



Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date **Tuesday 20 January 2015**
Time **9.30 am**
Venue **Committee Room 1A/B, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend. Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's agreement.

1. Apologies.
2. Substitute Members.
3. Minutes of the Meetings held on 10th, 17th and 25th November 2014. (Pages 1 - 24)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any.
5. Any items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.
6. Media Relations - Updates on Press Coverage.
7. Environment Improvement Campaigns / Projects. (Pages 25 - 34)
 - (i) Report of Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services
 - (ii) Presentation by Oliver Sherratt, Head of Direct Services and Ian Hoult, Neighbourhood Protection Manager, Neighbourhood Services.
8. Quarter 2 2014/2015 Forecast Outturn Report. (Pages 35 - 38)

Report of the Corporate Management Team presented by Phil Curran, Finance Manager Neighbourhoods.
9. Quarter 2 2014/2015 Performance Management Report. (Pages 39 - 48)

Report of Corporate Management Team presented by Mary Readman, Customer Relations, Policy and Performance Manager, Neighbourhoods Services.

10. Review of the Council Plan and Service Plans. (Pages 49 - 56)
Report of the Assistant Chief Executive
11. Verbal Update on EU Funding Programme 2014-2020.
12. Verbal Update on Woodlands Project.
13. Minutes of the County Durham Environment Partnership Board held on 23 September 2014. (Pages 57 - 62)
14. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

Colette Longbottom
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
12 January 2015

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

Councillor B Graham (Chairman)
Councillor D Hall (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors E Adam, J Armstrong, D Bell, E Bell, J Clare, J Clark, D Freeman,
J Gray, G Holland, K Hopper, I Jewell, C Kay, P May, O Milburn, S Morrison,
J Shuttleworth, P Stradling, L Taylor and S Zair

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Spurrell

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 10 November 2014 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Graham (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors E Adam, J Armstrong, D Bell, E Bell, J Clare, J Gray, D Hall, G Holland, K Hopper, I Jewell, P May, O Milburn, S Morrison, P Stradling, L Taylor and S Zair

Co-opted Members:

Mrs P Spurrell

Also Present:

Councillors R Todd and M Wilkes

1 Apologies.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Clark.

2 Substitute Members.

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2014 were approved subject to the following amendment to;

Item 8, Quarter 1 2014/15 Performance Management Report

Paragraph reads:

Councillor Clark raised a number of queries regarding; the collection of additional waste left next to the wheelie bin and the use of plastic bags in recycling bins. She further queried whether local supermarkets could be encouraged to use plastic carrier bags which were accepted for recycling by the local authority. It was noted that only clear bags would be accepted when left next to the wheelie bin and plastic carrier bags were currently not allowed to be placed within the recycling bin.

Paragraph amended to read:

Councillor Clark raised a number of queries regarding; the collection of additional waste left next to the wheelie bin and the use of plastic bags in recycling bins. She further queried

whether local supermarkets could be encouraged to stock and put clear bin bags in a more visually accessible location on their shelves, rather than focusing displays on black bin bags which would not be collected for recycling. In addition, she highlighted that carrier bags were not to be placed in the recycling bin.

4 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Any items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.

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

6 Media Relations - Updates on Press Coverage

The Committee received a presentation from the Overview and Scrutiny Officer on recent press articles relating to the remit of Environment and Sustainable Communities.

- Ending landfill an 'extraordinary achievement', says council leader - figures showed that the percentage of the County's waste going to landfill had fallen from 37.5% to 6.3%.
- Flood Defences will be improved this week- Work was commencing in Stanhope along the river wear to improve flood prevention, the work would be carried out by the Environment Agency.
- Right Results for Bin it Right – Recycling Assistants had knocked on almost 3000 doors and given advice to residents in relation to recycling which had resulted in fewer contaminates being placed in the recycling bin.
- Durham and Sedgefield handed Gold Gilt Awards as part of Britain in Bloom.

7 Community Action Team and use of targeted interventions

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services which provided Members with an overview of the work of the council's Community Action Team (CAT) and the use of targeted interventions (for copy see file of minutes).

In February 2013 the CAT began a two year work programme visiting ten communities across County Durham, undertaking an 8-10 week programme of work, tackling local housing environmental issues. Within the 10 locations housing and removing rubbish accumulations were identified as priority issues. The key findings of the summer review found that in the five areas revisited the number of housing and environmental issues had reduced, however rubbish accumulations was still an issue. Residents had highlighted that the CAT had made a difference in some areas.

In relation to next steps the CAT had drafted a programme for 2015-16 which included revisits to three previous project areas. The team also intended to build upon relationships developed with various partners such as Groundwork North East and Cumbria.

Councillor Adam requested clarification as to whether the ten communities to be visited by the CAT as part of the 2015/6 work programme had been identified. In response to a query from Councillor Adam, the Senior Environmental Health Officer queried why the report did

not confirm which areas were to be visited as part of that the work programme for 2015-16. The Senior Environmental Health Officer confirmed that the work programme was still in its draft format and was therefore still subject to change. Once final adjustments had been made and the programme for 2015-16 had been agreed, Members would be informed of the final ten areas.

Councillor May suggested that some areas were continually revisited by the CAT and may benefit from a different approach may be required. He continued by asking for clarification as to what a 'notice' is. The Senior Environmental Health Officer agreed that some areas within the County were more likely to need frequent support as the turnover of tenants was a continuing issue. A legal notice was a document which required the landlord or tenant to undertake work. A notice in relation to food waste would usually be served on the tenant who would be given 24 hours to comply. A notice for defective drainage would be served on both the tenant and the landlord and they could be given a period of 9-21 days to comply, depending on the circumstances of the case. If the notice was not complied with in the given period, the council could carry out the work by default and any work would be charged to the landlord, however it would be cheaper for them to have the work done privately.

In response to a query from Councillor Jewell, the Senior Environmental Health Officer confirmed that the purpose of the walkabouts over a 8-10 week period was to identify those who repeatedly offended and progress was being made. In areas where the turnover of tenants had been identified as a particular problem, the CAT were working with landlords and agents. However, some issues were complex and 8 weeks was not a long enough period of time to eliminate the more complex problems and it was therefore imperative that areas were revisited so that those individuals who had a history of non-compliance could be dealt with accordingly.

In response to a number of queries from Members, the Senior Environmental Officer confirmed that the private landlords targeted were identified by liaising with local police and neighbourhood wardens. The information was then recorded on to a database and in addition, walkabouts were usually undertaken in conjunction with both police and neighbourhood wardens, which helped to identify problem tenants. Those residents who suffered from mental health issues would be dealt with in conjunction with Family Link or by liaising with Social Workers.

Councillor Clare referred to Warm Up North and queried whether properties had been assessed for their eligibility in relation to energy saving schemes. The Senior Environmental Health Officer confirmed that properties had been assessed and in relation to the CAT was linking in with the providers of such schemes.. Councillor Armstrong queried whether members were consulted in relation to the work of the CAT within their localities and the Senior Environmental Health Officer confirmed that Members were invited to attend meetings and walkabouts.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Stradling regarding interventions by the CAT causing residents to fly tip in other areas within the same locality, the Senior Environmental Health Officer confirmed that although focus areas were restricted to approximately 500-600 properties, should residents from other areas report any concerns, they would be investigated. It was noted that in general, tenants tended to move rubbish from their own properties to other uninhabited properties in close proximity. In response to a further query

regarding whether it would be functional to employ permanent neighbourhood wardens where areas had recurrent problems, the Environment Protection Manager confirmed that the CAT permanently worked in conjunction with neighbourhood wardens and therefore all reported issues were picked up.

In response to a query from Councillor Holland the Senior Environmental Health Officer confirmed that the majority of the notices served were for household waste, however those who may struggle to pay the cost of removing bulky items could distribute it amongst more than one tenant or landlord. The policy had been agreed by council and therefore it was not possible to offer this service for free.

Councillor Wilkes raised queries with regards to whether Durham could operate a Registered Landlord Scheme and the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services, confirmed that Durham endorsed a voluntary scheme for landlords, referring to guidance available for all of those signed up to it and confirmed that the council could progress this scheme in the future.

Councillor Wilkes queried whether landlords had been approached directly with regards to paying the newly implemented charge for the collection of garden waste and suggested that those who were keen to ensure their properties were well maintained may be prepared to assist with the cost on behalf of tenants. The Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services confirmed that social landlords had been approached and provided with details of the garden waste scheme and the scheme had received a positive response, with 11500 occupiers having already signed up. Councillor Brian Stephens, Cabinet Portfolio holder for Neighbourhoods confirmed that should any private landlords elect to pay for the garden waste collection scheme, this could be reflected in the cost of the rent for the property.

With regards to fly-tipping, the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services, confirmed that 75% was domestic waste and there was a number of contributing social issues that needed to be addressed. He reassured Members that an extensive amount of work was continuing to be undertaken within the service to reduce fly-tipping.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

8 Winter Maintenance Plan Update

The Committee considered a joint report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and a joint presentation from the Head of Technical Services and the Policy and Asset Manager which provided Members with information regarding the Winter Maintenance Plan (for copies see file of minutes).

In addition to the slides the Head of Technical Services confirmed that the Councils Winter Maintenance Policy had been significantly overhauled in 2014 and the Council had invested additional resources over the past 12 months. Section 41 (1A) of the Highways Act 1980 stated that the Highways Authority had a statutory responsibility for ensuring the safety of the Highways during winter however, it did not specify a level of winter maintenance required. It was not possible for the Council to treat all 3773 kilometres of

carriageway, however a policy had been implemented which prioritised highway routes within the County.

The Policy and Asset Manager confirmed that Priority 1 routes had been identified by the Highways Authority and were pre-salted and post-treated throughout the period of severe weather. Priority 2 routes were also post-treated and snow clearance was carried out on carriageways when required. In addition footways and cycleways were cleared and during extreme winters which had been experienced within the last few years a Minimum Winter Network had been devised to ensure clearance following treatment of priority routes. Priority 1 and 2 routes were identified on a map located on the Councils website and could be viewed by members of the public.

Durham had a particularly large area of carriageways treated at 45%, in comparison to some counties of a similar network size which treated only 20% of their carriageway. Specialist winter weather forecasts were received from one of only 3 national companies, however weather could not be predicted any longer than 15 days in advance.

Many priority 2 routes were treated by local farmers in the Dales who were contracted by the Council. They were only treated during prolonged severe weather and if resources were available. Following heavy snowfall, Priority 1 routes were cleared with a plough, however routes had a maximum clearance time of 2.5 hours and were cleared in order of priority.

In addition, the treatment of footways was a priority for the Council and usually carried out by Streetscene. Footpaths were categorised as 1 and 1a (town centres), public transport interchanges, hospitals, surgeries and category 2 was small village shops, sheltered accommodation and care homes. The Council were also responsible for over 2000 salt bins which could be requested however. there was an allocation criteria to be considered in order to grant a salt bin as filling them was resource intensive..

Councillor May queried the criteria for the provision of salt-bins and advised that even the slightest of inclines prevented people from getting vehicles off their estates and attending work. The Head of Technical Services confirmed that salt-bins were provided following a scoring assessment against criteria such as gradients, bends, whether the route was a priority route, a bus route, whether it was used by pedestrians, whether there was a medical centre, a chemist, or shop etc. There was unlimited demand for salt-bins however since the average yearly cost of servicing a salt-bin was approximately £100, those who did not meet the criteria were encouraged to use alternative services such as requesting a one tonne dumpy bag of salt which could be delivered for a total charge of £100. The Policy and Asset Manager confirmed that 50 requests had already been considered this year.

In response to a query from Councillor Wilkes regarding the additional cost of a tonne dumpy bag in comparison to the cost the Council paid per tonne of salt, the Head of Technical Services explained that the salt was mixed with grit and the additional costs were for labour and distribution.

The Head of Technical Services confirmed that the Council had 42,700 tonnes of salt stored and during a mild winter such as last year, 18000 tonnes was used. In comparison

the year before, which was a severe winter, the Head of Technical Services confirmed the use of 48000 tonnes.

In response to a question from Councillor Jewell regarding the difficulties which snow clearance vehicles may have due to parked vehicles on priority routes, the Head of Technical Services confirmed that they did not cause an obstruction or prevent routes from being treated. There had been some complaints following the use of the plough as snow was heaped at the side of the road and in some cases driveways may be blocked, however the majority of residents acknowledged that this as a minor inconvenience. In response to a further question from Councillor Jewell the Policy and Asset Manager confirmed that the public were encouraged to clear outside of their own home and were reassured that they were not liable for any accidents that occurred as a result of any snow clearance.

In response to a query from Councillor Bell regarding the impact on carrying out refuse collections in severe weather, the Head of Technical Services confirmed that the Highways Authority liaised with the refuse and recycling service in order to carry out collections and would prioritise routes accordingly where possible.

In response to a query from Councillor Todd regarding the partnership working that was undertaken with various Parish Councils, the Head of Technical Services confirmed that the work consisted of an agreement between the Council and the Parish Council, to ensure that salt was distributed in line with council policy. The Council were therefore able to ensure that footpaths were cleared immediately and in return, the Council provided the salt. The Highways Authority would liaise with any Town or Parish Council, however it was acknowledged that some Parish Councils did not have the resources to deliver the level of service required.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9 Warm Up North Update

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development, which provided Members with an update on the development of Warm up North, a regional Green Deal Initiative (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Planning and Assets provided Members with an update on the figures since the report had been produced. Warm Up North had completed 2169 referrals, which was 1300 more than any other similar sized local authority and 1257 installations had been completed, which was 800 more than any other local authority in the region.

Councillor Jewell queried whether any complaints had been received regarding the installation process and the Head of Planning and Assets confirmed that the scheme had a 99% success rate. There were rigorous checks and all installations were re-checked three weeks later. Of the other 1% he confirmed that the majority of complaints were regarding the original contact with Warm Up North, which was improving, however the after-service was positively rated by customers.

In response to a comment from Councillor Bell regarding the quality of installations, the Head of Planning and Assets confirmed that the market was competitive and some companies were more quality controlled than others. With reference to an influx of low quality solar panels which had been imported and installed in the County, the Head of Planning and Assets confirmed that quality of equipment was improving, however he would investigate this issue further.

In response to a question from Councillor Adam regarding a more detailed breakdown of the 45 approved measures used to monitor installation, the Head of Planning and Assets confirmed that Members could be provided with a more detailed quarterly monitoring report which would contain details of how many complaints had been received.

In response to queries from the Vice-Chairman regarding the risk section of the report and in relation to public buildings and schools accessing the initiative, the Head of Planning and Assets confirmed that the take-up of Warm Up North interventions by householders had not been the success that the council had first hoped. This was partly due to the many changes that had been made to the initiative since it originated. There was not enough clarity for householders on how the Green Deal operated and the Council were still awaiting some guidance. The Council were providing advice on community buildings if contacted and schools had been a particular area of focus however, consideration could be given for a leaflet to be circulated giving information regarding what services could be offered.

Councillor Wilkes commented that he had reports of Warm Up North being contacted by householders, yet not returning calls and in comparison, other providers had allegedly been contacted and carried out the work within ten days at a lower cost. With regards to the variance in cost, other companies were carrying out work cheaper and he referred to the Home Improvement Fund which could provide £100m by December for homes in County Durham and suggested that people should be made aware of this by distribution of a leaflet. In response, the Head of Planning and Assets confirmed that following receipt of some guidance on how the money could be spent, the Home Improvement Fund would be promoted to householders.

The Vice-Chairman queried the delivery costs of Warm Up North and suggested that there may be a need to investigate the delivery partner to ensure that customers were receiving value for money. The Head of Planning and Assets confirmed that within the current monitoring process, details of unit costs could be provided.

The Chairman queried whether housing providers were aware of schemes available, referring to the recent regeneration of York Hill Estate in Spennymoor, the Head of Planning and Assets confirmed that the Social Housing Forum held regular meetings with the three social housing providers who were all aware of the scheme.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and a further update be provided to a future meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

10 European Structural and Investment Funds - Low Carbon Economy Update

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development, which provided Members with an update on the development of the European Structural and Investment Fund (low carbon economy) within County Durham (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor E Bell made reference queried why underground coal gasification (UCG) which had not mentioned in the report. The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader confirmed that UCG was not directly related to Low Carbon Economy and therefore was not considered under the same strand of funding, however it may go forward under the innovation funding strand. She confirmed that this topic would be discussed in more depth at the next meeting on 25 November 2014.

Councillor Holland suggested that reducing the use of gas and fossil fuels was one of the prime directives of the emerging County Durham Plan as it was expensive to retrofit existing buildings, therefore he suggested that renewable energy systems should be fitted during the construction of all new buildings. The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader confirmed that the primary focus of the European Structural and Investment Funds was how to deal with existing buildings and as new builds were a small proportion of the total buildings in County Durham, this reinforced the importance of dealing with them. In response to a further query from Councillor Holland, the Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader confirmed that with regards to the feasibility study which had been approved by DECC, all water sourced heat pumps would be considered. Mine water was of particular interest however whether it would be used would depend on whether it would be covered by funding.

Councillor Adam queried whether the council would focus on a smaller number of key areas as there was a significant amount of work required to develop the various schemes which would meet the funding criteria of European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF). The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader confirmed that the council would be more likely to develop schemes which focused on energy efficiency, however a more detailed plan for County Durham would be confirmed following consultation with Durham Energy Institute (DEI).

Councillor Wilkes queried match funding arrangements with regard to ESIF and whether the Council would be required to meet the required costs for the funding to be granted. The Sustainability and Climate Change Team Leader confirmed that there was no suggestion that the council would need to assist with match funding as it was likely to be sourced from local businesses or the DEI, which may use funding from University fees or could access other grants to assist with the cost.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that the Committee receive a progress update on the development of ESIF at a future meeting in 2015.

11 Limestone Landscape Programme Update

The Committee considered a joint report of the Assistant Chief Executive and the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development, and a presentation from the

Limestone Landscapes Programme Manager, which provided Members with information regarding the Limestone Landscape Programme (for copies see file of minutes).

The Chairman referred to a number of informative site visits which had been undertaken by the Committee regarding the Limestone Landscape Programme and considered the restoration work that was being undertaken was outstanding. She acknowledged the hard work which had been done by the Limestone Landscape team and thanked them for the work they had done.

Councillor Clare queried whether a strategy was in place to maintain those structures which had been restored. The Limestone Landscape Programme Manager confirmed that any restoration which took place was subject to a maintenance plan, usually a minimum of ten years and in the case of Hetton Smithy, the Blacksmith was required to allow members of the public to visit no less than six times per year, which had already been exceeded as it had already been open to the public eleven times. The Limestone Landscape Manager added that Blackhall Rocks had been heavily vandalised following its improvement however the Countryside Ranger Service had responsibility for its restoration. There were legal contracts in place to ensure all projects had maintenance plans in place for at least ten years.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

12 Management of the Woodland estate owned by Durham County Council - Scrutiny Review - terms of reference for the project

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred to the scoping report and the draft terms of reference for the scrutiny review focusing on the management of the woodland estate owned by DCC and confirmed that a Special meeting had been arranged for the 17 November 2014. The meeting would provide an overview presentation by Ged Lawson, Principal Landscape Officer and Richard Pow from the Forestry Commission and in addition, Members would be invited to discuss the draft terms of reference and project plan. The terms of reference would be circulated to members and any comments from would be incorporated into the draft terms of reference for discussion and agreement at the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that the draft terms of reference be further discussed at the meeting on the 17 November 2014.

13 Minutes of the County Durham Environment Partnership Board

The minutes of the County Durham Environment Partnership Board held on 15 July 2014 were noted by the Committee.

14 Minutes of the Durham Strategic Flood Prevention Group and draft minutes of the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

The Minutes of the Durham Strategic Flood Prevention Group held on 20 August 2014 and draft minutes of the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee held on 10 October 2014 were noted by the Committee.

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 17 November 2014 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Graham (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors E Adam, D Bell, J Clare, J Clark, J Gray, D Hall, G Holland, K Hopper, I Jewell, O Milburn, S Morrison, P Stradling and L Taylor

Co-opted Members:

Mrs P Spurrell

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Bell and P May.

2 Substitute Members

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4 Any items from Co-opted Members or interested parties

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

5 Management of the Woodlands Estate Owned by DCC Review

The Chairman thanked the Council's Principal Landscape Officer, Regeneration and Economic Development (RED), Ged Lawson and Landscape Delivery Officer, RED, Susan Mullinger together with the Forestry Commission's Partnerships and Expertise Manager, Richard Pow who were in attendance to speak to Members regarding progress in relation to the Management of the Woodlands Estate owned by Durham County Council (DCC) (for copy see file of minutes).

Forestry Commission

The Partnerships and Expertise Manager reminded Members of public sentiment following proposals by Government to sell off large areas of publicly owned woodland and explained that consequently an independent report was commissioned, led by the Bishop of Liverpool. It was noted 6 months following this independent report, a response from the Forestry Commission and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) set out a way forward, with the main points including that woodland should be retained in the public's ownership and that a return to "a woodland culture" would help to make woodland areas more sustainable.

The Committee noted that resulting policy had the principles of: Protect; Improve; and Expand. It was explained that there were challenging targets of increasing woodland cover by 12% by 2060, a doubling of the current rate of creation, and to have 66% of woodland sustainably managed, the current level in County Durham being 47%. It was noted that the woodland cover in County Durham was more typical of the rest of England than the North East region, with the percentage conifer coverage being between the North East and national values of 52% and 24%. Members noted woodland ownership was approximately split 50/50 between the Forestry Commission and other landowners. It was highlighted County Durham enjoyed the benefits of a large adjoining woodland economy in Northumberland and South Scotland.

Members learned that in terms of incentives to manage woodland, the end of the current Rural Development Payments scheme was making way for a new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for 2015-2020, £14 Billion of funds in total. It was explained that there were two "pillars" to the CAP and that Pillar 1 would be in effect "production subsidy", comprising approximately 70% of the £14 Billion, with the remaining 30% being under Pillar 2 promoting rural development. Members noted that Pillar 2 was split into 4 sub-sections: Countryside Stewardship (formerly NELMS); Growth; Farming Competitiveness; and LEADER. Councillors learned that Country Stewardship comprised of £2.2 Billion in legacy schemes, as many were medium-term (5-10 years), and £900 million would be for new schemes. The Committee noted that the "Growth" section would be dealt with via the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs); "Competitiveness" was in effect farming subsidy; and "LEADER" being a system whereby Local Authorities and Community Groups could work on local rural schemes.

It was explained that the English Woodland Grant Scheme had closed and a new single integrated system, as part of the Countryside Stewardship would come into effect from July 2015. It was noted that the funding profile had been retained and that administration was via Natural England; funds dealt with by the Rural Payments Agency; and advice given by the Forestry Commission. The Committee noted that interim grants from the Forestry Commission would be available in respect of: Creation, to ensure a planting season is not missed in the move to the new system; Planning, as a requirement of the new system was to have a Woodland Management Plan (WMP) in place before funding could be accessed; and Plant Health, to restock where diseased trees have been removed. It was added that the interim grants would be by invitation only for high priority sites; where woodland management and creation would best deliver against the Countryside Stewardship scheme; and in areas such as increasing biodiversity and water management, both quality and quantity.

It was noted that through the Competitiveness fund or “Countryside Productivity” there was funding for: infrastructure, new roads, hard-standings, drying sheds; Kit, log splitters, tractors, grab-arms; and haulage, adaptations to work with timber. Members noted that the Forestry Commission would provide advice to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), allowing them to prepare and take advantage of opportunities and funding when they become available. It was added that some businesses from County Durham had already come forward to take advantage of advice from the Forestry Commission. Councillors also noted venison as a potential market, however, this was not a large market in County Durham in comparison to other areas.

The Partnerships and Expertise Manager explained that approximately 18 months ago the Forestry Commission and representatives from the forestry industry developed a blueprint for the growth of forestry sector in northern England, “Roots to Prosperity”. It was added that the Secretary of State (SoS) and North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) had supported the launch in August 2014, coinciding with the NELEP Investment Strategy. It was noted that the high level strategy had been identified and Forestry Commission funding would mean a Co-ordinator would be in place shortly, with the blueprint moving into the implementation phase.

The Committee learned that County Durham had been selected as a pilot area for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) in respect of forestry management and it was explained that there was a need to ensure myths were dispelled regarding EIAs being simply an addition regulatory burden.

The Partnerships and Expertise Manager concluded by noting that in respect of the DCC woodland estate, an option could be to have a forest management company prepare and implement management plans to deliver the objectives DCC would wish for their woodland estate.

The Chairman thanked the Partnerships and Expertise Manager and asked Members for their questions on the presentation.

Councillors asked questions in relation to: the type of trees that would be used in expanding woodland cover; over how many years the £3.6 Billion of Pillar 2 was paid; whether that funds was for all of the UK; what the plan period was; who decided upon allocations; timing of funding via the Forestry Commission; and how allocations were spread out.

The Partnerships and Expertise Manager explained that the types of trees that would be selected for planting to expand woodlands and create new woodland cover would depend upon the sites identified. It was added that woodland expansion would only be where appropriate, so if an area was put forward and it is not deemed suitable or already has environmental value in its current state, then the area would not be planted. The Partnerships and Expertise Manager noted that the grants referred to were for England only for the period 2014-2020. It was noted that allocation was via DEFRA who had consulted last February, with input from organisations such as the National Farmers Union. It was added that in the past that Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were the means by which local input was given, however, with the RDAs being abolished in 2012 local input, albeit to a lesser degree, rested with the LEPS.

Members asked further questions in relation to: where in County Durham new woodlands could be created; whether there were preferred sites; whether the economy was the primary driver for woodland management; whether County Durham was getting a fair share of allocations; and what role DCC would play in the regional group, led by Northumberland.

The Partnerships and Expertise Manager explained that new woodlands would be in any suitable sites where a landowner came forward to the Forestry Commission with a suggestion. Members were reminded that the Forestry Commission had its regulatory role, carrying out EIAs and that sites were looked at in terms of where they would provide the greatest benefit socially, economically and environmentally. The Committee noted that there was an element of landowners being financially incentivised in order to protect woodland, however, it would be through a mix of arrangements to be able to deliver the improvements, benefits and woodland creation that was desired. Members were reminded that the CAP had originally been primarily a production subsidy, however there was increasing movement to providing environmental benefits. It was added that both the European Union and UK Government had confirmed that it was possible to modulate CAP funding from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2, with current “modulation” being 12.5%. In relation to County Durham getting a “fair share” and the role of DCC it was explained that appropriate woodland areas would be approached by the Forestry Commission regarding accessing funding, though there was an ability to “self-invite” and that DCC would be able to contribute as there were many attributes, such as having the third largest saw mill in the UK and an established base for solid fuel, that all counted in County Durham’s favour.

Durham County Council

The Principal Landscape Officer noted that DCC did not have a single corporate strategy for woodland management, however, there were elements of woodland management within existing plans: County Durham Landscape Strategy 2008; County Durham Green Infrastructure Strategy 2012; Corporate Tree Management Policy 2014; and within the emerging County Durham Plan. It was explained that the plans were generally “outward looking” and that guidelines had been adopted and set out within DCC documents in relation to the condition and protection of “ancient woodland”. Members were shown maps illustrating where ancient woodland sites were located within the County and noted that there were aims to: encourage the restoration of damaged or planted woodland; to promote a strategic landscape-scale approach to the creation of new native woods, and encourage planting which extends, or improve links between, isolated woods; and to encourage the positive management or restoration of other important habitats within the wider “forest habitat network”, particularly hedges and species-rich grasslands.

In terms of conserving and managing existing woodlands, Members understood that there were objectives linked to protecting and conserving woodland, and managing them to maximise their environmental value and ensure their long-term viability and productivity. Councillors learned that in terms of management, there was a need to understand what each type of woodland required and to promote the adoption of woodland management plans and greater participation in woodland grant aid schemes. The Principal Landscape Officer explained that the Forestry Stewardship Council standard for woodland management would be encouraged and also support would be offered to projects such as the “Northwoods” initiative.

Members noted that another aspect would be to encourage and promote greater involvement of local communities in the management, planting and care of woodlands and trees in their neighbourhoods.

Councillors learned that some of the woodland owned by DCC were looked after by the Countryside Team in areas such as Nature Reserves and former railway lines and some larger areas within parks and gardens were maintained by the Council's Neighbourhood Services. It was added that the largest woodland areas owned by DCC were managed by the DCC Forestry Team and these were mostly within rural areas, often with a high conifer content. Members also learned that there were some new "Jubilee Woods" that were planted on DCC land, subsequently leased to the Woodland Trust.

The Principal Landscape Officer explained that in terms of forest design, there were objectives linked to the restructuring of existing plantations, to be undertaken sensitively and encouraging and increase in the proportion of locally native broadleaved species. Members noted that where sites were of ecological or archaeological importance, and damaged by recent planting, those sites should have trees removed, or planting changed to a more appropriate type. It was added that when new plantations or shelterbelts were being restocked, this would provide an opportunity to improve their fit with the surrounding landscape, through design and appropriate planting.

The Committee learned that another aspect which would help to ensure the sustainability of woodlands was to encourage the development of new local markets for woodland produce including wood-fuels, woodland crafts and other niche markets. It was explained it would also be beneficial to encourage architects and specifiers to use a greater proportion of timber for construction and other purposes, sourcing timber from regional suppliers. Councillors noted there was an aim to increase use of wood fuels, such as short rotation coppice and forest residue as a contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Members were informed that benefits of woodland expansion included: expanding timber and other woodland resources; enhancing the beauty of the countryside and contributing to diversity; creating and improving habitats for wildlife; regulating the movement of water through river catchments, reducing soil erosion and leaching of pollutants into surface and ground water; helping to revitalise derelict and degraded land; creating jobs and opportunities for economic diversification in rural areas; improving quality of life by providing opportunities for recreation, education and local community involvement; and storing carbon.

Councillors noted that an objective of woodland expansion was to promote a substantial increase in the County's woodland cover while ensuring that plans for woodland expansion are integrated with wider environmental, economic and social objectives. It was added that the establishment of new woodlands was to be encouraged, including new native woodlands to help reverse woodland losses and habitat fragmentation, strengthen landscape character and enhance biodiversity. The Committee noted that new community woodlands in areas close to settlements could provide opportunities for public access and that new large multi-purpose woodland in landscapes should be encouraged, in particular areas affected in the past by land reclamation, opencast working or agricultural intensification.

Members were informed that the development of new urban fringe would help improve the appearance of settlements and provide setting for new development, and new woodland could be used in the restoration of mineral workings, waste disposal sites, or in the reclamation of derelict land.

The Committee noted that there were 4 “priority areas”, including: native woodland, to defragment by connection up ancient woodland; riparian, along rivers and other water courses; community woodlands, within walking distance of settlements; and landscape improvement areas, reclamation of former industrial or farming sites.

Councillors noted the statements and policies within the County Durham Green Infrastructure Strategy and how these sought to: protect existing trees from detrimental effect by development; requirements for new woodlands to be planted as part of restoration of schemes for opencast mineral or landfills sites; and institute new tree planting as part of new developments. It was added that the emerging County Durham Plan also looked to protect existing woodlands and the Corporate Tree Management Policy set out what customers could expect in terms of services offered by the Council’s Neighbourhood Services Department.

The Principal Landscape Officer concluded by reiterating that currently there was no overall woodland management in place, and that part of this ongoing process was to determine if there should be an internal management policy or whether the woodland estate could be managed differently.

The Chairman thanked the Principal Landscape Officer and asked Members for their questions on the presentations.

The Committee asked questions in relation to: what Officers saw as the main threat to meeting the aims and objectives as described; how a new overall woodland management strategy would differ from those policies already in place; and how to encourage use of locally sourced materials by architects.

The Principal Landscape Officer explained that there were several threats, including: disease, such as Ash Dieback; lack of active management of upland woodlands, and consequences in respect of flooding; and pressure from developers. It was added that the current policies and strategies were outward looking and any new approach would set out what DCC would do, or wish to do. Members noted that there was a role for the Council in looking to use sustainable, locally sourced material within its own contracts, however also to encourage use of such materials in the wider region. The Partnerships and Expertise Manager explained that there were several national schemes to promote using local materials, with moves to a “Grown in Britain” mark which would help consumers and specifiers to use local quality products.

Councillors asked further questions in respect of: the “existing market” for woodland products; meeting demands of new local markets; the demand for wood as a fuel; and the link to tourism.

The Principal Landscape Officer explained that County Durham was close to Northumberland and Southern Scotland, two large existing markets for woodland products and that meeting demands may require smaller plantations to develop products to be able to reach a “critical mass” in terms of a particular product. The Partnerships and Expertise Manager added that there was a strong firewood market, and that through active management of woodland, DCC could tap into this market, looking at what existing woodland could produce. The Principal Landscape Officer explained that with woodland management there was a degree of long term planning (around 20-30 years) however, there was a need to try and react to any market demands, such as increased demand for wood as fuel.

The Principal Landscape Officer noted that Hamsterley Forest was the second most popular attraction in the county, and issues of accessibility and facilities provided at woodland sites in general was not part of legacy strategies and therefore this may be an area for further development. Members noted new woodland being developed in the east of the County was along the A19 corridor just north of Murton and the quality of the tree cover would take time to build up.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

6 Draft Terms of Reference

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Ann Whitton referred Members to an amended Terms of Reference document relating to the Review of the Management of the Woodland Estate owned by Durham County Council. It was noted that this contained additional comments from Mrs P Spurrell, Co-opted Member of the Committee, and these related to strengthening objectives (c) and (d) relating to equality issues, to include: “physical, sensory and learning disability groups and various age groups including young people” when referencing projects targeting specific groups.

Members were also asked to express their interest at being included within the Working Group that would look at the Management of the Woodland Estate, with a view to have a group of 10 Members and Co-opted Members. A note was made of those Councillors, including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman that would comprise the Working Group.

The following Members expressed an interest in taking part in the Working Group: Councillors: Graham (Chair), J. Armstrong, Clare, Clark, Hall (V. Chair), Holland, Jewell, I. Taylor, Stradling and Mrs P Spurrell. The Committee agreed that the above would form the membership of the Working Group.

Resolved:

That the amended Terms of Reference document for the the Review of the Management of the Woodland Estate owned by Durham County Council be agreed.

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 25 November 2014 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Graham (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Armstrong, D Bell, E Bell, J Clare, J Clark, J Gray, D Hall, G Holland, I Jewell, S Morrison, P Stradling and L Taylor

Co-opted Members:

Mrs P Spurrell

Also Present:

J Bell, D Boyes and A Surtees

1 Apologies.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Adam, K Hopper, P May and S Zair.

2 Substitute Members.

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

3 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

4 Any items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.

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

5 Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) - Overview

The Chairman welcomed Professor J Gluyas, Chair of Geoenergy and Carbon Capture and Storage at Durham University and J McKewon, Spatial Policy Team who were in attendance to provide a presentation on Underground Coal Gasification including the

technological process, installation, licences, regulation and potential benefits and impacts for Durham County (for copy of report and slides of presentation see file of minutes).

Professor Gluyas proceeded to provide an in-detail presentation explaining that the UK energy mix is declining with coal and nuclear power in their last years and oil and gas stock depleting. In relation to coal currently there is 1 year's reserve supply of coal which had been mined which equates to 50 million tonnes, however there was at least 750 year's supply of coal in the UK which was undeveloped. In relation to geothermal there is a potential thermal reserve of greater than 100 year's supply.

It was explained that Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) involved the controlled combustion of coal seams beneath the ground and the consequent recovery of gases. The reaction of the combination of coal + water produced a gas called syngas. It was highlighted that UCG is not a new process and that the system had been used in 'gas works' for many years however the temperature and pressure in the reaction chamber can be precisely controlled but with UCG the precise nature of the and outputs from the UCG process are intimately related to the temperature profile of the underground cavity.

It was explained that 'syngas' consisted of hydrogen, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and methane. It was reported that there had been a number of trials in particular in Spain and Australia in order to determine its feasibility however at this stage there was still a significant amount of unknowns. The most advanced developments which had been made with UCG were happening in Australia however detail on their research at this stage was not forthcoming.

Professor Gluyas explained that there were a number of uses for syngas including the use of Hydrogen as a clean fuel, carbon monoxide as a petrochemical and that both of these gases could be used for power generation.

Reference was made to Yerostigaz, a company in the former Soviet Union who produces about 1 million cubic metres (35 million cubic feet) of syngas per day in Angren, Uzbekistan. The produced syngas is used as fuel in the Angren Power Station.

The thermal efficiency of UCG can be as high as 90% and is greater for thick coal seams that behave adianatically, low ash contents, high pulse rates, efficeient water influx and low gas leakage. The gas produced can be used for oil products, methanol carbonylation (acetic acid production), hydrogen fuel cells, carbon capture, carbon capture storage and carbon dioxide enhanced coal bed methane. Further background information was given to UCG and its history, including work which had been undertaken in 1912 at Hett Hill in Durham.

Moving on information was reported in respect of environmental implications and it was reported that there were some issues which would be required to be rigorously monitored including; the release of toxins to potable water, overburden collapse, topsides (although this was expected with any industrial plant) and monitoring the process which is difficult due to the extreme operating environment. In conclusion Professor Gluyas advised that long term UCG and geothermal were the only viable options for the UK which gave an acceptable level of homeland energy security. If the Council were to explore UCG further any early developments would require substantial investment in order to ensure it could work commercially.

Councillor E Bell asked if it was known what percentage of coal would be used to create the gas. In response Professor Gluyas advised that it was not known exactly however it could be around 60/70%. Councillor Bell further asked what the expected timescales would be for the development of a plant. It was noted that the development of a UCG plant from the very early stages of discussions to the development of the plant can take up to 5-10 years.

Councillor Bell asked whether proposals would be for off shore or on land. In response professor Gluyas advised that it could work on either however, it was about ensuring that the public were comfortable and starting in an area which was not heavily populated. It was noted that off shore costs were higher and the process more complex.

Councillor Holland asked whether the process required a minimum seam depth. It was noted that a thicker coal seam was advantageous. Councillor Clare in following on from that point asked whether it was possible to quantify the output of the operations outlined in the presentation. Professor Gluyas explained that the output was a fairly moderate one of around 100/200 tonnes.

Further discussion took place regarding manpower and it was noted that the process required a lot less human power than traditional mining methods, however a significant workforce would be required. Comparison were made to Gas and Oil operators in Aberdeen and the impacts that these operations had taken upon the economy of the area.

Councillor Boyes, who represented the Easington area, advised that there was a great deal of dissent in his area because of the unknown impact upon the community. He therefore asked what was the anticipated impact, disruption and benefits, if any, that the project would bring.

In response Professor Gluyas advised that the environment was critical and therefore it was imperative to ensure that all risks were fully understood and tested before anything was put in place. He advised that there would be job creation, however these would be higher skilled, with much less manual labour as was found with traditional mining.

In response to comments the Head of Planning and Assets referred to the County Durham Plan and in particular environmental protection which was in place down the Durham coastline. He advised that bearing this in mind the only suitable site would be at Seaham and the port. He further advised that there were still a lot of unknowns however there could be benefits to the Council if they were to make an early move on this, with options to pipe energy to Northumberland, Humberside etc.

Councillor Armstrong asked whether there were any companies identified to undertake the work. In response Professor Gluyas advised that Cluff Natural Resources and Five Quarters were the two main companies involved.

Councillor Wilkes made reference to energy efficiency and zero carbon homes, highlighting the use of renewables and retrofitting and suggested that the council should explore these options further, as it was known that it would help the economy by creating further jobs and would not damage the environment of County Durham.

Professor Gluyas added that he agreed completely and added that we were as country 'energy greedy' with an ever increasing appetite for energy and terrible at reducing energy consumption and that the measures outlined by Councillor Wilkes could run in parallel with new sources of energy supply however they alone would not satisfy the increasing demand for energy.,

Councillor Morrison asked what were the possible effects of UCG on the watertable and whether there were any comparisons with traditional methods of extraction. Professor Gluyas responded that UCG takes place at a level where it would not impact on ground water and that there would need to be in place measures to ensure that pathways do not open up which could cause the contamination of ground water.

Jason McKewon of the Spatial Policy Team then went on to provide a presentation on the way in which the council was addressing UCG under the emerging statutory development plan for County Durham.

The Senior Policy Officer advised that UCG would be a heavily regulated industry with planning permission being required from the minerals planning authority for each phase of extraction, exploration, appraisal and production.

The exploratory phase seeks to acquire geological data to establish whether hydrocarbons are present and may involve seismic surveys and exploratory drilling. The appraisal phase takes place following exploration when the existence of oil or gas has been proved, but the operator needs further information about the extent of the deposit or its production characteristics to establish whether it can be economically exploited. The production phase will involve the drilling of a number of wells, this may be wells used at the sites at the exploratory and/or appraisal phases of hydrocarbon development.

In addition to planning permission a range of other consents and permissions are required with the Department of Energy and Climate Change giving consent to drill under the Licence once permissions and approvals are in place together with responsibility for assessing risk and monitoring seismic activity as well as granting consent to flaring or venting. The Environment Agency protect water resources and ensure the appropriate treatment and disposal of mining waste and emissions to air and the Health and Safety Executive which regulate the safety aspects of all phases of extraction particularly responsibility for ensuring the appropriate design and construction of the well casing for any borehole.

Other bodies which may be involved in the consenting to the process include the Coal Authority, Natural England, the British Geological Survey and the Hazardous Substances Authorities.

Further details were then presented with regard to planning policy. Members were advised that the County Durham Local Plan which was to be adopted within the next 12 months did not address UCG or any other type of conventional or unconventional hydrocarbons. However, the plan did contain numerous policies which would be applicable to UCG. The County Durham Plan will be supplemented by a Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Document which will address all forms of conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons including UCG and fracking. The Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Document is to be adopted by the end of 2016.

It was further reported that when the Local plan was prepared there were no licences held for any form of hydrocarbons within or off the Durham Coast and evidence led DCC to conclude during initial investigations that prospects in County Durham for Conventional Oil and Gas, AMM, CMM were low, with UCG being recognised as a possibility off shore. Consultation occurred in December 2010 with respondents agreeing that policies could be prepared in the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Document. Moving on it was noted that two conditional UCG licences had been issued by the Coal Authority on 29 August 2014 to Cluff Natural resources called Durham North and Durham South however no production can occur until the owners of the licences Cluff Natural Resources have de-conditioned the licences and in order to do this they then need to apply for a wide range of studies.. Evidence suggested that off shore progress to de-condition licences would be slow.

The Senior Policy Officer then went on to outline potential benefits for County Durham including; potential direct employment and the development of associated industries.

In conclusion members were advised that if an application for a UCG plant and infrastructure was to be submitted in the next two years the council would rely upon the County Durham Plan Policies and saved minerals local plan policies. In addition the Council would also take into consideration the NPPF and Planning Practice guide..

Councillor Boyes expressed his concern and that of the local community in relation to the UCG process and asked whether it was known what the risk of overburden collapse and risk of underground explosion was as there were so many unknowns. In response the Senior Policy Officer advised that UCG was in its infancy however it was felt to be a viable technology. It was accepted that there was still a number of unknowns and further stringent studies needed to be undertaken however the process is heavily regulated via the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety executive. Professor Gluyas commented that there are a lot of unknowns and any project would have to start small with a rigorous monitoring programme in place..

The Head of Planning and Assets advised that members should be reassured that for this to work on a commercial basis it was critical to private companies that the issues and concerns discussed did not occur as the companies would be subject to environmental fines with the prospect of the project failing having already invested considerable sums of money into the project. . It was therefore crucial that DCC worked in partnership with Durham University to ensure that any decisions taken were based upon scientific fact.

Councillor E Bell asked whether there would be any known emissions from the plant. In response Professor Gluyas advised that the only emissions would be steam and water. In addition the CO² emissions could be used to synthesize plastics.

Further discussion and debate took place regarding Geothermal energy and the potential for further exploration of this energy source. Councillor Bell further queried why Seaham had been identified as a possible location for a UCG plant, when it was not identified in the County Durham Plan.

The Head of Planning and Assets added that UCG was not a 'when but an if', if UCG was to come to Durham, Seaham was the only viable location. Members were also reminded

that the council was still working on other major energy schemes including hydro power, anaerobic digester, bio-mass and hot water rock. The council would also continue to work on micro-regeneration.

Councillor Stradling commented that having himself worked in the mining industry on the east coast, he advised that the coal had already been worked out of the Easington area and he saw little risk of caving. He further asked whether it was likely that UCG would become government policy in the future. The officer responded that any UCG application in relation to County Durham would be out at sea. In relation to Government policy, Professor Gluyas responded that there is very little in current Government policy regarding UCG and that it had not been given proper consideration by Government however Government would have to look at potential future sources of energy.

Councillor Clare commented that there was always the danger that if County Durham did not make a move early on UCG the county may lose out to other areas. He further asked whether there was any danger of potable water being contaminated with polluted water. Professor Gluyas in response added that there was no definitive answer however he was able to advise that over time due to compression and the areas of subsurface becoming tighter and tighter the opportunity for polluted water to escape was reduced.

Councillor Armstrong commented that in effect we were being held to ransom as a result of our energy demands, however he agreed that the council should take a really good look at Geothermal and UCG energy. He further commented it was important that training could be provided to local people so that any jobs created could be of local benefit.

In conclusion the Chairman thanked professor Gluyas and the officers present for their very helpful presentation. It was suggested that this topic be continued as a theme and regular updates be provided on each of the possible technologies which could be developed in County Durham.

Councillor Armstrong further suggested that given that this issue was of interest to all members that Professor Gluyas be invited to attend a future meeting of full council to discuss further.

Resolved:

That the content of the report and presentation be noted.

That as part of the work programme for 2015/16 the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive updates on possible new energy technologies which could be developed within County Durham.

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



20th January 2015

**Environment Improvement Campaigns and
Projects**

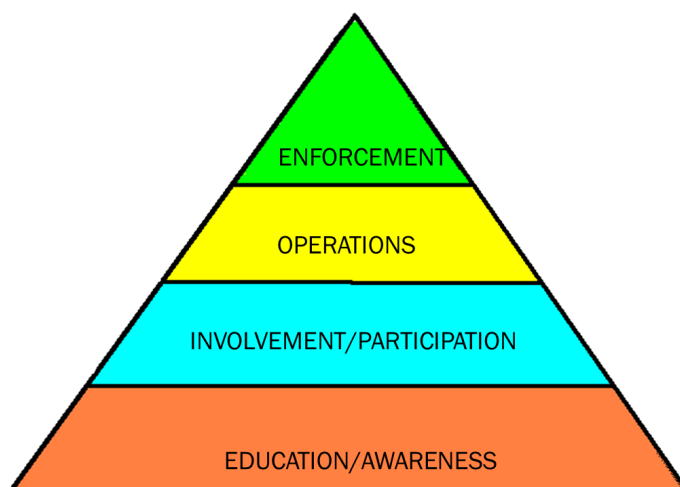
Report of Terry Collins, Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members of the Environment & Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an update on the development and implementation of environmental improvement campaigns and projects.

Background

2. The local environment is crucially important to quality of life in our communities. Residents regularly report issues and concerns to the Council, Area Action Partnerships, Town and Parish Councils and elected Members on a wide range of matters from dog fouling and littering, to graffiti and fly-tipping. Not only do these matters impact on community safety and fear of crime, but they are also recognised as forms of anti-social behaviour, which the British Crime Survey consistently identifies that residents feel is a big or fairly big problem in their area.
3. Whilst the Council does deploy considerable resources through its clean and green teams in ensuring the County is clean and attractive as possible, (Members have previously received presentation in this regard) it is recognised that behavioural change is the key to a more sustainable environment as well as lower costs. The civic pride approach in Durham, applied since Local Government Reorganisation (diagram below) utilises programmes of education/awareness and community involvement as a key foundation to its approach to environmental services. Operations and enforcement will always have a part to play, but their role is lessened, if this more holistic approach to the local environment is taken.



4. The Environment Partnership has developed a multi-agency thematic group “Pride in Our Communities” to oversee much of this work. This group, together with the Councils Neighbourhood Protection service considers and selects the most appropriate campaigns, and ensures their delivery is monitored and evaluated. The common theme and overarching aims of many of these campaigns are not only to promote behavioural change for the minority that spoil our environment, but also to increase opportunities for people to become more involved in making a difference in their area.

Overview

5. Members of the Committee will receive a short presentation from the Head of Direct Services, together with the Neighbourhood Protection Manager regarding some of the work that has been undertaken in the last twelve months, as well as have an opportunity to input to future priorities and issues.
6. The presentation will cover the following campaigns or projects have taken place in the past 12 months, are currently taking place or are currently being planned. Headline statistics from these campaigns are summarised below for reference:
 - a. Fly-tipping – Operation Stop It (November 2014 – Spring/Summer 2015).
 - b. Dog fouling:
 - i. Green Dog Walkers Scheme.
 - ii. Responsible Dog Ownership Campaign (February 2014).
 - iii. Mini Dog Fouling Campaigns.
 - c. Open space improvement:
 - i. Big Spring Clean.
 - ii. It’s Your Neighbourhood.
 - iii. Northumbria & Britain in Bloom.
 - iv. Green Flag
 - d. School activities:
 - i. Education sessions.
 - ii. Junior Neighbourhood Watch.
 - iii. Safety Carousels.
 - iv. Tidy Ted Awards (December 2014).

Operation Stop It

7. Operation 'Stop It' is a multi-agency approach including various DCC sections, Police, Environment Agency and Crimestoppers and it has 2 main aims:
 - a. to target fly-tippers and;
 - b. educate householders to understand their responsibilities in making sure their waste is disposed of properly
8. This campaign is ongoing but is already benefiting from the collective approach a number of facets:
 - a. Stop checks of those carrying waste in partnership with the Police and other agencies.
 - b. Increased CCTV at hotspot locations (some funded by members) which are increasing the amount of evidence which will result in greater prosecutions.
 - c. Use of media is also crucial to gather evidence/ intel, create awareness and act as a deterrent to those thinking of flytipping.
 - d. Durham has a national first with Crimestoppers piloting a campaign to allow communities to anonymously report those involved in flytipping and links with Durham Police were crucial to gaining this breakthrough.
 - e. 6 Neighbourhood Wardens have been allocated specific duties to focus on the investigation and use a wider range of legislation.

Green Dog Walkers Scheme

9. The Green Dog Walkers Scheme (GDWs) is a non-confrontational, friendly way for residents to change attitudes about dog fouling. To be part of the scheme, members of the general public sign a volunteer pledge to:
 - a. wear their GDWs badge as often as possible when walking their dog;
 - b. clean up after their dog and dispose of the bag in a bin at all times;
 - c. encourage other dog walkers to clean up after their dog; and
 - d. carry extra dog waste bags to distribute to other dog walkers if requested.
10. As of December 2014, there are 1364 residents signed up to the scheme.

Responsible Dog Ownership Campaign (February 2014)

11. This campaign focused on 15 hot-spot areas with each area centred on a sports pitch that had historically experienced dog fouling problems. These hot-spot areas were identified by liaison between Outdoor Sport & Leisure, Clean & Green and the Neighbourhood Wardens.

12. The campaign included a mixture of awareness raising, enforcement and, for the first time, a focus on how residents can report dog fouling incidents. The campaign was mainly delivered by Civic Pride and the Neighbourhood Warden, but there was also support and partnership working with town and parish councils, community groups, the Dogs Trust, Stray Aid and Deerness Kennels.
13. The campaign delivered the following results:
 - a. 9 articles in regional and local papers.
 - b. 713 views across the four dog fouling / responsible dog ownership related web pages.
 - c. 20 whole school assemblies and 13 individual year 5 and year 6 classroom sessions delivered to 4428 children.
 - d. 188 residents signing up as Green Dog Walkers.
 - e. 272 dogs micro-chipped.
 - f. 52 advisory letters issued to dog owners reported as probable offenders.
 - g. 9 fixed penalty notices issued.
 - h. 83% awareness amongst local residents that the campaign had taken place.
 - i. 60% of local residents surveyed indicating that they were willing to provide information about offenders.
 - j. An average 34% increase in residents who were surveyed feeling that the problem with dog fouling in the hot-spot locations had improved as a result of the campaign.

Mini Dog Fouling Campaigns

14. In addition to the county-wide campaign, a series of 19 mini campaigns have taken place across the county in 2014. Similar to the main campaign but flexible enough to respond to local issues, these mini campaigns focus on smaller areas of the county that has a specific issue with dog fouling. The areas are usually selected by the Neighbourhood Wardens and tend to be areas where the problem has persisted despite routine engagement and enforcement activity. The mini campaigns will continue in the coming months with a further 3 planned so far.
15. Outcomes delivered by the mini campaigns in 2014 include:
 - a. 314 dogs micro-chipped.
 - b. 326 residents signing up as GDWs
 - c. 99 golden tickets handed out to dog owners seen clearing up after their pets.

Big Spring Clean

16. Running since 2010, this annual month long campaign aims to get community groups and individual residents involved in cleaning up their neighbourhood. It is organised by LittFree Durham (a regional group set up as part of the Campaign to Protect Rural England's "Stop the Drop" campaign) and is delivered jointly by the group, Darlington Borough Council and Durham County Council. The three partners work together to promote the campaign and to provide support for people and groups wanting to take part in such an activity by either organising and supervising the event or by simply providing equipment and advice to groups that are capable of running their own event.
17. The 2014 campaign saw:
 - a. 1700 volunteers taking part;
 - b. 3000 hours of unpaid work being undertaken;
 - c. 1200 bags of rubbish removed; and
 - d. a clean-up of a section of the River Wear in a partnership activity involving the Environment Agency, the Council and some local volunteers.
18. The 2015 campaign is scheduled to take place from the 2nd March to 18th April and planning is already well underway.

It's your neighbourhood – Background

19. It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) is a scheme run by the Royal Horticultural Society that aims to support and recognise community groups greening up and cleaning up their local neighbourhood. It is a non-competitive national scheme which recognises community participation, gardening achievement and environmental responsibility.
20. Groups entering their activities into the scheme are given an award based on the following achievement levels:
 - a. Level 1 – Establishing
 - b. Level 2 – Improving
 - c. Level 3 – Developing
 - d. Level 4 – Thriving
 - e. Level 5 – Outstanding
21. Through the general work of Civic Pride and a local campaign funded by Chester-le-Street AAP, the following results were achieved across Durham in 2014:
 - a. Outstanding – 23 groups.
 - b. Thriving – 8 groups.

- c. Developing – 5 groups.
22. For 2015, Civic Pride has established a county-wide community grant scheme that will encourage 15 new groups to undertake activities that will lead to an IYN award. The scheme will offer grants of up to £500 to groups who have not previously entered the scheme. The aims of the scheme are to:
- a. improve green spaces with sustainable projects;
 - b. harness community spirit;
 - c. forge new links with proactive members of the community; and
 - d. provide the basis for a future entry into the national RHS In Bloom competition.

Northumbria-in-Bloom / Britain-in-Bloom

23. The County achieved considerable success in the Royal Horticultural Society led Northumbria-in-Bloom awards in 2014. In total there were 16 awards won by entries from Durham, including the category winners for the small and large town categories, with Sedgefield and Durham winning respectively. Civic Pride and Clean & Green were heavily involved in the Durham and Chester-le-Street entries and supported a range of other In-Bloom entries around the County. In addition to the County's performance at Northumbria-in-Bloom, Durham City and Sedgefield also both won gold at the prestigious Britain-in-Bloom competition. Sedgefield's gold marked a hat-trick at Britain-in-Bloom, scoring their third consecutive gold result.
24. Success requires a real partnership approach involving the community, business, the Council and other public bodies. Although the awards were initially focussed on horticultural achievement, there has been an increasing focus placed on environmental responsibility and community participation.
25. Following last year's success, Civic Pride will be working just as hard to support the 2015 entries for Northumbria-in-Bloom and Durham City's re-entry into Britain-in-Bloom.

Green Flag:

26. The Green Flag award scheme is the national standard for parks and open spaces that recognises excellence and good practice in their management and development. To achieve Green flag status a site should contribute to its locality and provide facilities suited to the needs of the community. This community should look at the sites as a true asset and be actively involved in this management and development.
27. We achieved 15 Green Flags in 2014, which was one more than in the previous year. Delivery of these is a collective effort across Direct Services and importantly community participation.

School Education Sessions

28. Civic Pride engage with schools, youth groups and colleges to deliver a range of educational sessions addressing the four most reported environmental crimes. Such sessions are delivered using a variety of teaching methods including:
 - a. story sack session for under 5's;
 - b. Tidy Ted and Scoop the Dog sessions for junior school children; and
 - c. an interactive DVD for older children.
29. The sessions are usually organised to coincide with a campaign or problem that is highlighted in an area. In addition, where the school or youth group is interested, Civic Pride will also organise a related activity for the children to participate in (e.g. litter picking, bulb planting, fence painting, etc).

Junior Neighbourhood Watch

30. This scheme is organised by Durham Constabulary and aims to engage with younger children. Spread over several weeks, the programme includes a range of sessions that encourage the children to take an interest in what is happening in their neighbourhoods and to generate an interest and awareness in their personal safety, their community and crime and disorder issues. Civic Pride deliver the envirocrime modules on the programme.
31. In 2014 there were 38 schools who signed up to the programme.

Safety Carousels

32. Also organised by Durham Constabulary, these sessions take part on a single day and are aimed at older children. Their main focus is anti-social behaviour enforcement and consequences; weapons awareness; hate crime; arson and fire setting; internet safety/cyber bullying; alcohol awareness, support and enforcement; environmental issues such as litter and graffiti; resuscitation awareness; prison life. As with the Junior Neighbourhood Watch programme, Civic Pride deliver one of the modules.
33. The team have delivered 129 sessions to 10778 children and young people.

Tidy Ted Awards (December 2014)

34. These annual awards aim to reward junior school children who have made a significant environmental contribution to their school or community over the previous 12 months. Schools are invited to nominate pupils for the award and those accepted receive a visit from Tidy Ted who presents them with a gold badge during an assembly. If possible, Civic Pride will also deliver one of their education sessions to the school at the same time.

Return on Investment

35. Although the benefit gained / delivered by what Civic Pride do is often not measurable (e.g. the additional happiness that a resident gains from living next to a nice open space that they helped to improve or the long term benefit from a child's environmental activities being recognised with a Tidy Ted Award), the team have generated a 'return on investment' of over £24,000 since 01 April 2014 from those things that are measurable
36. This is made up of the following:
- i. Nearly £1,800 in savings to schools from Civic Pride delivering sessions rather than the school employing someone to deliver them (using rate hourly rate for an NQT).
 - ii. Over £9,000 in free microchips for dogs that would otherwise have cost their owners at least £15 each.
 - iii. Over £21,000 in free labour from volunteers taking part in activities (based on employing someone on the minimum wage to do the same work).

Recommendations

37. Note the wide range of environmental campaigns aimed at promoting behavioural change and greater community involvement in their local environment.

Background Papers

Presentation to be issued.

**Oliver Sherratt, Head of Direct Services, oliver.sherratt@durham.gov.uk
Ian Houl, Neighbourhood Protection Manager ian.houl@durham.gov.uk**

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - None

Staffing - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder – The campaigns contribute to safety agenda

Human Rights - None

Consultation - None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Risk and Legal Implications - None

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20 January 2015



**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES QUARTER 2
REVENUE & CAPITAL OUTTURN 2014 / 2015**

Report of Neighbourhood Services Management Team

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To set out details of the forecast outturn as at Quarter 2 for 2014/15, highlighting variances against revenue and capital budgets for Neighbourhood Services.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Q2 forecast for the 2014/15 Revenue Outturn for Neighbourhood Services was under budget against the cash limit by £0.820m. This takes into account adjustments for sums outside the cash limit such as redundancy costs which are met from the strategic reserves, and use of / contributions to earmarked reserves.
- 3 The Q2 forecast for the 2014/15 Capital Outturn identified schemes to the value of £3.501m which are required to slip in to 2015/16.

Neighbourhood Services Revenue 2014/2015

- 4 The summary of the revenue outturn position, is shown in the following table analysed by Head of Service:

Head of Service	Revised Base Budget 2014/15 £'000	QTR 2 Report			Cash limit Variance Over/ (Under) £'000
		Quarter 2 Forecast (Apr-Sep) £'000	Variance Over/ (Under) £'000	Reserves / outside cash limit £'000	
Central Costs	1,570	1,544	(26)	0	(26)
Direct Services	38,383	37,591	(792)	239	(553)
Env, Health & C. Prot	6,132	5,817	(315)	0	(315)
Proj & Business Serv	16,332	16,754	422	(44)	378
Culture & Sport	23,793	23,744	(49)	(85)	(134)
Technical Services	28,224	28,106	(118)	(52)	(170)
Total	114,434	113,556	(878)	58	(820)

- 5 The forecast revenue outturn for 2014/15 is under budget against the cash limit by £0.820m, after taking account of the forecast use of reserves, and items outside the cash limit. This compares to the previous forecast at Quarter 1, which was under budget by £0.486m.

- 6 Since Quarter 1 the Neighbourhoods revenue budget has been adjusted to take into account the movement in reserves that were agreed at the end of June 2014.
- 7 The forecast variance is a managed position, reflecting the proactive management of activity by Heads of Service across Neighbourhoods to remain within the cash limit.
- 8 The main reasons accounting for the outturn position are as follows:
- Within Direct Services there is an increased surplus within Building Services of £0.130m, and premises costs are under budget for Admin Buildings (£0.173m), and Depots (£0.261m).
 - The outturn forecast within Technical Services is under budget by £0.170m. The trading areas in Highway and Design Services are generating increased surpluses but these are offsetting increased policy led expenditure on highway maintenance in relation to Category 1 and Category 2 defects (£0.450m), structures inspections (£0.400m) and gully cleansing (£0.300m). Category 1 and Category 2 defects are identified from Highway Safety Inspections and repairs are required in accordance with our Highway Safety Inspection Manual and our Highway Maintenance Plan which are aligned with national standards. Similarly, the increased expenditure on structures' inspections and gully cleansing is to meet the Highway Maintenance Plan which is aligned with national standards.
 - Environmental Health and Consumer Protection is under budget by £0.315m and this is associated with savings on employees and supplies and services. Some of these variances relate to early achievement of 2015/16 MTFP savings requirements.
 - Projects and Business Services is forecast to be over budget by approximately £0.378m. This is due to Strategic Waste being over budget by £0.435m mainly due to additional costs associated with the Materials Recycling Facility contract for processing of Dry Kerbside Recycling materials, and increased repairs and maintenance costs associated with Power Generation equipment. This is partially offset by savings within Business Support and Policy, Performance and Communications.
- 9 Taking the projected outturn position into account, including items proposed to be treated as outside the cash limit, the forecasted cash limit reserve to be carried forward for Neighbourhood Services is £3.102m.

Neighbourhood Services Capital 2014 / 2015

- 10 The following table sets out details of forecast spend for 2014/15 analysed by individual Heads of Service areas within the Neighbourhoods capital programme against the revised budget.

Head of Service	Revised Budget £'000	Outturn £'000s	Variance £'000s
EH&CP	0	0	0
Direct Services	5,799	5,779	0
P & B Services	11,566	9,566	(2,000)
Culture and Sport	3,785	3,785	0
Technical Services	29,692	28,191	(1,501)
Total	50,842	47,341	(3,501)

- 11 The capital budget has been adjusted at MOWG meetings since Q1 as a result of additional funding sources being identified, and this has now resulted in a revised 2014/15 Capital Programme of £50.842m
- 12 The following two schemes have been identified as being required to slip in to 2015/16;
- Work at Seaham Pier (£1.501m) will now be carried out in 2015/16
 - The implementation of a new Customer Relations Management System (£2m) will occur in 2015/16

Recommendations

- 13 It is recommended that:
- Overview and Scrutiny note the Quarter 2 forecast outturn position on Revenue and Capital for 2014/15.

Contact:	Terry Collins	Tel:	03000 268080
	Phil Curran	Tel:	03000 261967

APPENDIX 1 - Implications

Finance

To set out details of the Q2 forecast outturn, highlighting areas of over / underspend against the revenue and capital budgets for Neighbourhood Services, at each Head of Service level and for the whole of Neighbourhood Services.

Staffing

There are no implications associated with this report.

Risk

There are no implications associated with this report.

Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no implications associated with this report.

Accommodation

There are no implications associated with this report.

Crime and Disorder

There are no implications associated with this report.

Human Rights

There are no implications associated with this report.

Consultation

There are no implications associated with this report.

Procurement

There are no implications associated with this report.

Disability Issues

There are no implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

There are no implications associated with this report.

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



20 January 2015

**Quarter 2 2014/15
Performance Management Report**

**Report of Corporate Management Team
Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive
Councillor Simon Henig, Leader**

Purpose of the Report

1. To present progress against the council's corporate basket of performance indicators for the Altogether Greener theme and report other significant performance issues for the second quarter of 2014/15 covering the period July to September 2014.

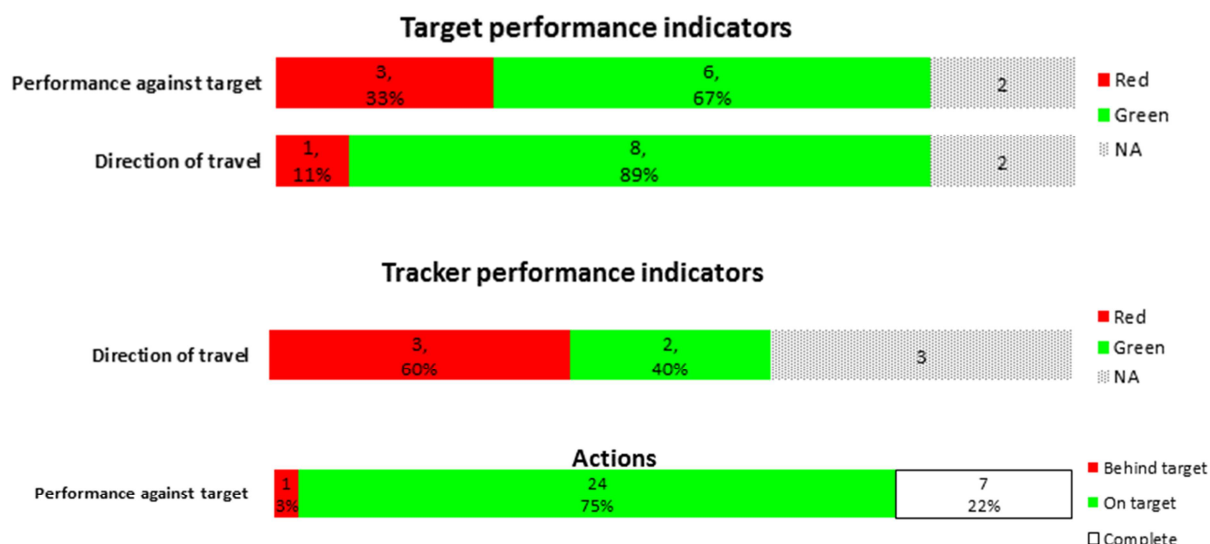
Background

2. The report sets out an overview of performance and progress for the Altogether Greener priority theme. Key performance indicator progress is reported against two indicator types which comprise of:
 - a. Key target indicators – targets are set for indicators where improvements can be measured regularly and where improvement can be actively influenced by the council and its partners (see Appendix 3, table 1); and
 - b. Key tracker indicators – performance will be tracked but no targets are set for indicators which are long-term and/or which the council and its partners only partially influence (see Appendix 3, table 2).
3. The report continues to incorporate a stronger focus on volume measures in our performance framework. This allows us to better quantify productivity and to monitor the effects of reductions in resources and changes in volume of activity. Charts detailing some of the key volume measures which form part of the council's corporate basket of performance indicators are presented in Appendix 4.

Developments since Last Quarter

4. A corporate performance indicator guide has been produced which provides full details of indicator definitions and data sources. This is available to view from the intranet or can be requested from the Corporate Planning and Performance Team at performance@durham.gov.uk.

Altogether Greener: Overview



Council Performance

5. Key achievements this quarter include:

- a. During the 12 months ending August 2014, 95.8% of municipal waste was diverted from landfill. This exceeds the target set of 85%.
- b. Street and environmental cleanliness improved this period. The results of the first survey relate to the period April to July 2014 and indicate that of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of litter, 5.8% fell below an acceptable level. Performance was better than the target of 7% and improved from 6.8% reported at quarter 2 2013/14. Of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of detritus, 12.1% fell below an acceptable level. Performance was worse than the target of 10% but improved slightly from 12.2% reported at quarter 2 2013/14. Of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of dog fouling, 0.3% fell below an acceptable level. Performance improved from 1.2% recorded at quarter 2 2013/14.
- c. Between July and September 2014, there were 353 renewable energy feed in tariff installations registered and approved, including 352 solar photovoltaic (PV) installations and 1 wind installation equating to installed capacity of 1.254 megawatts (MW). The period target of 250 installations was exceeded. In relation to renewable energy generation, the installed or installed / approved capacity within County Durham was 213.46MW at September 2014; 186.15MW operational capacity and 27.308MW approved through planning.

6. The key performance improvement issues for this theme are

- a. During the 12 months ending August 2014, 42% of household waste was re-used, recycled or composted. Performance is below the 45% target and has deteriorated from 44.1% reported 12 months earlier. The 2.1 percentage point decrease can be partially attributed to contamination of recycling bins, which remains an issue. The new waste contracts, introduced in June 2013, have prioritised the diversion of waste from landfill and this has impacted on the recycling rate. This decrease has been partly balanced by Durham County Council's countywide education campaign about contamination called

'Bin it Right' , which continues with recycling assistants knocking on doors to inform residents of what they should and should not include in their recycling bins. This will take time to influence performance as one contaminated bin contaminates an entire load.

- b. Tracker indicators show there were 9,922 fly-tipping incidents reported in the 12 month period to September 2014. This is an increase of 37% compared to 12 months earlier, when 7,242 incidents were reported (see Appendix 4, chart 1). An increase in fly-tipping incidents is also observed nationally. Work continues on a review of the fly-tipping process looking at the arrangements for collection, recording and reporting, assessing how the data is used internally/externally and ensuring that reported data is robust, reported consistently and used effectively. Work also continues in the Fly-tipping Task Force Group with targeted action and a county wide campaign to get everyone engaged in reducing fly-tipping. The work of both groups has now been merged and actions in relation to education, campaigns and community involvement include:
- A high profile county-wide campaign (October to December) with two strands, will inform
 - householders of their 'duty of care'
 - potential offenders of the penalties if caught fly-tipping
 - Multi-agency educational programme in schools
 - Roadshows outside builders' merchants to raise awareness of issue
 - Work closely with private land owners and housing providers
 - Share intelligence and jointly procure surveillance equipment with Area Action Partnerships and town and parish councils.

Tougher enforcement actions include:

- Creating a specialist fly-tipping team (six neighbourhood wardens)
- Identify and target repeat offenders, rogue traders and commercial fly-tippers through multi-agency spot check operations
- Increase business compliance with trade waste disposal in hot-spot areas
- Improve the process for recovering costs from clearing fly-tipped waste

Further updates on both the review and the work of the task force will be provided at quarter 3.

7. There are no key risks in delivering the objectives of this theme.

Recommendation and Reasons

8. That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive the report and consider any performance issues arising there from.

Contact: Jenny Haworth, Head of Planning and Performance
Tel: 03000 268071 **E-Mail** jenny.haworth@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

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

Staffing - Performance against a number of relevant corporate health PIs has been included to monitor staffing levels and absence rates.

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

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - Corporate health PIs and key actions relating to equality and diversity issues are monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

Accommodation - Not applicable

Crime and Disorder - A number of PIs and key actions relating to crime and disorder are continually monitored in partnership with Durham Constabulary.

Human Rights - Not applicable

Consultation - Not applicable

Procurement - Not applicable

Disability Issues - Corporate health PIs and key actions relating to accessibility issues and employees with a disability are monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

Legal Implications - Not applicable

Appendix 2: Key to symbols used within the report

Where icons appear in this report, they have been applied to the most recently available information.

Performance Indicators:

Direction of travel

Latest reported data have improved from comparable period

GREEN

Latest reported data remain in line with comparable period

AMBER

Latest reported data have deteriorated from comparable period

RED

Performance against target

Performance better than target

Getting there - performance approaching target (within 2%)

Performance >2% behind target

Actions:

WHITE

Complete (Action achieved by deadline/achieved ahead of deadline)

GREEN

Action on track to be achieved by the deadline

RED

Action not achieved by the deadline/unlikely to be achieved by the deadline

Benchmarking:

GREEN

Performance better than other authorities based on latest benchmarking information available

AMBER

Performance in line with other authorities based on latest benchmarking information available

RED

Performance worse than other authorities based on latest benchmarking information available

Appendix 3: Summary of Key Performance Indicators

Table 1: Key Target Indicators

Ref	PI ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	Current performance to target	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
Altogether Greener											
53	NS14a	Percentage of relevant land and highways assessed (LEQSPRO survey) as having deposits of litter that fall below an acceptable level	5.8	Apr - Jul 2014	7.00	GREEN	6.83	GREEN	15.00 GREEN		2012/13
54	NS14b	Percentage of relevant land and highways assessed (LEQSPRO survey) as having deposits of detritus that fall below an acceptable level	12.14	Apr - Jul 2014	10.00	RED	12.19	GREEN	26.00 GREEN		2012/13
55	NS10	Percentage of municipal waste diverted from landfill	95.8	Sep 2013 - Aug 2014	85.0	GREEN	67.0	GREEN			
56	NS19	Percentage of household waste that is re-used, recycled or composted	42.0	Sep 2013 - Aug 2014	45.0	RED	44.1	RED	41.6 GREEN	35.89* GREEN	2012/13
57	REDPI53	Percentage of conservation areas in the county that have an up to date character appraisal	41.00	As at Sept 2014	37.00	GREEN	39.00	GREEN			
58	REDPI48	Percentage change in CO ₂ emissions from local authority operations [1]	-9	2013/14	-5	GREEN	5.5	GREEN			
59	NS08	Percentage reduction in CO ₂ emissions from the DCC fleet	3.35	2012/13	Not set	NA	2.01	GREEN			

Ref	PI ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	Current performance to target	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
60	NS36	Average annual electricity consumption per street light (kilo-watt hour (KwH)) (estimated)	388.6	2013/14	Not set	NA	New indicator	NA			
61	REDPI49	Number of registered and approved feed in tariff installations	715	Jul - Sep 2014	250	GREEN	470	GREEN			
62	NS04	Percentage of recorded actionable defects on carriageways and footways repaired within 24 hours (category 1)	96	Jul - Sep 2014	90	GREEN	92	GREEN			
63	NS05	Percentage of recorded actionable defects on carriageways and footways repaired within 14 working days (category 2.1)	77	Jul - Sep 2014	90	RED	New indicator	NA			

[\[1\] Indicator description amended to accurately reflect how performance is measured](#)

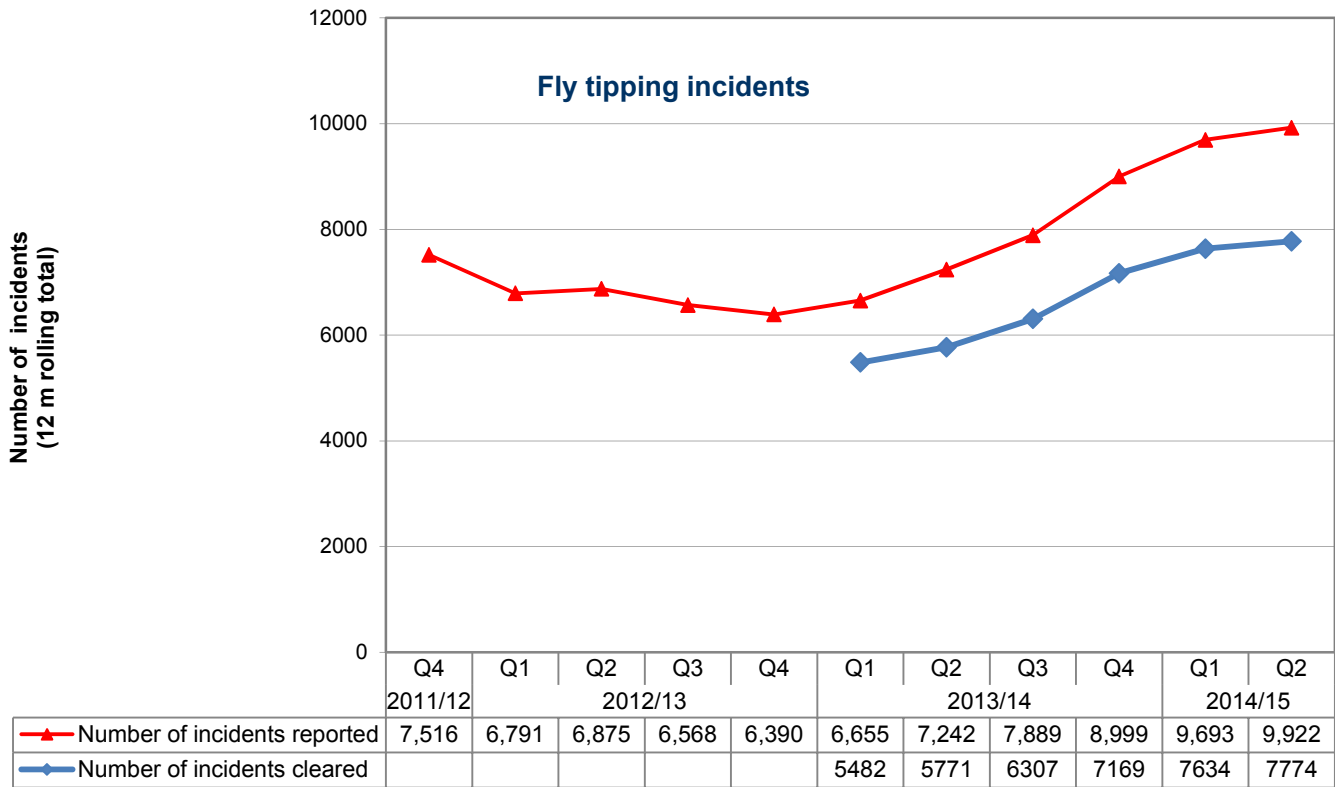
Table 2: Key Tracker Indicators

Page 6 Ref	PI ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Previous period data	Performance compared to previous period	Data 12 months earlier	Performance compared to 12 months earlier	National figure	*North East figure **Nearest statistical neighbour figure	Period covered
Altogether Greener											
175	NS14c	Percentage of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of dog fouling that fall below an acceptable level	0.33	Apr - Jul 2014	2.33	GREEN	1.22	GREEN			
176	NS15	Number of fly-tipping incidents reported	9,922	Oct 2013 - Sep 2014	9,693	RED	7,242	RED			
177	NS16	Number of fly-tipping incidents cleared	7,774	Oct 2013 - Sep 2014	7,634	NA	5,771	NA			
178	NS17a	Percentage of household waste collected from the kerbside and recycled	20.8	Sep 2013 - Aug 2014	21.2	RED	21.8	RED			
179	NS17b	Percentage of household waste collected from the kerbside and composted	11.2	Sep 2013 - Aug 2014	11.1	GREEN	10.4	GREEN			
180	NS09	Megawatt hours (MWh) of energy produced from municipal waste sent to Sita's 'Energy from Waste' plant	38,930	Sep 2013 - Aug 2014	28,944	GREEN	New indicator	NA			
181	REDPI46	Percentage reduction in CO ₂ emissions in County Durham	39	As at Dec 2012	41.2	RED	41.2	RED	6.4	18*	2009
182	REDPI47	Renewable energy generation - mega watts equivalent (MWe) installed or installed/approved capacity within County Durham	213.46	As at Sep 2014	207.79	Not comparable [2]	202.71	Not comparable [2]			

[2] Data cumulative year on year so comparisons are not applicable

Appendix 4: Volume Measures Chart numbers

Chart 1 – Fly-tipping incidents



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



20 January 2015

**Review of the Council Plan and Service
Plans**

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Scrutiny with progress on the development of the Altogether Greener section of the Council Plan 2015-2018 including the draft aims and objectives contained within the Plan and the proposed performance indicator set to measure our success.

Background

2. The Council Plan is Durham County Council's primary corporate planning document. It sets out our objectives that we want to achieve over the medium-term, details our contribution towards achieving the vision and ambitions that we share with other partner agencies articulated in the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and also provides a framework for the delivery of our services.
3. The Council Plan is refreshed annually and is currently being revised to cover the 2015-2018 three year period. The format of the Plan is being amended with the aim of introducing a more concise narrative and streamlined performance monitoring arrangements.
4. The priorities set out in the current Council Plan reflect the results of an extensive consultation exercise carried out in 2013/14 on spending priorities and include an ongoing focus on protecting frontline services.

Draft Objectives and Outcomes

5. Overall it is proposed that the five key altogether better themes remain unchanged in line with the review of the Altogether Better Durham vision by the County Durham Partnership. It is also proposed that the altogether better council theme is retained giving six key themes.
 - I. Altogether Wealthier
 - II. Altogether better for children and young people
 - III. Altogether healthier
 - IV. Altogether safer
 - V. Altogether greener
 - VI. Altogether better council

6. Sitting beneath each of these six themes are a series of objectives setting out the key goal(s) being pursued over the medium-term. The objectives layer is shared across the SCS and Council Plan. These were agreed by Council last year and are proposed to be retained as unchanged. The Altogether Greener objectives are shown below:
 - I. Deliver a cleaner, more attractive and sustainable environment
 - II. Maximise the benefits of Durham's natural environment
 - III. Reduce and adapt to the impact of climate change
7. Whilst the SCS is a long-term plan, the Council Plan having a medium-term time horizon of three years is more detailed in nature. The Council Plan therefore contains an additional layer which is the council's outcomes. These are defined as the impacts on, or consequences for the community of the activities of the council. Outcomes reflect the intended results from our actions and provide the rationale for our interventions. These are subject to more frequent change than objectives.
8. The draft objectives and outcomes for the 2015-2018 Council Plan for the Altogether Greener theme are set out in full in **Appendix 2**.
9. Services are currently reviewing the performance indicator set which is used to measure progress against the Plan, performance manage our services and report to Members quarterly. An early draft of the corporate indicator set for the Altogether Greener theme is contained in **Appendix 3**, for detailed consideration by Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
10. There are two indicators proposed for removal from the Altogether Greener basket of indicators:
 - I. Percentage of household waste collected from the kerbside – recycling
 - II. Percentage of household waste collected from the kerbside – composting
11. The target setting process for the proposed indicator set will begin at the end of the year once performance data is available for the full year. Targets for the current year and forthcoming two years are presented to Members in **Appendix 3** for comment. Baseline performance data will need to be established for the proposed new indicators before targets can be set.

Next steps

12. Next steps in the corporate timetable for production of the Council Plan and service plans are:

Corporate Issues OSC
considers Cabinet MTFP and
Council Plan report

23 January 2015

Director of Resources
and Assistant Chief
Executive

Cabinet considers Council Plan and service plans for 2015/16 – 2017/18	18 March 2015	Assistant Chief Executive
OSMB and Corporate Issues OSC consider Cabinet report on Council Plan	20 March 2015	Assistant Chief Executive
Council approves Council Plan 2015-16 – 2017/18	1 April 2015	Assistant Chief Executive

Recommendations and reasons

13. Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- I. Note the updated position on the development of the Council Plan and the corporate performance indicator set.
- II. Note the draft objectives and outcomes framework set out in **Appendix 2**.
- III. Comment on the draft performance indicators proposed for 2015/16 for the Altogether Greener priority theme contained within **Appendix 3**.
- IV. Comment on the current targets in **Appendix 3** and provide input into target setting for 2015/16 onwards.

Contact: Jenny Haworth, Head of Planning and Performance, 03000 268071

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

The Council Plan sets out the corporate priorities of the Council for the next 3 years. The Medium Term Financial Plan aligns revenue and capital investment to priorities within the Council Plan.

Staffing

The Council's strategies are aligned to achievement of the corporate priorities contained within the Council Plan.

Risk

Consideration of risk is a key element in the corporate and service planning framework with the Council Plan containing a section on risk.

Equality and diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty

Individual equality impact assessments are prepared for all savings proposals within the Council Plan. The cumulative impact of all savings proposals will be presented to Council and will be updated as savings proposals are further developed. In addition a full impact assessment has previously been undertaken for the Council Plan. One of the outcomes within the proposed framework is that people are treated fairly and differences are respected. Actions contained within the Council Plan include specific issues relating to equality.

Accommodation

The Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan is aligned to the corporate priorities contained within the Council Plan.

Crime and disorder

The Altogether Safer section of the SCS and Council Plan sets out the Council's and partner's contributions to tackling crime and disorder.

Human rights

None

Consultation

Council priorities are influenced by our resource base and have been developed following extensive consultation on the council's budget. Results have been taken into account in developing our spending decisions.

Procurement

None

Disability Issues

None

Legal Implications

None

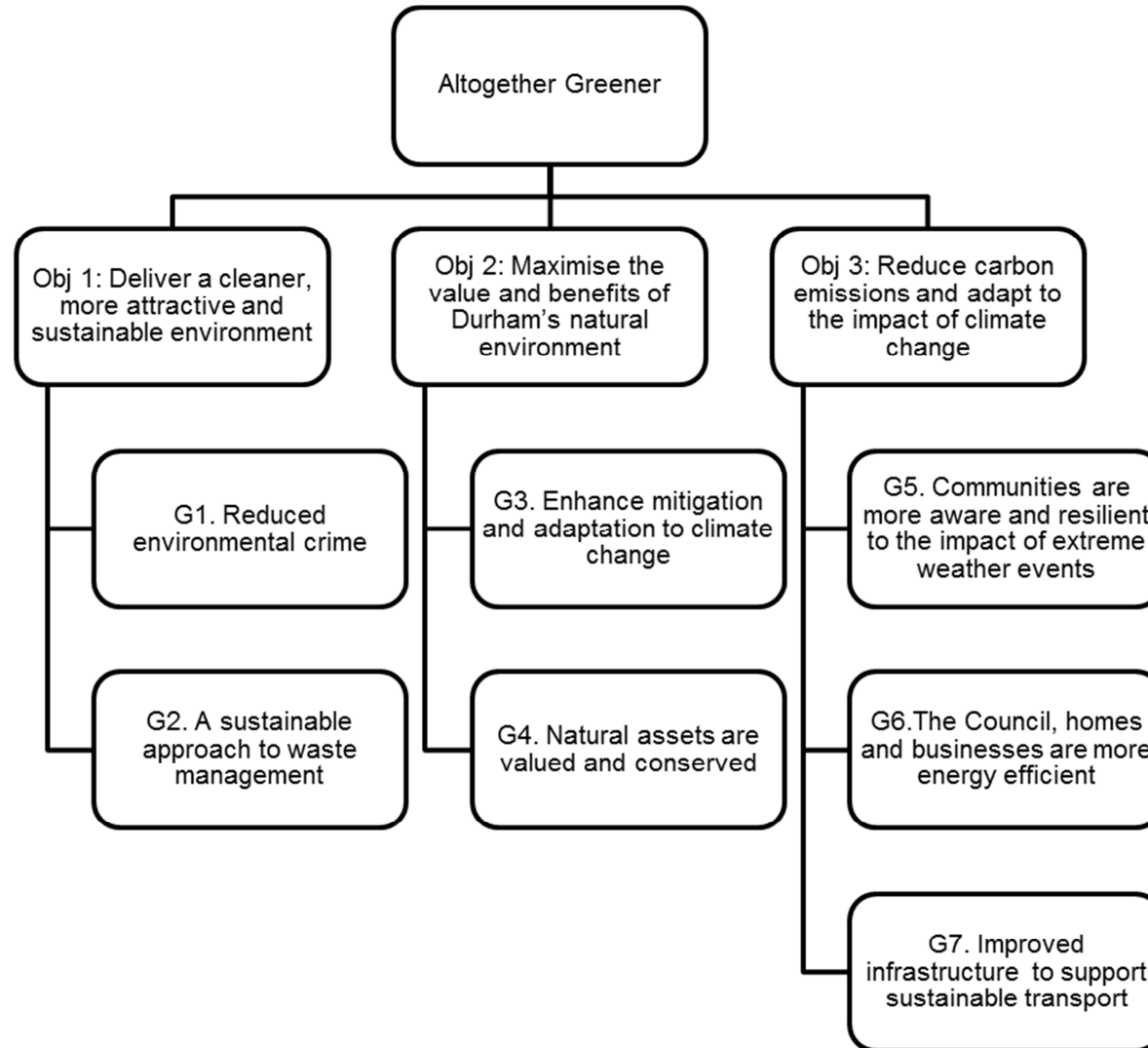
KEY

No Change

Amended

New

Appendix 2: Partnership and Council Draft Objectives and Outcomes Framework



Appendix 3: Proposed Corporate Performance Indicator Set 2015/16

Indicator	Description	Current targets		
		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Altogether Greener				
NS04	% actionable defects repaired within 24 hours (Category 1)	90%	90%	90%
NS05	% actionable defects repaired within 14 working days (Category 2.1)	90%	90%	90%
NS14a	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits that fall below an acceptable level - litter	7%	7%	7%
NS14b	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits that fall below an acceptable level - detritus	10%	10%	10%
NS14c	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits that fall below an acceptable level - dog fouling	Tracker indicator		
NS15	Number of fly-tipping incidents reported	Tracker indicator		
NS16	Number of fly-tipping incidents cleared	Tracker indicator		
NS10	% municipal waste diverted from landfill	85%	85%	86%
NS19	% of household waste reused, recycled or composted	45%	46%	47%
NS09	Megawatt hours of energy produced from municipal waste sent to Sita's 'Energy from Waste' plant	Tracker indicator		
NS08	CO ₂ emissions from fleet	Not set	Not set	Not set
NS36	Average annual electricity consumption per street light (KwH)	Not set	Not set	Not set
REDPI46	Reduction in CO ₂ emissions in County Durham by 40% by 2020 and 55% by 2031 – March 2017	Tracker indicator		
REDPI47	The amount of renewable energy generation (MwE) installed or installed/approved capacity within County Durham	Tracker indicator		
REDPI48	Reduction in CO ₂ emissions from local authority operations	5%	5%	5%
REDPI49	Number of new registered and approved Feed In Tariff (FIT) installations	500	250	250
REDPI53	Percentage of the conservation areas in the county that have an up to date character appraisal	42%	43%	45%

Indicators proposed for Removal (2)

Indicator	Description
Altogether Greener	
NS17a	Percentage of household waste collected from the kerbside – recycling
NS17b	Percentage of household waste collected from the kerbside – composting

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**County Durham Environment Partnership Board
Minutes**

**Tuesday 23rd September 2014
Burlison Room, Town Hall, Durham**

Apologies

Julian Carrington - Environment Agency
 Jim Cokill - Durham Wildlife Trust
 Gordon Elliott - Durham County Council

Attendees:

Chair: Terry Collins - Durham County Council

Julie Form - Groundwork North East
 Adrian Vass - Natural England
 Tara Duncan - Durham University
 Oliver Sherratt - Durham County Council
 Steve Bhowmick - Durham County Council
 Maggie Bosanquet - Durham County Council
 Jayne Watson - Durham County Council
 Corinne Walton - Durham County Council
 Victoria Burrell - Durham County Council
 Stella Hindson - Durham County Council
 Beverley Clark (Minutes) - Durham County Council

Item No.	Subject	Action By
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies noted.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising Consideration was given to the minutes of 15th July 2014. No issues were raised.</p>	
3.	<p>AAP Update and Discussion Corinne Walton from the Derwent Valley AAP introduced herself to the Board. She gave an AAP update where the following areas were noted: The AAP's have been established for 5 years. Back in 2009, seven of the AAP's had environment as a priority. However over the years there has been a decline in the number of AAP's listing environment as a priority with an increased focus on health, welfare and employment.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group had a wide agenda to address. • It was felt that the group had evolved and there was a need to refocus the groups' priorities. • The group has been successful and the Climate Change Strategy in the main has been delivered. <p>Problems of mitigation and adaptation. A paper has been written showing the possibilities for the future of the climate change group. They are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to keep the group as it is with a new chair; 2. Look at what actually exists and strengthen that group and make it part of this board; 3. Appoint sub groups to deal with different issues. <p>There is a need to raise how important the communication issue is. There was a discussion at the Board in relation to the Climate Change Group. It was concluded that climate change is an important issue and therefore warrants its own group. Topics such as flooding, education and domestic energy needs to be addressed. It was suggested that the group could perhaps concentrate on 3 projects a year and involve wider community partners. Terry Collins asked Tara Duncan to consider being the new chair for the Climate Change Group. Tara Duncan is to formally accept/decline the offer following her consideration.</p>	Tara Duncan
5.	<p>Updates from Group Chairs & Questions</p> <p>It was stated that the first Caring for Your Environment Award had been issued to The Durham in Bloom Team. If the sub groups have examples of projects please contact Stella regarding publicity. It was suggested that the unsuccessful entries for The Environment Awards could possibly receive an award from the chair instead of receiving a letter. It was noted that the award certificate should be made bigger for publicity shots e.g polystyrene boards, pop up signs. It was pointed out that there is no category in the Environment Awards for engagement itself. This category is to be considered in the future. Terry Collins left the meeting.</p> <p><u>Coastal, Heritage & Landscape Group</u> Oliver Sherratt provided an update of the work of the group. Durham City, Chester-le-Street and Sedgefield received awards in this year's Northumbria in Bloom competition as well as other towns and villages in the county. It was reported that the Limestones Landscape Project is coming to an end. The Little Terns Project has been very successful. Wildflower Meadows has seen 2 pilots this year and there</p>	

	<p>are plans to extend them. Work is ongoing on the Skerne Landscape Project. The group is looking at hedgerow schemes. A renewed HLF bid has been put together regarding a project at Ushaw College. Heritage Open Days have proved a great success and an update will be given at the next meeting. It was suggested that the timing of the Skerne Project needs to be right so that it doesn't clash with the Uplands Project.</p> <p><u>Environment in Your Communities</u> Julie Form stated that she would like to review the membership of her group in order to make it more action and delivery focussed. It was suggested that a representative from Natural England could attend the group meetings in the future. Julie to invite a rep from Natural England. Julie Form to speak to Terry Collins regarding the above issue.</p> <p><u>Local Nature Partnership</u> An update was given by Steve Bhowmick who reported that Claire Thompson is the dedicated officer for LNP work and Frank Major is chair. It was stated that resources will have to be found in order to manage the Climate Change Group. LEPs have substantive funding to help LNPs deliver an economic agenda. LNPs at the present time do not have large resources. LNPs in the north east are taking a positive step forward but how can the LNP have more relevance and how can it's profile be raised? Need to be more outward looking. The recent appointment of the LNP Officer has been invaluable. It was pointed out that there is another Upland Chain LNP in the area and this is well funded. DEFRA has asked for consultation with all LNPs in relation to the Upland Chain and how it will be involved in biodiversity offsetting. It was proposed that Adrian Vass/DEFRA update to be added to future agendas.</p>	<p>Steve Bhowmick</p> <p>Julie Form Julie Form</p> <p>Victoria Burrell</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Environment Partnership Communications Stella Hindson circulated copies of The Altogether Greener newsletter. Remarks from Board members regarding the content and look of the newsletter were positive. Stella to circulate the newsletter electronically to all for comments. She asked that members send her articles for the next newsletter as well as any details of awards that have been given. Stella proposed to distribute the newsletter through the partnership so members can in turn circulate through their own organisation.</p>	<p>Stella Hindson</p>

	It was agreed that paper copies of the newsletter were not needed.	
7.	<p>Environment Awards Update</p> <p>Steve Bhowmick gave an update and the following points were noted:</p> <p>A panel meeting is to be held later today and the judges will decide who will go forward to the final.</p> <p>There has been an amazing response from across the community with 119 schemes coming forward in the first round. Because there have been so many entries, the categories may be split into three themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability (10 possible prizes) • Natural and Built Environment (14 possible prizes) • Caring For Your Environment (25 possible prizes) <p>Aiming to achieve good media for the event this year.</p> <p>The possibility of including the Beautiful Durham Competition in The Environment Awards next year.</p>	
8.	<p>County Durham Partnership Event</p> <p>Victoria Burrell provided an update on the County Durham Partnership event and stated that the 'save the date' had changed from 17th October to 20th November 2014. The event is to be held at The Excel Centre at Newton Aycliffe, between 9.30 and 15.00. The event is a celebration of looking at the wider structure of the County Durham Partnership. The format for the day, themes and workshops is currently being developed.</p> <p>Victoria to send details electronically to all.</p>	Victoria Burrell
9.	<p>AOB</p> <p>The date of the next meeting is 10th December 2014, The Burlison Room, Town Hall, Durham.</p>	

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