2% | 34.5% | 33.5% | 32.9% |
| Quarterly | 34.6% | 36.6% | 38.3% | 31.6% |



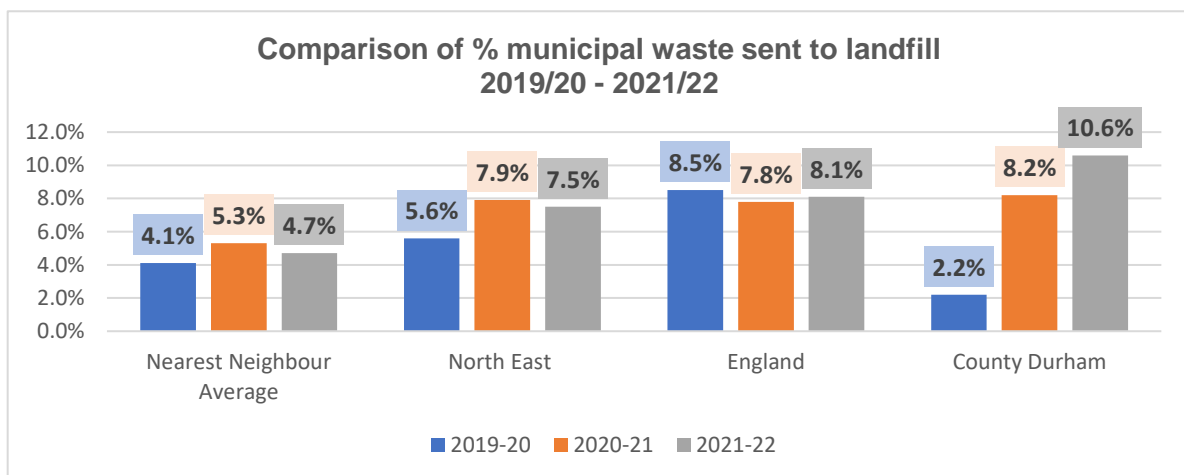
2.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Waste Diverted from Landfill

- 23 Performance was impacted by both planned and unplanned maintenance issues at the energy recovery facility. The planned maintenance period overran, resulting in two of the lines being out of commission at the same time. Issues were compounded by issues with the alternative facilities: one was closing for renovation, and one had unplanned maintenance issues affecting the amount of waste that could be processed. As a result, the diversion rate for the 12 months ending December 2022 was 89.6% against the target of 95%. This is 3.6pp lower than the previous reporting period (93.2%) and in line with the same period 12 months ago (89.4%). Almost 18,000 fewer tonnes (-6.5%) of municipal waste was collected and disposed of during this period (255,699 tonnes, January-December 2022).



24 The latest benchmarking data (2021/22) shows our performance in relation to the proportion of municipal waste sent to landfill to be weaker than our regional neighbours, statistical neighbours and the England average. The increased volume of waste throughout the pandemic resulted in capacity issues at the energy from waste plants across the region. This is the main reason for the increase to landfill in County Durham. The impact on each local authority was dependent upon a combination of factors including contractual arrangements, and their waste policies and priorities.



Tree Planting

25 Difficulties have been encountered with weather conditions and the availability of previously identified land some of which has now been earmarked for other purposes which has impacted on our efforts to plant 140,000 trees by the end of 2024. 12,586 trees and whips have been planted in 2022/23, taking the total to 53,000 trees planted to date.

2.3 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

Resources and Waste Strategy 2018

- 26 An announcement from DEFRA on the recycling consistency agenda, including a Government proposal to introduce separate weekly food waste collections is expected imminently. If it is agreed, local authorities would need to put in the required infrastructure by March 2025. An announcement on new burdens funding to support this change by central government is also awaited.

3.0 Our Communities

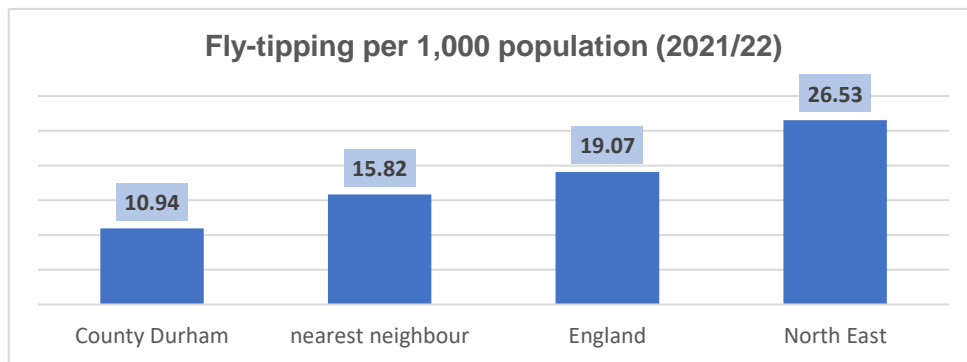
3.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Selective Licensing Scheme

- 27 The scheme was launched in April, and to date, 8,226 (28%) of the 29,000 (approx.) eligible private sector properties are now fully licensed. Applications have been received and are being processed for a further 1,527 properties. Work is underway to compare 2021 census data against the 2020 modelling data, areas of low compliance will be targeted by the enforcement team.

Fly-tipping

- 28 Latest fly-tipping data shows that 5,614 incidents were resolved during 2022/23. Although on par with the previous year (5,645), it is the lowest volume in our history and around a third lower than a few years ago. In the last 12 months there were:
- 20 prosecutions
 - 5 vehicles seized
 - 46 fixed penalty notices issued for fly-tipping offences
 - 2,615 further investigations of incidents.
- 29 Latest benchmarking data shows that County Durham is performing strongly against our comparator groups. Continued efforts in raising awareness, education, and enforcement are supporting the reduction in incidents.



- 30 The current rate of fly-tipping per 1,000 population is 10.77 a slight improvement on last year (10.94).

Street cleansing surveys – litter and detritus (November - February)

- 31 Our latest cleanliness surveys show that we have met our targets for litter and detritus with 5.8% of surveyed areas not meeting the standard in relation to litter and 11.4% not meeting the standard for detritus (targets of 6% and 12% respectively). Over each year there are 3 surveys undertaken across different areas of the County the average of the 2022/23 surveys was 4.83% for litter and 8.99% for detritus. Hot spot areas for litter are industrial and warehousing areas which also includes retail parks, rural roads and other highways. Hot spot areas for detritus are housing areas with a higher proportion of on-street parking and other highways.
- 32 The methodology for collecting the cleanliness survey data is changing from April 2023. Surveys will follow an Association for Public Sector Excellence methodology and will allow us to benchmark against other local authorities.

Big Spring Clean

- 33 During the Big Spring Clean (20 February to early April 2023), there were more than 250 litter picking events with six open days in targeted locations. More than 1,500 pieces of litter picking equipment were issued to volunteers who collected 3,000 bags of litter over a combined 4,600 hours.

3.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Street cleansing surveys – dog fouling (November - February)

- 34 In our latest cleanliness survey 1.6% of surveyed areas did not meet the standard in relation to dog fouling, the target for dog fouling cleanliness is less than 1%. Over each year there are 3 surveys undertaken across different areas of the County the average of the 2022/23 surveys was 1.18%. Hot spot areas for dog fouling are recreation areas and other highways⁹. We are responding with targeted patrols in the

⁹ Roads that are not main or rural roads

known problem areas and the revising of [The Public Space Protection Order for dog ownership](#) which is expected to come into force at the end of May 2023.

6.0 Data Tables

Key to Symbols

| Performance against target and previous performance | | Performance against comparable groups | | Direction of Travel | |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| ✓ | meeting or exceeding | ✓ | Performance is better than national or north east | ↑ | higher than comparable period |
| ○ | within 2% | × | Performance is worse than national or north east | → | static against comparable period |
| × | more than 2% behind | S | Performance is the same as national or north east | ↓ | lower than comparable period |

NB: oldest data in left column

Types of indicators

There are two types of performance indicators throughout the report:

1. Key target indicators – targets are set as improvements can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the council and its partners; and
2. 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.

National Benchmarking (N)

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

North East Benchmarking (NE)

The North East comparator is the average performance from the authorities within the North East region - 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

Our Economy

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18

| Performance Indicator | Latest data (period covered) | Performance compared to: | | | | | Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods | | | | updated |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|---|----|--|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| | | Period target | 12 months earlier | Pre-COVID | N | NE | | | | | |
| Attract 11.96 million visitors to the county in 2021 (5% increase on 2020) | 15.77m (2021) | 11.96m ✓ | 11.39m ✓ | 11.39m ✓ | - | - | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↑ | No |
| Amount (£ million) generated by the visitor economy | £826.6m (2021) | £608.4m ✓ | £506.7m ✓ | £506.7m ✓ | - | - | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↑ | No |
| No. jobs supported by the visitor economy | 10,063 (2021) | 8,153 ✓ | 6,794 ✓ | 6,794 ✓ | - | - | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↑ | No |
| Increase the proportion of visitor attractions which are served by public transport (against 2019 baseline) | 67% (Dec 2022) | Tracker - | new PI | new PI | - | - | new PI | new PI | new PI | new PI | Yes |
| No of tourism businesses actively engaged with Visit County Durham | 230 (2022) | Tracker - | 236 x | new PI | - | - | new PI | new PI | new PI | new PI | No |
| No. of people attending cultural events / programme events | 96,745 (2022) | Tracker - | 185,132 ² x | new PI | - | - | new PI | new PI | new PI | ↓ | Yes |
| No. of people attending council owned cultural venues (Killhope, DLI & town halls) | 35,231 (Jan-Mar 23) | Tracker - | - | - | - | - | new PI | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | Yes |
| Average number of tickets sold per cinema and theatre screening/performance during the quarter | 61 (Jan-Mar 23) | TBC | 56 ✓ | 74 x | - | - | ↑ | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | Yes |

Our Environment

| Performance Indicator | Latest data (period covered) | Performance compared to: | | | | | Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods | | | | updated |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------|---|----|---|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| | | Period target | 12 months earlier | Pre-COVID | N | NE | | | | | |
| County Durham to become net zero by 2045 | 57 (2020) | Tracker - | 54 ✓ | 54 ✓ | - | - | ↑ | ↑ | ↓ | ↑ | No |
| Reduce the council's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 (reduction from 1990 baseline) | 57% (2021/22) | Tracker - | 58% ○ | 51% ✓ | - | - | ↑ | ↑ | ↑ | ↓ | No |
| Work towards Durham City Air Quality Management Area NO2 levels being below the govt threshold of 40µg/m3 | 65% (2021) | 100% x | 96% x | 96% x | - | - | ↓ | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | No |
| Plant a minimum of 140,000 trees by 2024 | 12,586 (2022/23) | Tracker - | 40,414 | new PI | - | - | new PI | new PI | new PI | new PI | Yes |
| % of household waste that is re-used, recycled or composted | 37.5% (Jan - Dec 22) | Tracker - | 38.0% ○ | 41.1% x | | | ↑ | → | ↓ | ↓ | Yes |
| Increase the proportion of waste diverted from landfill to at least 95% | 89.6% (Jan - Dec 22) | 95% x | 89.4% ✓ | 97.8% x | | | → | ↑ | ↑ | ↓ | Yes |
| Contamination rate (%) | 35.2% (Jan - Dec 22) | Tracker - | 33.4% x | 29.95% x | - | - | ↑ | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | Yes |
| Raise cycling and walking levels in County Durham in line with national levels by 2035 | 67.7% (2020/21) | Tracker - | 68% ○ | 68% ○ | | | ↑ | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | No |
| % overall satisfaction with cycle routes & facilities <i>(confidence intervals +/-4pp)</i> | 52% (2022) | Tracker - | 54% ✓ | - | | | - | → | → | → | No |

Our Communities

Page 1 of 2

| Performance Indicator | Latest data (period covered) | Performance compared to: | | | | | Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods | | | | updated |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|------------|---|----|---|-----|-----|-----|---------|
| | | Period target | 12 months earlier | Pre-COVID | N | NE | | | | | |
| Achieve 100% licensing of private rented sector properties covered by the Selective Licensing Scheme by 2027 | 28% (Jan-Mar 23) | Tracker - | new PI | new PI | - | - | new PI | n/a | n/a | n/a | Yes |
| No. of fully licensed private rented sector properties in the selective licensed areas | 8,226 (Jan-Mar) | Tracker - | new PI | new PI | - | - | new PI | n/a | n/a | n/a | Yes |
| Reduce ASB rates (per 10,000 population) within the Selective Licensing Scheme areas by 10% (against the 2021 baseline) | 170 (Oct-Dec 22) | 224.27 x | 249.19 x | new PI | - | - | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | Yes |
| Return the number of fly-tipping incidents to at least pre-COVID levels by 2035 | 5,614 (2022/23) | 6,548 ✓ | 5,645 ✓ | 6,548 ✓ | - | - | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | Yes |
| % of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness - detritus | 11.37% (Nov 22 – Feb 23) | 12% ✓ | 10.07% x | 13.4% ✓ | - | - | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↑ | Yes |
| % of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness - litter | 5.78% (Nov 22 – Feb 23) | 6% ✓ | 4.74% x | 6.6% ✓ | - | - | ↓ | ↓ | ↑ | ↑ | Yes |
| % of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness - dog fouling | 1.58% (Nov 22 – Feb 23) | 1% x | 1.68% ✓ | 1.6% ✓ | - | - | ↓ | ↓ | ↑ | ↑ | Yes |

Other relevant indicators

| Performance Indicator | Latest data (period covered) | Performance compared to: | | | | | Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods | | | | updated |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|------------|---|----|--|---|---|---|---------|
| | | Period target | 12 months earlier | Pre-COVID | N | NE | | | | | |
| % of A roads where maintenance is recommended | 3.7% (2022) | Tracker - | 3.0% ✓ | 3.0% ✓ | | | ↓ | ↑ | ↑ | ↑ | Yes |
| % of B roads where maintenance is recommended | 3.3% (2022) | Tracker - | 3.1% ✓ | 3.3% ○ | | | ↓ | → | ↓ | ↓ | Yes |
| % of C roads where maintenance is recommended | 3.5% (2022) | Tracker - | 2.3% ✓ | 2.3% ✓ | | | ↓ | → | ↓ | ↑ | Yes |
| % of unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended | 25.0% (2022) | Tracker - | 22.8% ✓ | 21.3% ✓ | | | → | ↑ | ↑ | ↑ | Yes |

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



21 July 2022

**Refresh of the Work Programme
2023/24 for Environment and
Sustainable Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ESC OSC) with an updated draft work programme for 2023/24.

Executive summary

- 2 ESC OSC review their work programme each year to reflect the objectives and associated outcomes and actions identified within the Council Plan and in the context of the County Durham Vision 2035.
- 3 The proposed ESC OSC work programme has been framed around the shared County Durham Vision 2035 based on the three strategic ambitions – ‘more and better jobs’, ‘long and independent lives’ and ‘connected communities’.
- 4 Overview and Scrutiny work programmes are designed to be flexible to accommodate items which may arise throughout the year. This flexibility is particularly important as we have an extensive work programme and we must ensure we are able to accommodate issues that may arise during the term of the work programme.

Recommendations

- 5 The ESC OSC is recommended to:

- a) Receive and comment on the proposed draft work programme for 2023/24 (copy attached at appendix 2).
- b) Agree the ESC OSC work programme for 2023/24 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues.
- c) Consider identifying a topic for future light touch review activity.

Background

- 6 Scrutiny committees adapted to the change during the pandemic and some of these adaptations have become a part of business as usual for the committee such as briefing reports being used to provide information to members of the committee and the more recent addition of informal information sessions. The ESCOSC work programme is refreshed annually and takes into consideration the priorities of the Committee and areas identified by the service.
- 7 The current overview and scrutiny committees work programmes are informed by:
 - County Durham Vision 2035
 - Council Plan
 - Cabinet's Notice of Key Decisions
 - Partnership plans and strategies
 - Performance and budgetary control data
 - Changes in government legislation
 - Key questions for improving performance
 - Local priorities
- 8 The County Durham Partnership agreed a Vision for County Durham 2035 which sets out our strategic direction and what we would like to achieve over the next 15 years and is written around three broad ambitions for the people of County Durham:
 - More and better jobs
 - People live long and independent lives
 - Connected communities
- 9 Each ambition contains a number of objectives together with some council specific objectives. The Council Plan is structured around five objectives which capture the three ambitions:
 - Our Economy
 - Our People

- Our Communities
- Our Environment
- Our Council

Council Plan 2023/24-2026/27

- 10 The Council Plan is the primary corporate planning document for the County Council and details Durham County Council's contribution towards achieving the objectives set out in the Vision for County Durham 2035 together with its own change agenda. It aims to provide a readable and accessible summary for members, partners and the public of our priorities for the county and the main programmes of work that we will undertake over the coming three years to help achieve these priorities.
- 11 Both the Vision for County Durham and the Council Plan are structured around the three ambitions which are mentioned above and below are the relevant objectives which apply to the ESC OSC.

More and Better Jobs

- a) A broader experience for residents and visitors to the county

Long and Independent lives

- a) We will create a physical environment that will contribute to good health

Connected Communities

- a) Our towns and villages will be vibrant, well used, clean, attractive and safe
- b) People will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities.

- 12 The Council Plan has been structured around five objectives: Our Economy; Our People; Our Communities; Our Environment and Our Council. The Key Council Plan objectives for ESC OSC are Our Environment and Our Communities.

Current Work programme

- 13 During 2022/23 the ESC OSC prioritised items to be considered at formal meetings of the committee due to the size of the work programme. Reports on other items were circulated via email to members. The committee has undertaken budgetary and performance monitoring, visits,

responded to consultations, hosted a workshop and provided an O&S response and considered overview and progress monitoring reports and presentations in relation to the following:

- **Consultations**
 - Library Provision

- **Workshop**
 - Climate Emergency Response Plan 2 (CERP 2)

- **Areas of overview and monitoring activity**
 - Fuel Poverty
 - Climate Emergency Response Plan
 - Strategic Waste
 - Fly Tipping
 - Air Quality Management Plan
 - Allotment Improvement Plan
 - Community Action Team Update
 - Ecological Emergency Update
 - Bereavement Services
 - Management of DCC Land for Biodiversity
 - Environment and Climate Change Partnership Update
 - Environmental Campaigns
 - Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham
 - DCC Fleet
 - Heritage Coast

- **Visits undertaken**
 - Thornley Waste Transfer Station
 - Biffa Material Recycling Facility – Hartlepool
 - Suez Recycling and Recovery – Haverton Hill, Stockton-on-Tees
 - Nature Reserves/Parks/Open spaces – Various Locations

- **Budgetary and performance monitoring:**
 - Quarterly budgetary monitoring for the Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Service Grouping.
 - Quarterly corporate performance monitoring for the Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Service Grouping.

14 In addition, the ESC OSC has also considered the following areas which cut across objectives in the Council Plan or cut across the remit of other Overview and Scrutiny Committees including:

- County Durham Visitor Economy
- Regional and Local Transport Policy and Delivery
- Empty Homes
- Empty Properties
- Housing

Areas for Consideration in the ESC OSC Work Programme

15 Members of the ESC OSC are asked to agree the proposed work programme for 2023/24 that has been prepared and is attached at appendix two. The work programme is very comprehensive drawing on topical areas across the remit of the committee and it should be noted that it is also flexible.

16 Paragraph 13 of the report identifies the activity undertaken by the committee during 2022/23. The committee is asked to consider areas for inclusion in the work programme for 2023/24 in light of the current Council Plan and the Vision for County Durham 2035. Appendix 2 of this report sets out a draft work programme for consideration.

17 Members are encouraged to consider identifying areas of scrutiny investigation (for light touch review) from the work programme.

Conclusion

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

Background papers

- [Council Plan](#)
- [County Durham Vision 2035](#)

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
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| | Diane Close | Tel: 03000 268141 |
| | Stephen Gwilym | Tel: 03000 268140 |

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Climate Change

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

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

Procurement

Not applicable

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24</p> <p>Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Lead Officer: Stephen Gwilym Overview and Scrutiny Officers: Diane Close and Ann Whitton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and Better Jobs • People live long and independent lives • Connected Communities | <p>Note:</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Review – A systematic six-monthly review of progress against recommendations/action plan</p> <p>Scrutiny/Working Group – In-depth review/light touch review</p> <p>Overview/progress – Information on an issue; opportunity to comment, shape, influence, progress with a scrutiny review</p> <p>Informal Information Sessions – Presentation via Teams on areas that fall within the remit of the committee</p> <p>Briefing Reports – Reports for information on areas within the remit of the work programme</p> <p>Possible Visits – Visits identified to areas to provide a better understanding of an item</p> <p>Performance/Budget – Ongoing quarterly monitoring performance reports/budgets</p> |
|--|--|

| Item | When | Priority | Who | Outcome | Comment |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----|---------|---------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to ESC • briefing report to ESC members via email | | | |
| Overview & Scrutiny Review | | | | | |
| New area for focused review TBC | The committee will need to consider | TBC | TBC | TBC | TBC |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|------------------|---|---|--|
| | and determine an area for focused review | | | | |
| Overview/ Progress | | | | | |
| Woodland management | 21 July 2023 | Report to ESCOSC | Sue Mullinger (NCC) | Members will receive detail of DCC's management of its woodland estate. | The Committee will continue to monitor DCC's management of its woodland estate. |
| Tree Management Policy | 21 July 2023 | Report to ESCOSC | Ged Lawson (NCC) | Members will receive detail of DCC's current tree management policy. | The Committee will be updated on current tree management policy within the county. |
| Highways, Footways and Bridge Maintenance | 5 October 2023 | Report to ESCOSC | Mark Readman/ Paul Watson/ Paul Anderson (NCC) | Members will receive information on DCC's approach and performance in managing highways, bridge and footpath maintenance in the County. | The Committee will continue to monitor and scrutinise the progress and performance of the authority. |
| Street Lighting Energy Reduction Project (SLERP) | 5 October 2023 | Report to ESCOSC | Mark Readman/ Paul Watson/ Paul Anderson (NCC) | Members will receive an update on the progress of to SLERP phase 2. | The committee will be able to scrutinise the performance of the SLERP phase 2 and ensure that it is |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | achieving the targets and objectives set for the project. |
| Ecological Emergency Update | 24 November 2023 | Report to ESCOSC | Stuart Priestley (NCC) | Members will be updated on progress made in relation to the actions contained in the Ecological Emergency Action Plan including those actions linked to the recommendations of the O&S Ecological Emergency Review report. | The committee will continue to monitor and comment on the progress of the Ecological Emergency Action Plan. |
| Local Nature Recovery Strategy | 24 November 2023 | Report to ESCOSC | Jim Cockill/ Steve Bhowmick/ Stuart Priestley (NCC) | Members will receive information in relation to the development of the LNRS including work to promote the development of the strategy to the | The committee will scrutinise the progress of the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy including any work being undertaken to promote/publicise the strategy to the |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|--|---|--|
| | | | | residents of County Durham. | residents of the County Durham. |
| Bereavement Services | Date TBC | Report to ESCOSC | Ian Hoult/Graham Harrison (NCC) | Members will receive an update in relation to DCC's management of bereavement services including detail of challenges within the service. | The Committee will continue to monitor delivery of bereavement services in the county including arrangements for the maintenance of cemeteries. |
| Fly Tipping | 19 January 2024 | Report to ESCOSC | Ian Hoult/ Belinda Snow (NCC) | Members will receive information on fly-tipping in the county including: incidents of fly-tipping; comparative data; enforcement actions and impact of enforcement action undertaken. | The Committee will continue to monitor the issue of fly-tipping in the county and consider how effective current schemes and enforcement are in tackling this issue. |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------|--|--|---|
| Waste and Recycling | 19 January 2024 | Report to ESCOSC | Jo Blackie / Victoria Burrell (NCC) | Members will be aware of work undertaken in relation to waste management and recycling across the county including detail of various campaigns, levels of contamination and how the service is addressing various challenges within the service including food waste requirements. | The Committee will receive information on current waste management and future waste and recycling campaigns, update on development of WEEE schemes, information on vape disposal, food waste requirements and contamination levels. |
| Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP2) | 25 March 2024 | Report to ESCOSC | Stephen McDonald / Ellie Grimes (NCC) | Members will receive an update on the CERP and will receive detail of how CERP 2 has been informed by the comments made by O&S members and captured in the formal O&S response from the O&S CERP | The Committee will continue to monitor the implementation of the actions contained within CERP 2. |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | | workshop held in March 2023. | |
| Climate Emergency Response Plan 3 | Date TBC | Report to ESC OSC | Stephen McDonald / Ellie Grimes (NCC) | Members will have the opportunity to comment as part of the consultation process on CERP 3. | The committee will inform the future development of CERP 3 as a result of commenting during the consultation process. |
| Energy from Minewater | 25 March 2024 | Report to ESCOSC | Stephen McDonald (NCC) Ellie Grimes (NCC) Chris Myers (REG) | Members will be aware of the Energy from Minewater projects within the county such as Seaham Garden Village and the Horden project and any future plans to develop further projects in the county. | The Committee will receive information on projects to obtain energy from minewater which are currently being delivered in the county and any future plans to develop new projects within the county. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Management of DCC land for Biodiversity | 10 May 2024 | Report to ESCOSC | Darryl Cox/ Geoff Knight (NCC) | Members will be made aware of further work being undertaken to manage DCC land for biodiversity throughout the county. | The Committee will receive information relating to how DCC is managing land for biodiversity including detail of how land is identified and how DCC is reducing the use of herbicides (Glyphosate). |
| Allotments Update | 10 May 2024 | Report to ESCOSC | Ian Hoult/ Mark Farren (NCC) | Members will be aware of the impact and success of the policy changes particularly those aligned to the recommendations of the O&S review. | The Committee will receive an update on the allotment policy and the impact of the recent policy changes. |
| Environment and Climate Change Partnership Update | 10 May 2024 | Report to ESCOSC | Jim Cokill/ Steve Bhowmick (NCC) | Members will be aware of the current work of the ECC Partnership and future plans. | The Committee will receive an update on the work of the ECC Partnership. |
| Tourism and County Durham's Visitor Economy | October 2023 TBC | Workshop jointly hosted by EE OSC and ESC OSC for all | Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG) Michelle Gorman | Members will undertake focused group work with colleagues from Visit County Durham looking at | The Committee together with additional Overview and Scrutiny members will have the opportunity to |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| | <p>Joint Special meeting with EE OSC members</p> <p>October 2023 TBC</p> | <p>O&S members</p> <p>Report to EE OSC and ESC OSC</p> | <p>Managing Director (VCD)</p> <p>(REG)</p> <p>Alison Clark Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism</p> <p>(REG)</p> | <p>how the tourism offer is currently promoted providing an opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny members to put forward ideas on how the offer is promoted in the future.</p> <p>Members will consider the Destination Management Plan (DMP) for County Durham and will have the opportunity to provide comment</p> <p>Members will receive detail of ongoing work undertake to promote the tourism offer, how we are comparing in relation to visitor numbers, stays and contribution to</p> | <p>contribute and influence the promotion of County Durham's tourism offer in the future.</p> <p>The Committee will be aware of what is included in the new Destination Management Plan for County Durham.</p> <p>The Committee will be aware of changes/additions as to how we promote the tourism offer, current performance and future performance targets and projects</p> |
| | <p>Joint special meeting with E&E OSC members</p> <p>(April/May 2024) TBC</p> | <p>Report to E&E OSC and ESC OSC</p> | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| | | | | the economy compared to other areas of the country, future performance targets and projects to develop the tourism offer. | to develop the tourism offer. |
| Leisure Centre Transformation Programme | Special Joint Meeting with EE OSC members (Dec) TBC | Report to E&E OSC and ESC OSC | Amy Harhoff/Alison Clark | Members will receive a progress update on the Leisure Transformation Programme, having previously fed comments into the various consultation stages. | The Committee will continue to monitor the progress and development of this programme. |
| Strategic Leisure Framework | Special Meeting Date TBC | Report to ESCOSC | Amy Harhoff/Alison Clark | Members will receive information on the development of the Strategic Leisure Framework. | Members will be aware of the further development of the framework and will have a further opportunity to provide comments and inform its further development. |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Library Provision | Special Meeting Date TBC | Report to ESCOSC | Amy Harhoff/ Alison Clark | Members will be aware of proposals/options for library provision and provide comment | Members will have an opportunity to provide comment on options for library provision in the county |
| Transport Management | Joint Special Meeting with EEOSC (May) TBC | Report to ESC and EE OSCs | Amy Harhoff Corporate Director (REG) Mark Jackson Head of Transport and Contract Services (REG) | Members will receive information on the progress of various plans and strategies regionally and locally including progress with the BSIP, detail of public transport provision locally, plans to reduce car usage, the impact of the Devolution Deal and the development of the ULEV charging network. | The Committee will scrutinise transport management regionally and locally. |
| Informal Information Sessions | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Fuel Poverty | Date TBC | AWH and EE OSC members invited | Alan Hunter (REG) | Members will be aware of current projects and grants available to assist residents. | Members of the relevant OSCs will receive information via Teams relating to various projects and grants to tackle Fuel Poverty. |
| Air Quality Management Plan | Date TBC | AWH and EE OSC members invited | Denyse Holman/ David Gribben (NCC) Mark Jackson (REG) | Members will be updated in relation to air quality management in the county. | Members of the relevant OSCs will receive information via Teams on the approach to managing air quality in County Durham. |
| Pest Control | TBC (Mar) | AWH, SSC and EE members invited | Ian Hoult/Mark Farren | Members will be aware of the service offer, the work undertaken, levels of risk and future plans. | Members of the relevant OSCs will receive information regarding the scope of the service, responsibilities, what we do, benchmarking in terms of cost/price; method of delivery, risk, co-dependency and future plans. |

| Briefing Reports | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Heritage Coast | September/October 2023 | Circulate to Members of ESC and EE OSCs | Alex Kaars Sijpesteijn (REG) | The Committee will receive information on work being undertaken to develop the Heritage Coast including proposals for future development. | Members will continue to monitor work undertaken on the Heritage Coast to develop the offer. |
| CAT Team Update | Date TBC | Circulate to ESCOSC | Jennifer Jones | Members will be aware of the work of the team during the past year, actions undertaken and plans for the year ahead. | Members will receive an update on the areas the CAT Team have visited during 2023, actions undertaken and plans for 2024. |
| Winter Maintenance programme | Date TBC | Circulate to all O&S members | Mark Readman (NCC) Paul Anderson (NCC) | The Committee will receive detail of the arrangements for winter maintenance in the county. | Members will be aware of the policies and procedures in place for delivering winter maintenance in the County. |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|---------------------|---|--|--|
| Capital Maintenance Programme | Date TBC | Circulate to ESCOSC | Mark Readman (NCC) Paul Anderson (NCC) | Members will receive detail of the Highways, Bridges and Footways Capital Maintenance Programme. | Members will be aware of the Capital Maintenance Programme for this service area. |
| DCC Fleet | Date TBC | Circulate to ESCOSC | Alex Cummings (NCC) | The Committee will receive an update on the management of DCC's Fleet including detail of measures implemented to reduce carbon emissions. | Members will continue to monitor the management of DCC's fleet. |
| Environmental Campaigns | Date TBC | Circulate to ESCOSC | Ian Hoults/ Jonathan Seymour (NCC) | Members will receive information on various environmental campaigns including Civic Pride together with detail of any challenges and future plans. | Members will be able to monitor the various environmental campaigns in the county and determine how successful they have been. |

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| Flood Risk Management Authorities | Date TBC | Circulate to ESCOSC | Brian Weatherall, Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water | Members will receive further information from the Flood Risk Management Authorities (FRMAs) for County Durham on current and future projects, funding and partnership working to mitigate flood risk in the county. | The Committee will continue to monitor the work undertaken by the FRMAs in partnership to alleviate flood risk in the County. |
| Audit of land in Council Ownership (CPAL) | Date TBC | Circulate to ESC & E&E OSC | Laura Carrick (REG) | Members will receive detail of the progress of the audit of DCC's land being undertaken by CPAL. | The Committee will be aware of the progress made in relation to the ongoing audit of DCC land. |
| Water quality | Date TBC | Circulate to ESCOSC | Steve Bhowmick/ Brian Weatherall (NCC) | Members will be aware of how DCC's engages with partners to discuss water quality issues in County Durham. | Members will receive information on how DCC engages with partners to discuss water quality issues within County Durham. |

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| Possible Visits | | | | | |
| Heritage Coast | Date TBC | Visit | Stephen McDonald/ (NCC) | Members will experience the Heritage Coast and hear of ongoing projects. | Members will have an opportunity to visit the Heritage Coast and see ongoing work undertaken by DCC and partners. |
| Park visit and could potential combine this with some volunteering | Date TBC | Visit | Darryl Cox/ Geoff Knight (NCC) | Members will experience the work undertaken in the parks and become involved with volunteering opportunities. | Members will have an opportunity to visit parks within the County and if they wish to combine this with some volunteering. |
| Morrison Busty Depot | Date TBC | Visit | Christopher Jones (REG) | Members will see the measures undertaken to reduce carbon emissions at the depot. | Members will be aware of how carbon emissions have been reduced at the depot. |
| Performance/Budget | | | | | |
| Performance Quarterly reporting | Sept/Oct 2023 Jan 2024 May 2024 Dates TBC | Report to ESC OSC | Tom Gorman (Resources) | To provide Members with progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate | Summary information to Members. |

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| | | | | performance framework. | |
| Budget Outturn Report Quarterly reporting - | Sept/Oct 2023 Jan 2024 May 2024 Dates TBC | Report to ESC OSC | Phil Curran (Resources) | Detail of budget | Summary information to Members. |
| Minutes | | | | | |
| Environment and Climate Change Partnership | TBC | Minutes to be circulated to ESC OSC members | Partnership Team | Members will be kept updated on the activity of the partnership. | The Committee will be aware of activity undertaken by the partnership. |

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

21 July 2023



**Overview and Scrutiny
Response to the Climate and
Emergency Response Plan 2
Workshop**

Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide members of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ESCOSC) with the Overview and Scrutiny response from the Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) 2 Workshop for their information.

Executive summary

- 2 Members of ESCOSC agreed when determining their work programme for 2022/23 that they wanted to have an opportunity to discuss and feed into the future development of CERP2. A workshop event was arranged to allow members the opportunity to undertake focused group work in relation to the various sections included within CERP 2.
- 3 In discussion with the Chair and Vice Chair regarding the importance of CERP2 it was agreed that the workshop would be open to all Overview and Scrutiny and their comments and suggestions from the event would be formulated into an Overview and Scrutiny response which would be used to inform the future development of the CERP.
- 4 An Overview and Scrutiny response was sent to the service following sign off by the Chair and Vice Chair of ESCOSC and is attached at Appendix 2 for members information.

Recommendations

- 5 That Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive and note for their information the Overview and Scrutiny response as attached at Appendix 2.

Background

- 6 At its meeting on 22 July 2022 ESCOSC agreed its work programme for 2022/2023, included within the work programme was a workshop for members to discuss and feed into the further development of CERP 2.
- 7 Arrangements were made with the Low Carbon Team in relation to the various sections of CERP2 that would be discussed and considered during the focused group work and appropriate colleagues were approached to facilitate discussion and to take note of member's comments.
- 8 The workshop took place on 27 March 2023 and covered six areas of the CERP:
 - Education and Engagement
 - Heat Decarbonisation
 - Transport and Connectivity
 - Natural Environment (including agriculture)
 - Waste and Scope 3 Emissions
 - Adaptations
- 9 Following the workshop taking place comments made relating to each of the group discussions were collated and formed into an Overview and Scrutiny response which was signed off by the Chair and Vice Chair of ESCOSC before it was sent to the service to aid them in the further development of the CERP2.
- 10 The response is appended to this report at Appendix 2 for your information.

Conclusion

- 11 Members comments and suggestions from each group area have been forwarded to the service and will assist with the future development of CERP2 and beyond.

Background papers

- None

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Contact: | Diane Close | 03000 268141 |
| | Ann Whitton | 03000 268143 |

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Climate Change

Comments and suggestions can be found in appendix 2

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable

Member Comments and Suggestions from CERP Workshop –

27 March 2023

Group 1: Education & Engagement

(1) Members felt that the climate change messages needed to be embedded into all Council communications and ensure that these messages covered the whole of the county.

(2) Consideration should be given to engagement with hard to reach groups, disinterested people and with those people who do not use social media. Specific mention was given to engaging with older residents on climate change.

(3) Suggested that digital screens and platforms are used in the county to show 'climate friendly' messages.

(4) Local engagement is needed to emphasise what is happening in the local area highlighting the benefits to the people and area and utilising parish councils, AAPs and local groups. It is important that young people and youth groups are involved in any engagement processes.

(5) Councillors need information sheets to help them to engage on climate change issues and to forward to interested groups/individuals. A member information hub/one stop shop that could be utilised by members that would include independent information on Electric Vehicles; insulation; trusted trader schemes and climate change.

(6) The Council should lead by example and emphasise/promote all projects/successes whether large or small to encourage people to make small changes.

(7) Suggestion that there is a Climate Change Champion.

(8) Engage with children and young people via schools or groups getting them involved in practical activities to benefit climate change.

(9) Practical school engagement in energy saving such as reduction in energy consumption in school, promotion of the walking and using the bus to get to school and encourage schools to sign up for this, deter parents from allowing engines to idle outside schools. Members felt that deterring engine idling should be a priority.

(10) Need to promote the benefits of wild flowering and tree planting to residents.

(11) Establish a mobile energy advisory service.

Group 2: Heat and Decarbonisation

(1) Members raised concerns at the eligibility and criteria of residents accessing green energy grants and for commercial and public sector properties too and noted that academisation of schools was an issue that impacted on the retrofit of school buildings. More work needs to be undertaken around decarbonisation priorities taking into account schools and academisation possibility.

(2) There is a need to focus on heat loss and heat generation equally.

(3) In relation to new government funding for energy funding DCC had submitted bids but often there were issues relating to staffing and capacity as to what DCC could achieve. Where funding was related to staff posts it was highlighted that recruitment could be an issue in getting/retaining the right people. To deliver on our plans we need increased staffing and skills.

(4) Members discussed enforcement of standards, relating to what was currently in place and how from 2025 standards would be increased.

(5) There is a need to lobby for longer term, more strategic funding.

(6) The importance of communicating the benefits of green energy was important to young people in schools but also the wider community. Members suggested that Councillors could help and events at local community centres/groups could be beneficial, Officers noted previous schemes such as "Durham Energy Friends".

(7) Members discussed the merits of retrofit verses replace and of cases where this had led to the venues no longer being eligible for further funding due to the efficiency of the equipment giving venues a better ECP rating. However, examples were also given where payback time had reduced making the works even more economical. They noted that an important element to consider was embodied carbon already in existing structures and that retrofitting is therefore often a good solution for non-residential buildings too. Members highlighted that many new build developments the focus was the architecture rather than energy efficiency and, in some properties, this had a greenhouse effect, whereby a cost was incurred in terms of cooling the property.

(8) Members noted that more people were trained to required standards in energy efficiency and retrofit works and that several Registered Provider

partners now were certified contractors, and it would be good to have such certified contractors internal to DCC.

(9) Funding needs to be available for installer/retrofit co-ordinator training to ensure that training is available locally.

(10) Members considered energy efficiency and green energy and suggested that this was of high importance and should be supported in terms of appropriate training, adequate resources and have the right teams in place to give the capacity to deliver. Members noted the importance, especially in a cost of living crisis, of educating people on why such energy efficiency/green energy measures were needed, but also how new technology can be used.

(11) Members discussed new technologies and noted the example of increased and upgraded electrical substations linked with offshore wind at Jade Business Park. Members noted that new technologies such as mine water heating being used in Seaham Garden Village.

(12) Members highlighted that there may be spend to save advantages in relation to Leisure Centres which were DCC's biggest emitters and costly to run.

Group 3: Transport and Connectivity

(1) Members sort clarification on the Council's plans on the introduction of larger Electric Vehicles (EVs), specifically bin wagons. Members suggested that there was an opportunity and need to trial larger EVs within the Council's fleet and Members noted the challenges that exist in relation to the size of the County and the lack of charging facilities and battery charging sites.

(2) Members discussed how to encourage businesses, partners and wider community to increase investment in EVs.

(3) Members commended the authority on having in excess of 100 charging points across the county but stressed there was a need for the authority to look at the location of the charging points and where there were gaps in provision.

(4) Members discussed the timeliness of the ban on sales of new cars using fossil fuels, the accessibility of hybrid vehicles and the shift to EV buses. Also discussed was the affordability of EVs, and the negative impact this could have in a shift to cleaner vehicles.

(5) Concerns were raised by Members in regard to the suitability of some of the housing stock in the county in developing suitable EV charging points particularly amongst terraced properties.

(6) As the local planning authority better promotion is required of alternative energy/fuel solutions and strategic oversight is key and should be balanced against the cost of not addressing climate change/carbon reduction.

(7) The rurality of County Durham was highlighted by Members, and they suggested that this could be a potential deterrent to persuading private car users to public transport or active travel.

(8) Members highlighted the air quality management plan aimed at reducing air pollution and suggested a shift to cleaner transport and active travel.

(9) Carbon emissions were considered to be the key issue which needed to be reduced and Members questioned how this could be achieved and suggested that a key area in achieving this was to move private car owners out of their vehicles and onto public transport and/or active travel whilst also recognising the difficulty in achieving this.

(10) Members discussed the importance of car share schemes and an accompanying infrastructure to promote it especially in terms of improving access to employment.

(11) Members suggested that low-cost car parking and free parking across the county was actively encouraging car use.

(12) Members acknowledged the importance of an effective public transport network to ensure connectivity and accessibility for employment, social and leisure purposes. They also recognised the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on public transport by way of loss of income and expressed concerns at driver shortages and the impact this had on sustainability of routes and reliability of services.

(13) Members referred to the devolution deal and the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and the potential to lead to improvements such as cleaner greener vehicles and ticket subsidies.

(14) Members echoed concerns raised by the public regarding the availability and reliability of a local bus service. Members questioned how to get public transport to poorer and deprived areas that had less economically viable routes.

(15) Members reiterated concerns around the reliability of services and certain areas of the county being served by older less reliable fleet. there was a suggestion that the use of BSIP funding to subsidise bus ticket prices was not necessarily the best use of this resource but that resources should be targeted to deliver better vehicles.

(16) Members suggested that a transport survey was needed to identify key issues regarding public transport and connectivity whilst acknowledging that

this may prove complex because of the ongoing conversations around devolution.

(17) The greatest challenge was identified as getting car drivers to make the shift to public transport or active travel.

(18) Members sort clarity as to whether bus operators had been involved in the sign up to the County Durham COP initiative and associated pledge and if they had not why was this the case.

(19) Reference was made to footpath connectivity and the need for investment in this area to make or develop safe walking routes particularly at night. Members also discussed the development of local cycling walking improvement plans across the 12 main town centres in County Durham was a positive step forward and maybe improved further should access to devolution resources be identified.

(20) The development of cycling routes and the importance of making these as safe as possible for users was expressed alongside the need for associated education of road users around cycle safety.

(21) Concerns were raised concerning connectivity challenges and underperformance across County Durham especially in rural areas – this is a key requirement for the changes in working habits/flexible home working and the absence of investment in those areas deemed not to be commercially viable. Members asked what do we do to change this or encourage commercial providers to invest in wider infrastructure?

(22) Further concern was raised that public sector funding investments for digital network infrastructure (as part of Project Gigabit) is determined by central government.

(23) Members discussed the viability of using IT servers to increase energy/heat facilities such as leisure centres/factory/business units and asked how can this be explored/developed?

(24) In discussing the improvements needed to broadband, Members referenced the often negative reaction made by the public to the installation of mobile phone masts, telegraph poles or associated network infrastructure. Members suggested that more work could be done to promote the need for this emerging technology, particularly in supporting people who work from home or in developing ICT hubs in community venues/facilities.

(25) The need for Community IT hubs which provided access to technology to all the Members of the population was highlighted and the potential ability to utilise existing community facilities to promote these services. This would improve social networking and demystify information technology amongst certain groups whilst also providing an opportunity to reduce social isolation.

(26) Members referenced the need to coordinate works between the council and infrastructure providers particularly in terms of Streetworks and any required reinstatement works.

(27) There was a suggestion made that more well-established communication companies were better at public engagement, consultation, and communication due to the importance they place on organisational and product reputation.

(28) Communications and engagement with the public is critical. There is a need to improve education among the older generation in communities (65yrs+) as the younger generation are by and large sighted on the CERP issues. Suggestions were made to develop more locally based CERP to provide a more targeted and bespoke approach.

(29) It was expressed that a real worry was it would be the same 15% of areas of County Durham that are without effective broadband; public transport; employment opportunities; cleaner and more carbon efficient developments.

Group 4: Natural Environment (including agriculture)

(1) Members acknowledged that it was difficult for farmers to make a profit and suggested that farming subsidies or grants should be accessible.

(2) Members also suggested that solar panels could be placed on areas of poor agricultural land to reduce energy costs. Members suggested that it was essential for farmers to diversify their land.

(3) Members noted the Potential Greenspace Project, which supports regenerative agriculture and helps farmers to find alternative ways to generate income. Members were advised that the project was awaiting a funding bid decision.

(4) In relation to tenant farmers, how do we influence these groups to adapt regenerative practises going forward.

(5) Recognised that engagement with landowners is vital and this needs to feed into the LNRS.

(6) Members suggested the benefit of crop rotation for land and that the leasing of Council land needs to be more diverse. In relation to tenant farmers, Members suggested that it was important to influence groups to adopt regenerative practices.

(7) Members highlighted the importance of hedgerows and suggested that grants for the replanting of hedgerows would be useful, and that regular maintenance of hedgerows was key to their longevity. Members suggested that hedgerow and wild meadow creation were important to the restoration of

natural wildlife. Members emphasised Durham Hedgerow Partnership was a success and grants were available and straight forward.

(8) Members highlighted the importance of connecting with communities at a local level. There is a need to link local people to local schemes and encourage community managed projects.

(9) Members emphasised the importance of education in relation to the natural environment and suggested that this should start as early as possible to ensure the next generate were aware. Members expressed that the importance of ensuring public understanding of the connection between the natural environment, the air we breathe and the survival of the planet. If Members helped residents to understand this, it may help promote engagement and encourage residents to take local issues more seriously.

(10) Members highlighted challenges with community engagement and support from parish councils regarding tree planting, particularly regarding health and safety issues.

(11) Members suggested Climate County Durham website was regularly updated in line with the CERP and champion's local action. An example was given regarding Great Aycliffe Town Council who had not mown land and instead allowed wildflowers to grow.

(12) Members highlighted that land not maintained is met with resistance from local people. Members added that whilst the public were aware of the benefits of tree planting and understand the role of trees in carbon sequestration, they were often had issues with tree planting locations. Members suggested that there was a need to change the public perceptions to support tree planting and diverse grasslands and not mowing land.

(13) Members were advised of a successful tree planting programme which plants 10,000 trees per AAP. Schools are involved in planting the trees and benefit from a combined education package. An example was given - millions of trees planted in an area but 80% had died within one year due to poor management, questioned how woodland areas cared for. It was noted that the Community Forest Partnership have grants available to help with maintenance. The latest year has been bad in terms of drought and watering trees is not built into maintenance. It was further noted that woodlands have been included in the woodland improvement grant which includes five years funding to manage woodlands and makes them more carbon efficient. Part of the management includes thinning the woodlands, but complaints are often received from residents when this occurs.

(14) Members advised that parish councils whilst wanting to look after their woodland areas were sometimes reluctant to take this area of work on due to concerns with insurance. It was noted that Durham Woodland Revival Project

helps communities manage their own woodlands independently and a new model has recently been agreed with a third sector and will help address concerns with liability and insurance.

(15) Great Aycliffe Town Council plant trees on a regular basis and have adopted the same policy as Durham where if a tree is removed, 3 trees are subsequently planted.

(16) In terms of GEO offsetting, it was noted that the next local plan would be shaped by an updated GI strategy and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy LNRS.

(17) Members suggested that Northumbrian Water should consider placing solar panels on reservoirs. Although it was noted by Members that there were issues with this suggestion and solar panels on land with animal grazing was more beneficial.

(18) In relation to carbon sequestration, Members emphasised that this had to be to scale and suggested that elimination of peat and peatlands restoration was for overall carbon reduction and should be a priority for the Council.

(19) Members noted that local people understand that trees are beneficial for nature and carbon sequestration but often have a problem with the locations in which they are planted. It was suggested that public access to woodland should be considered, and an example was given in relation to dog walkers.

(20) Members expressed that a full understanding of land law was needed and although funding was available a full understanding of the land hold was currently not known. Member's local knowledge was important and should be encouraged. They understand the best use of their land and should be encouraged to feed this information back.

(21) Members identified that a mechanism was needed to evaluate the best use for land. It was noted that that this was a CERP action which involved a land mapping exercise to determine how land should be used. However, it was noted that in terms of mapping, ultimately it was whether the landowner wanted to do this on their land. The CERP cannot be delivered independently and relies on engagement from landowners.

(22) Members noted that DCC own a great deal of land and suggested DCC had an opportunity to carry out strategic interventions to improve biodiversity and wildlife, to lead by example.

(23) Members referred to the A68 Corridor Project and noted that whilst this area had the greatest capacity for large scale woodland it was not successful

in obtaining funding, however there were more funding pots currently available, and the project could be reconsidered.

(24) In relation to the ecological emergency, Members suggested that this should be viewed as an opportunity.

(25) Members highlighted bee keeping in urban areas and suggested strategic locations for intervention for pollinators and engaging with Clean and Green regarding connectivity.

(26) It was suggested that the County Durham Community Foundation was a possible source of funding to help tidy up parts of County Durham.

(27) Members highlighted cemeteries and cremation and questioned how environmentally friendly cemeteries were and if cremation should be encouraged and they noted that scattering of ashes impacted on soil health. Member suggested that consideration should be given to the grounds maintenance of cemeteries as there was a potential for ecological gains.

(28) Members noted there was currently consideration of a cremation package where carbon credits could be purchased.

(29) Members suggested that DCC could generate income through the planning process by encouraging developers to pay the Council to carry out the relevant works on their land to achieve biodiversity net gains.

(30) Members highlighted that areas within the County could be developed to encourage better use by people/local communities and to prevent anti-social behaviour. It was advised that a targeted approach for development could be used if areas of the County were identified as a concern.

(31) Members considered waste management and suggested that compost which is made from green collections should be utilised to grow flowers for County Durham rather than buying them in and any flowers that are removed should be recycled. It was noted that the compost from green collections was currently used as a soil improver but that there were issues with this.

Group 5: Waste and Scope Three Emissions

(1) Members acknowledged that Scope 3 was mentioned in CERP2 but suggested there was a need to expand this in CERP3 by looking at how carbon emissions could be measured in relation to investments and the grey fleet.

(2) Members suggested that consideration was needed as to how to encourage staff to reduce car usage (grey fleet). Members put forward

suggestions of better facilities for staff such as changing, showering and bike storage to encourage active travel.

(3) Members advised there was a need to focus on public transport provision specifically buses to ensure there was reliable provision across the whole of the county to meet the needs of local communities.

(4) Referring to waste Members suggested that consideration should be given to conducting analysis of carbon emissions resulting from waste incineration, which produces mostly carbon dioxide. Members also suggested that information should be provided on the reduction of carbon emissions achieved through recycling rates of 40% as this would give a full picture.

(5) Members felt there was a need for a tool kit to be developed for Members, AAPs and staff who work in the community to get key messages out to residents in relation to the waste services provided, how to bin waste correctly and where to get advice.

(6) Members requested training or support to assist them in their role as community leaders to enable them to communicate key messages regarding waste management and the CERP in their local communities.

(7) Members advised that it was difficult for local communities to connect local issues to the bigger picture and stressed that there was a continued need to promote key messages through local community groups such as residents' groups, PAC meetings and AAP meetings.

(8) Members felt there was a need to promote what DCC was doing and offering in relation to services and gave an example of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Scheme (WEEE). Consideration was needed as to how this scheme and other schemes/service provision could be promoted in local communities.

(9) Members highlighted the composting scheme and suggested this was another good scheme that should be fully promoted, and that consideration should be given to selling compost to the public. Members reiterated that consideration should be given to selling compost and investigate developing local markets for the waste products we produce.

(10) Members suggested that DCC develop services as a commercial product for the use of other local councils, and gave an example as DCC's flower growing operations, to deliver a local alternative for Town and Parish councils. Need to examine the whole lifecycle analysis of local markets.

(11) In relation to refuse collection vehicles Members noted that currently there was only one electric vehicle with the remainder of refuse collection vehicles using diesel. It was suggested that this should be kept under review

in relation to what alternatives were available to reduce carbon emissions from this type of vehicles.

(12) In discussing carbon offsetting, Members suggested that it should be ensured that the benefits from such schemes go to County Durham projects and added that these schemes should be implemented through the procurement process.

(13) Members highlighted the resource efficiency and waste reduction of Government's Environment Act 2021, including the possible introduction of weekly food waste collections, which will increase the amount of waste miles and carbon footprint. Members suggested that work would need to be undertaken to qualify this further in relation to the carbon impact.

(14) It was highlighted that DCC was a big spender and as such had leverage to influence suppliers through social value and climate change and Members suggested the need to continue to expand the use of themes, outcomes measures (TOMs) in the procurement process.

(15) Members advised that there was a need to recognise the good practice and success which was taking place within procurement with the use of Contract Procedural Rules, Priority Environmental Procurements (PEPs), Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) and a Procurement Policy Note requiring suppliers bidding for a contract over £5m to have a Carbon Reduction Plan to achieve Net Zero by 2050. It was felt that this good practice should be shared with other DCC services such as planning to determine what requirements can be embedded into their infrastructure to ensure the continued reduction of scope 3 emissions.

(16) Members suggested that procurement needs to continue to work with Business Durham to ensure that local businesses are on board with DCC procurement requirements to ensure they are not behind.

Group 6: Adaptations

(1) Members discussed the importance of flood elevation schemes such as the work which had taken place a Cong Burn at Chester Le Street.

(2) Members highlighted the availability of information regarding local flood risk. National flood risk maps were available online which could show risk, by post code, including risk of flooding from rivers, coastal water and rainfall. River flooding in the county is from catchment wide flood events, causing rivers to burst their banks.

(3) Members raised concerns regarding the stripping of vegetation or over grazing, which can lead to an increased risk of flooding and the importance of work on natural flood management measures with landowners.

(4) Members noted that work had taken place with farmers and landowners on natural flood management systems, which often included simple but effective measures such as erecting fences and highlighted that importance of the continuation of this work. Members recognised that clarifying land ownership was often an issue.

(5) Members were made aware of Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership which Durham is part of, the partnership works with the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water on catchment studies to reduce risk of flooding. Conducts full integrated modelling and partners collaborate to identify risk and find solutions.

(6) Members highlighted that small issues in residential areas could cause flooding such as badly fitted drain covers, frequency of gully cleaning, repairs and damage caused by public utilities and tree roots.

(7) Members referred to the scope of the hydro power scheme at Freeman's Reach in Durham City and enquired if there were other viable locations within the county for similar schemes.

(8) Members discussed the County Durham Plan, planning policy and the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to manage excess rainfall. Specific mention was made to the South Stanley SUDS project to investigate retrofitting SUDS and the importance of the ability to evidence that schemes work, in order to secure funding. It was highlighted that this was partnership working with both Teesside and Northumbria Universities.

(9) Members learned of engagement work that had taken place with partner organisations such as the Resilience Forum and the Environment Agency to encourage communities to create local plans. Templates for emergency plans were available and an online resource was being developed. Members noted that following storm Arwen the workload had increased.

(10) Members referenced storm Arwen and advised that in emergencies it was not clear to the public who was responsible or who they should contact. Members suggested that improvements could be made in relation to partnership working and specifically response times such as during power outages. Further work needs to be undertaken with partners.

(11) Following storm Arwen, Members sought confirmation that community emergency plans were being developed and highlighted the need to ensure that community emergency plans are communicated.

(12) Members highlighted the use of mine water to heat properties at Seaham Garden Village.

(13) Members suggested that consideration be given to the types of trees that were planted as we adapt to climate change and suggested that the Ecology Team may be able to provide information on this.



Better for everyone

Meeting: Environment & Climate Change Partnership Executive Board

Date & Time: Wednesday 8th March 2023 at 2.00pm

Venue: Online Via Teams

| Present: | Name | Organisation |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Jim Cokill (JC) Chair | Durham Wildlife Trust |
| | David Loudon (DL) | Durham University |
| | Cllr Mark Wilkes (Cllr MW) | Durham County Council |
| | Steve Bhowmick (SB) | Durham County Council |
| | Gordon Elliott (GE) | Durham County Council |
| | Chris Woodley-Stewart (CWS) | NP AONB |
| | Stuart Priestly (SP) | Durham County Council |
| | | |
| Also in attendance: | Angela Brown (ABro) (Minutes) | Durham County Council |
| | Glenn Robinson (GR) | Durham County Council |
| | Simon Park (SPark) | Presenting Item 5 |
| | Yvonne Flynn (YF) | Presenting Item 5 |
| | Ellie Grimes (EG) | Presenting Climate Emergency update |
| | Denyse Holman (DH) | Presenting Item 3 |
| | | |
| Apologies: | | |
| | Kate Burrows | Durham Community Action |
| | Alan Patrickson | Durham County Council |
| | Jon Gluyas | Durham university |
| | Maggie Bosanquet | Durham County Council |
| | Suzanne McDermott | County Durham Sport |

| Item No. | Subject | Discussion and Decision | Lead Officer(s) | Timescale |
|----------|---|---|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. | Welcome and apologies | <p>JC welcomed everyone to ECCP meeting. He initiated round the screen introductions</p> <p>Apologies for the meeting were noted.</p> | | |
| 2. | Minutes of the meeting 9th Dec 2022 Matters arising | <p>The minutes from the meeting on the 9th of December 2022 were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting.</p> <p>Action 1 - Environment Awards – This on agenda for today’s meeting Action 2 – Physical Activities Strategy – SMcD to share report on research with Durham University. – GR reminded SMcD to share report Action 3 – Physical Activities Strategy – GR will speak to CWS and SP to link with Mick Shannon from Public Health – GR made introductions and SP mentioned he is now involved in workshops Action 4 – Town & Country Planning – SB/AP arrange a meeting with DL and Michael Kelleher – DL said work in progress. Last meeting with colleagues from planning department was cancelled, but had since met with Amy Harhoff and discussed how planning can support environmental sustainability Action 5 – COP 27 Events – If anyone would like link to Webinar Series let EG know – EG mentioned no one had contacted her in relation to this action</p> | | |
| 3. | Air Quality Strategy – Denyse Holman | <p>DH delivered a presentation to the Board on Delivering Durham City Air Quality Action Plan</p> <p><i>Questions/Comments</i></p> <p>It was asked what main sources of pollution are – DH said Vehicles. Conducted a source apportionment study to see which are the largest contributors. Light</p> | | |

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| | | <p>goods vehicles are also contributors</p> <p>It was asked what practical measures were being considered? SPark said Uni have integrated travel plan, but with role out of hybrid working they have hit targets already, so need to revisit some of those targets. Park and Ride should have a joined-up approach, it does not stop near the University which is an issue. DH – there are measures on table to improve Park and Ride facilities, so they are aware of these issues and ways to address them will be in the new plan.</p> <p>It was asked if the Council undertake pollution monitoring around the city to see where the hotspots are? There is a strong correlation between traffic pollution and health and would like to try and see how this could be addressed. Technologies – could we try to move to electronic buses and would DCC consider introducing zones across the city to try and penalise those that drive high emitting cars. DH - there is a network of air quality monitoring if anyone is interested DH will send ABro link to circulate to group which details where all monitors are. Hotspot areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Elvet • Gilesgate • Nevilles Cross <p>Public Health Teams reps come to steering group to look at health impacts of pollution and trying to get fumes to under 40mg per metre cubed of nitrogen dioxide, which is world health organisation base standard. The first air quality action plan had actions in to try and address this but issue around funding. Had actions to retrofit busses around the city. In new air quality action plan, we are hoping to look more at what type of engines the busses that come through Durham use.</p> <p>Clear air zone for city has not been put on the table. The new draft actions we have in plan it will not have it included as an option, so maybe something we have to revisit.</p> | | |

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| | | <p>EG felt this was very interesting and asked if there were possibly some recommendations from report that could be lowering speed limit in City Centre. Are we looking pollution for HVO vehicles, (diesel vehicles using Hydrogenated vegetable oil). DH said speed issue is measured on scoop system and there are various ways of controlling the traffic system. One action is to look at other ways apart from scoop that could have big impact on outskirts. Council looking at ways to clean up, but they are looking at using hydrogen rather than HVO</p> <p>JC asked if there was any natural environment added to plan to which DH said yes, one action is to review the green Infrastructure Strategy</p> <p>DH asked if it were worth her attending one of the Workstreams, JC mentioned that Jon Gluyas who is chair is not at the meeting today, but it would be worth building synergies with Climate Change Group</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABro will circulate presentation • DH to send ABro link on network air quality monitoring • DH to speak to JG and attend Workstream going forward | <p>ABro DH DH</p> | |
| 4. | ECCP Workstream Updates | <p>Place, Health, and Communities Workstream – Steve Bhowmick</p> <p>Last met in Feb. KB had sought nominations for Vice Chair, Andy Coulthard from Livin Housing was proposed for post.</p> <p>One of topics that the group have been charged to look at, through the Environment Climate Change Action Plan, is a better understanding of local heritage. We heard presentations from the councils' conservation team regarding a pilot project with 22 local authorities in England promoting local heritage as a statutory protected asset. This refers to any heritage asset that is locally significant within the landscape, monuments or buildings that anyone has identified locally, which can be reviewed and protected through the planning framework. We had discussion around progress with the pilot and preparation of</p> | | |

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| | | <p>local lists to identify what is significant for people in their communities. There had been several talks given to societies e.g., city of Durham Trust. There is panel being set up that is meeting for the first time to review list, look at cases, and suggest further sites to apply. That meeting will happen in April, with a soft launch; then a Supplementary Planning Document will be consolidated through formal consultation in early summer this year. Julie Anson who works with Towns and Villages, and sits on the PHC group, has been nominated to represent the group on the technical panel, so pleased with this..</p> <p>We heard from Zoey Lewin, Environment Planner who talked about the latest environment planning policy context that is going on with the National Environment Act goals. Zoey spoke about mechanism to progress this through Environment Act, Defra 25 Year Plan, levelling up and habitat regulations going forward.</p> <p>We also heard about nutrient neutrality - Defra are looking at impacts of developments in areas which suffer nitrogen issues through development.</p> <p>We looked at future topics, such as influencing the funding for the Towns and Villages programme, respecting things like local needs We also want to look at key project areas such as mine water heat at Horden, so we are looking to invite Someone from East Durham Trust to talk about Horden Together and how mine water heat can be used for sustainable projects.</p> <p>We are looking to have more housing engagement at future meetings</p> <p>Question/Comments It was asked in relation to River Pollution - one of issues is with Farmers Fields. Would be in group Terms of Ref to look at this? SB mentioned they are looking at combined issue of water pollution.</p> <p>Climate Emergency Workstream – Ellie Grimes Group met in Jan and next one will be April there has been a change in Board</p> | | |

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| | | <p>members we have welcomed Sam Goss, Anna Riser, and Derek Fairbairn. Sam from NHS gave update on NHS green plan. We heard from Oasis on Climate friendly schools' website, we also had presentation from Nick Malin about Redhill's Pitman's Parliament, which members from the workstream the group are going to see this in April.</p> <p>The meeting was rounded off with a presentation on developing the Solar Supplementary Planning Document, Board members were asked to come along to the events planned for April to feed into to the Consultation.</p> <p>In terms of projects discussed - Solar Carports Feasibility Study which was completed in Nov last year. This did look at partner sites including the University, NHS Trust, property developers as well as Northumbrian Water. We would be happy to invite DH along to the next meeting in April.</p> <p>DCC, NWA, Durham University and NHS Trust have put in joint Funding bid to innovate UK Fast followers Project and had some joint events with the University looking at sharing knowledge and all things NetZero.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EG invited DH to attend next Climate Change Workstream at Redhill's <p>Ecological Emergency Workstream – Stuart Priestly The group have a single task to produce a Local Nature Strategy, still awaiting guidance from Defra of what this looks like in detail. We have been carrying out a mapping process – through meetings between ERIC (Env Record Information Centre) and County Ecologists, around Urban locality mapping and species mapping, making sure have linkages across boundaries. We have been looking at consultation - who might engage in the process and spoken to national farmers union about the process.</p> | EG | |

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| 5. | Durham University Biodiversity Strategy | <p>Simon Park and Yvonne Flynn gave a presentation on Durham Biodiversity Strategy</p> <p>Questions/Comments SB congratulated DL and his team for this work</p> <p>DL – Projects and infrastructure, the Vice Chancellor is 100% behind this and keen to see this rolled out. DH felt that this was remarkably interesting and said that Air Quality was a major factor to species dying out JC said it would be good to see how can link to NHS EG – Strategic Lead NHS for Climate Change is on the CE Board. Ellie will speak to DL regarding getting SP and YF to come along to give this presentation to their workstream.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will circulate presentation and video • EG to speak to DL in relation to Presenting at the Climate Emergency Workstream | ABro EG/DL | |
| 6. | Environment Awards 2022 and Plans for 2023 Awards | <p>Ceremony took place last Tuesday. Great to see them back in person after 3 years of being online. Amazing evening at Hardwick Hall Hotel</p> <p>SB will forward crib sheet via ABro for circulation</p> <p>Senior management said timely to look at new awards will go forward will work up short papers of what wanting to achieve and how do we value them Review criteria a bit working group would like reps from Board to feed into wider judging panel</p> <p>Cllr Wilkes thanked everyone that was involved.</p> | | |

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| | | <p>However, a couple of comments for future event. The lighting was very bright, blinding for the close audience. Needs to be more of an emphasis on other partners, push it is a partnership approach.</p> <p>Also had great feedback about using sustainable food at the event.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB will forward Crib Sheet to ABro to circulate | SB | |
| 7. | Devolution Impact on Environment Issues in Durham City – Jim Cokill | <p>JC mentioned he had attended the County Durham Partnership Board meeting and there was presentation there on the Devolution Deal. He wasn't aware of how wide range the areas that would be covered by Devolution deal were and how they relate to our work, so was quite a lot on there that has Environmental angle to it, such as transport, habitat, rural issues etc.</p> <p>Do we want to look at this in more detail and see how we may interact with Devolution how do we integrate into work doing?</p> <p>Cllr Wilkes – Really need to push the Environmental Issues that we feel are the most important and that funding can be potentially directed too.Devolution will only work if it involves a significant investment into things which green the Northeast Economy and make us more productive in a green way, so fully behind this but how do we do this? We need direct contact with what will be the eight leaders and whatever subgroups and Committees that surround that.</p> <p>JC asked if someone could come and speak to us from DCC about this at the next meeting - GR will find best officer to come along.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GR to find best officer to come along to next meeting to speak about devolution | GR | |

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| 8. | Any Other Business | <p>The Community Engagement Review</p> <p>Since June 2022 consultants ERS have been undertaking an impartial and unbiased review of the Council's community engagement function, primarily the work of the AAP's.</p> <p>The final report was received in January 2023 and proposed that the council consults with staff, elected members, AAP Board and Forum members, key partners, residents, and other interested parties on the changes that have been proposed in the independent review of the current approach. Consultation will take place between 13th march and 23rd April 2023</p> <p>A briefing paper and presentation were circulated to Board members</p> <p><i>Questions/Comments</i></p> <p>It was suggested that people need to be feeding into the consultation noting the things that work well already and the things that do not.</p> <p>JC will do response on behalf of the ECCP and will work with GR on this.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JC will work with GR to do response for consultation on behalf of ECCP | JC/GR | |
| | Date and time of Next Meeting | The next meeting of the ECCP Board will be Tuesday 20th June 2023 at 2pm online via Teams | | |

Summary of Actions (as meeting date above)

| No | Action | Lead | Timescale |
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| 1 | Air Quality Strategy – ABro will circulate Presentation | ABro | |
| 2 | Air Quality Strategy – DH to send AB link on network air quality monitoring | DH | |
| 3 | Air Quality Strategy – DH to speak to JG and attend Workstream going forward | DH | |
| 4 | Workstream – EG invited DH to attend next Climate Change Workstream | EG | |
| 5 | Durham University Biodiversity Strategy – Will circulate presentation and video | ABro | |
| 6 | Durham University Biodiversity Strategy – EG to speak to DL in relation to presenting at the Climate Emergency Workstream | EG | |
| 7 | Environment Awards – SB will forward Crib Sheet to ABro to circulate | ABro | |
| 8 | Devolution – GR to find best officer to come along to next ECCP Board to speak about devolution | GR | |
| 9 | AOB – JC will work with GR to do response for The Community Engagement Review Consultation on behalf of ECCP | JC/GR | |