



Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Monday 6 March 2017
Time 9.30 am
Venue Committee Room 2, 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 Meeting held on 24 January 2017 and Special Meeting held on 6 February 2017 (Pages 3 - 16)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Any Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties
6. Media Relations - Update of Media Coverage
7. Work of the Community Action Team and the Use of Targeted Interventions (Pages 17 - 24)
 - (i) Joint Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services
 - (ii) Presentation by the Senior Environmental Health Officer
8. Review of the County Durham Environment Awards (Pages 25 - 28)
 - (i) Joint Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services
 - (ii) Presentation by the Environment and Design Manager and Senior Design and Conservation Officer
9. 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

24 February 2017

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

Councillor B Graham (Chairman)
Councillor E Adam (Vice-Chair)

Councillors J Armstrong, D Bell, J Clare, J Clark, D Freeman, J Gray, D Hall,
G Holland, I Jewell, C Kay, B Kellett, A Liversidge, P May, O Milburn, S Morrison,
J Shuttleworth, P Stradling and L Taylor

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Spurrell

Contact: Paula Nicholson

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 24 January 2017 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Graham (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Armstrong, D Bell, J Clare, D Freeman, J Gray, G Holland, B Kellett, A Liversidge, O Milburn, S Morrison and L Taylor

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton

Also Present:

Councillor B Stephens

The Chairman advised Members that she had agreed to consider the Quarter 2 Performance Management 2016/17 report first to allow the Head of Direct Services, Regeneration and Local Services to attend a further appointment.

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors E Adam, J Clark, D Hall, I Jewell, P May, P Stradling and Mrs P Spurrell (Co-optee).

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2016 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

5 Any Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

6 Media Relations - Update of Media Coverage

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to recent press articles relating to the remit of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The articles were:

- Recycling rates in England drop for first time - Recycling rates in England have fallen for the first time ever, prompting calls for a tax on packaging and meaning EU targets are now almost certain to be missed.
- 1,700 dogs microchipped through #Be Like Chip - As of April last year, all dogs had to be microchipped by the time they were eight weeks old.
- Lack of Whitehall policy preventing 'natural' flood management methods – There would be a Special Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 February 2017 to look at Flood Risk Management.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

7 Quarter 2 Performance Management 2016/17, Report of Corporate Management Team

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Management Team which presented progress against the Councils corporate basket of performance indicators for the Altogether Greener theme and report other significant performance issues for the second quarter of the 2016/17 financial year, covering the period July to September 2016 (for copy of report, see file of minutes)

The Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager gave a presentation which gave an update of the performance indicators relating to:

- Performance summary
- Achievements
- Refuse and Recycling
- Improved Environmental Cleanliness
- Consultation on the Implementation of a countywide Public Space Protection Order for dog control
- Fly-tipping
- Condition of the Local Authority road network
- Reduction in carbon emissions
- Renewable Energy Generation
- Environmental Awards

The Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager updated the committee with the results of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) consultation as requested at an earlier meeting and advised that 577 responses had been received. Of these responses: 84% agreed with the proposal to make it an offence to allow a dog to stray; 82% agreed with the proposal to exclude dogs from fenced off play areas owned by Durham County Council; 85% agreed with the proposal to make it an offence for failing to put a lead on a dog when directed to do so by an authorised officer and 50% of respondents stated they would not be affected by the Public Space Protection Order.

The Head of Direct Services, Regeneration and Local Services was in attendance to update Members on Fly-tipping. He advised that 'Operation Stop It' was carrying on and the service was determined to reduce and tackle the problem but it was going to take time. In order to answer members' questions as to whether fly tipping had increased we should go further back to 2014 and from this date it is clear that fly tipping had decreased by 19%. A lot of progress had been made in investigating fly tipping and the service were determined to find the underlying causes but this was still a work in progress. There were three areas which were impacting on increase of fly tipping – black bags of general waste, construction waste and over reporting of incidents.

There had been an increase in black bag fly tipping incidents in Peterlee and Bishop Auckland areas, which had been investigated to see if this was linked to waste collection but the findings had shown that there was no link. The Head of Direct Services advised that Section 46 notices could be issued if necessary but the authority was vigilant and had used intelligence to good effect. Households were reminded only to use the waste bin provided and not to leave the bin out all week.

Construction waste fly tipping had increased and the service were working with the Environment Agency and were currently considering offering more outlets to handle this type of waste with the possibility of some household waste and recycling centres to accept trade waste. This would create income for the Council and would help traders to get rid of construction waste.

The new CRM had enabled clearer reporting of incidents of fly-tipping and collection requests could now be taken online but there was also issues of false reporting. The Clean and Green Teams were working together to go through evidence where there had been fly tipping incidents to find a name or address. They had also moved to mobile technology which enabled incidents to be reported in but they needed to ensure that incidents were not been reported twice.

Councillor Armstrong referred to prosecutions and sought clarification if the Council recovered all their costs.

The Head of Direct Services, Regeneration and Local Services responded that when the Council put an application in for costs it had to be reasonable and was generally awarded. The Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had given local authorities the power to seize vehicles suspected of illegally dumping waste and this was a new opportunity which would act as a deterrent to perpetrators.

Councillor Liversidge referred to the opening times of the household waste centres and asked whether this had an impact on fly-tipping.

The Head of Direct Services, Regeneration and Local Services responded that they had carried out analysis which compared fly-tipping before and after the reduced closure times and closure of some household waste and recycling centre sites to see if there was a cause and effect and there was no association.

Councillor Taylor referred to fly-tipping in closed cemeteries specifically how dead flowers are just left in cemeteries.

The Head of Direct Services, Regeneration and Local Services responded that flowers were a delicate issue but if there were a significant number of incidents then they could look to install CCTV cameras to identify culprits.

Councillor Clare referred to his area which had suffered from a significant amount of fly-tipping and that when tenants had requested collections the registered provider had given a 40 day timeframe therefore the rubbish can be there for 8 weeks. This may look like fly tipping to others and added to it. He asked if the council distinguished between fly-tipping incidents and tenants putting additional items out to be taken away such as black bin bags that had not been removed during the waste collection.

In response, Members were advised that the council no longer had the contract for refuse collection in this area and as such were unable to remove items and the land where the items were left was not in local authority ownership. The service did report any incidents of fly tipping it finds to the social housing provider as a concern. In relation to the distinction of items the Head of Direct Services advised that they did receive a breakdown of the figures of the type of rubbish and they could identify if it was fly-tipping or linked to refuse collection. They would issue a fixed penalty notice for small amounts of rubbish rather than prosecution.

Councillor Holland referred to the man with a van and was fly-tipping the cheaper option. Were the costs too high to dispose of commercial waste properly or did they not care. He asked if the penalties could be so high that it would be a deterrent and if caught would not do it again. He also asked what the fees would be to dispose of commercial waste at the household waste centres.

Members were advised that the household waste centres were not intended for commercial waste although some modern household waste and recycling centres could accommodate trade waste but a permit is required, the service was exploring ways to make it easier to obtain permits but needed to address costs to reflect the cost of disposal. The Head of Direct Services, Regeneration and Local Services referred to a recent case of fly-tipping that was within 2 miles of a household waste centre which was open at the time.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Direct Services, Regeneration and Local Services and Councillor Stephens for their attendance and asked if a further update on fly tipping could come to a future meeting.

The Chairman also thanked the Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager for her presentation and asked that she may convey her thanks to the team for 'operation spruce up' which had concluded in Spennymoor and the results were starting to show.

The Head of Direct Services, Regeneration and Local Services advised that the programme had just started in Framwellgate Moor and that they would be doing an evaluation and would produce a report, which scrutiny members could receive at a future meeting.

Councillor Clare referred to the 'warm up north' fund, which had now closed and asked for a brief update.

The Low Carbon Economy Team Leader advised that the fund had now come to an end and the team were looking at what to do next.

The Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager indicated that she would get Mr C Duff, Housing Regeneration Project Manager to do a response on the 'warm up north' fund and circulate to members of the Committee.

Resolved: That the report be noted and that a further update on fly tipping come to a future meeting.

8 Climate Change and Delivery Plan

The Committee considered the Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services and Director of Transformation and Partnership that provided Members with an update on the County Durham Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan in which the committee has a key role in monitoring the progress of the strategy and deliver plan (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Members received a presentation from the Low Carbon Economy Team Leader that focused on the following:-

- Changes in Co2 Emissions – 41% reduction since 1990
- Total renewable energy capacity in County Durham – wind farms the largest element of this steady increase
- Renewable Energy – continued uncertainty due to government policy
- Climate Change Delivery Plan – progress is driven by the County Durham partnership Climate Change Strategy Group
- Delivery Plan Actions
 - 90% of schools are engaged in Schools Carbon Reduction Programme
 - North Pennines AONB Peatscapes project works to protect over 90,000 hectares of peat which stores carbon very efficiently
 - Go smarter to work encourages businesses in County Durham to promote sustainable travel including site travel plans and improved cycle networks
 - Community energy events and surveys and a bid for ESIF funding for a community energy project are ongoing with community organisations
 - £300,000 has been received for two EU funded projects looking at business energy efficiency and community energy and a further £530,000 is funding the Business Energy Efficiency Project
 - The Civil Contingencies Unit is visiting schools and caravan sites to raise awareness of flooding and climate change.
 - A BEIS funded study into district heating opportunity for County Durham

Members were advised that the Council had signed the European Covenant of Mayors that committed to a 20% reduction in CO2 emissions. They were working with the regional LA7 group to write a low carbon plan. Each authority had placed money into a fund and the project had commenced.

Durham County Council had already hit its target which had been reached due to the number of energy efficient installations but other factors had also impacted on reaching the target were warmer winters and the loss of the area's manufacturing capacity.

The Delivery Plan is a live document to monitor progress against the strategy and sets out priority actions. All programmes are driven by the County Durham Partnership. The Low Carbon Economy Team Leader highlighted some of the programmes and advised that 90% of County Durham schools are engaged in school carbon reduction programme which had been excellent in raising awareness among children and young people. Go Smarter to Work was another project which encourages businesses to promote sustainable travel including site travel plans and improved cycle networks. Other projects include community energy events and surveys and an ESIF bid for funding for a community energy project is ongoing. A Beis funded study into district heating opportunities for County Durham will report in May 2017 and will report to the committee at a later date.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for a very informative presentation and commented that the report was well set out and very interesting.

Councillor Holland congratulated the Low Carbon Economy team on their outstanding work. He then referred to the CO2 emissions reduction and how the drive to renewable energy had meant better management of CO2 and commented that public buildings could be energy efficient and new houses energy neutral. He commented that the rising oil costs had led to an increase in the cost of fuel causing an energy dilemma and common sense approach was needed.

The Low Carbon Economy Team Leader responded that we needed to make our own energy and without energy, 90% of things could not be done.

Councillor Clare referred to the loss of EU funding and could not see the government putting money into this area so what were Durham County Council going to do to move forward in a non-funding environment.

The Low Carbon Economy Team Leader responded that they were trying to maximise European funding until it stopped. A lot of discussions had taken place with BEIS to encourage money to be spent in the North East and they could focus on sustainable heat such as geothermal projects, with the importance on invest to save projects.

The Chairman sought clarification if the team had been involved in the geothermal project at Bishop Auckland.

The Low Carbon Economy Team Leader responded that a bid for £5 million had been submitted for the project but so far there was no news on progress.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

9 Quarter 2 Forecast and Revenue and Capital Outturn 2016/17, Report of Corporate Management Team

The Committee considered the report of the Regeneration and Local Services Management Team which set out details of the forecast outturn as at Quarter 2 for 2016/17

and highlighted variances against revenue and capital budgets for Neighbourhood Services. The Finance Manager, Neighbourhoods and Resources gave a presentation (for copies, see file of minutes).

Councillor Holland sought clarification on the Culture and Sport variance to which the Finance Manager confirmed that it was £324,000.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

10 Waste Programme Update

The Committee considered the Joint Report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Local Services and the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided Members with supporting information in advance of the update on the waste programme (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Members received a presentation from the Head of Projects and Business Services that focused on the following:-

- Garden Waste Scheme 2017 Update
- Capital Programme Update
- Waste Transfer Station Capital Programme Update
- National Trends in Waste
- UK Recycling Performance
- Effects of Brexit
- Austerity

The Head of Projects and Business Services updated members that there had been an increase in the price of the garden waste collections by five pounds taking the annual fee to £25.00 per annum. He also advised that the take up had been good and was slightly ahead of last year, new collections would run over a two-week collection period with week one collections starting at the end of March and week two collections the first week in April and would run for 33 weeks. Members were advised that the tonnage of garden waste is greater at the beginning of the collection period.

Councillor Clare referred to the garden waste collection timetable and asked if the period could be extended without an increase in the number of collections as the warmer autumns and winters meant leaves were still falling long after the collections had stopped and perhaps having a break during the summer months when the amount of garden waste reduced.

The Head of Projects and Business Services advised that tonnage varied but was less during the summer holiday period however, the tonnage in the autumn was not as high as the councillor would expect as leaves were not as heavy as grass cuttings. By having a regular collection schedule ensured that people knew when they needed to put their bins out and would cause the least confusion to residents. The Head of Projects and Business Services advised there would be 17 collections again this year.

Councillor Holland indicated that waste does not have holidays and this department were outstanding and wished to congratulate the team on the high quality standards, their management skills and how they tackled problems.

Mr T Bolton referred to the household waste recycling centres and asked if they monitored the traffic queuing at centres as at Seaham he had witnessed there had been a lot of traffic from the Household Waste Recycling Centre backing up onto the roundabout and impeding the flow of traffic and he had also noticed similar incidents at Pity Me Household Waste Recycling Centre which was close to a major roundabout.

The Head of Projects and Business Services replied that they do have Inspectors who go and visit the operators at Household Waste Recycling Centres. If there was a skip turnaround at one of the centres then they had to temporarily close the site for Health and Safety reasons as no members of the public are allowed on the site at this time and this closure may impact on traffic especially at weekends when the Household Waste Recycling Centres were very busy. The two sites mentioned do have a short drive which was a constant challenge to monitor. The current contractors provided a really good service and were responsive to comments, the officer would take the comments back to the contractors.

The Chairman sought clarification if they had CCTV equipment in operation at the gates to the sites so if people were leaving rubbish at the gates they could prosecute for fly-tipping. The Head of Projects and Business Services responded that they had CCTV at all sites and they used what evidence they had but CCTV was mainly used for the safety of staff so the cameras were not positioned to catch people fly-tipping.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

11 Minutes from the County Durham Environment Partnership Board

The Minutes of the meeting of the County Durham Environmental Partnership Board held 7 September 2016 were received by the Committee for information.

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 6 February 2017 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Graham (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors E Adam, J Armstrong, J Clark, J Gray, B Kellett, A Liversidge, P May, O Milburn, S Morrison, J Shuttleworth, P Stradling and L Taylor

Also Present:

Councillor T Smith

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bell, J Clare, D Hall and I Jewell.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

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 Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham - Updates

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided background information on the role and responsibilities of the committee as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham prior to receiving presentations from the Flood Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) for County Durham (Durham County Council (DCC), Northumbrian Water Ltd (NWL) and the Environment Agency (EA)) (for copy of report and slides of presentations, see file of minutes).

Durham County Council

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Technical Services and the Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager, Regeneration and Local Services that highlighted the following points:-

- Review for 2016/17 – 48 schemes with a total value of £1.2m
- Grant Funded Schemes for 2016/17 – including Lanchester and Great Bridge and risk money schemes at Etherley, Witton Gilbert and St. Johns Chapel.
- Going Forward – EA programme of 21 schemes with a total value of £1.3m
- Medium Term Investment Plan 2015-2026 – total value of £4m with significant contributions from DCC
- Partnership Working – Examples of the various forums for partnership working-current partnership working is positive and constructive at all levels
- Lanchester Scheme – holistic scheme developed with a hydraulic model to help recover more quickly from floods in the future. Landowners involved in the process.
- Sunnybrow Scheme – flood waters coming off fields and overwhelming the highway drainage – investigations found that minewater was being diverted into the NW sewer system
- Barnard Castle Bridge End – flood event 13 September 2016- investigations identified significant issues with highway drainage.
- Murton – flooding problems due to highway drainage and sewer capacity issues.
- Middleton in Teesdale – Flooding problems in Storm Desmond and Storm Eve – winter 2015/16 – residents received funding for installation of property level protection and work with landowners to clear surface water, culverts and ditches.

Councillor Shuttleworth made reference to the grant funded schemes for 2016/17 and asked for clarification as to the meaning of risk money for schemes at Etherley, Witton Gilbert and St. John's Chapel. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager explained that risk money relates to a contingency element included in the funding of some schemes which could be drawn down should unexpected issues arise on site.

Councillor T Smith commented on the excellent partnership working in the county undertaken by the Risk Management Authorities and then highlighted the importance of County Council members reporting flooding incidents in their localities. She continued that funding was available for flood alleviation schemes however the relevant DCC officers need to be made aware of flooding incidents to then instigate the necessary investigations to be undertaken. Councillor Smith then continued by providing details of how she had reported local residents using sand bags, which had resulted in an investigation by DCC officers and it had been determined that the flooding issue was the result of blocked gullies which were then cleaned and the issue resolved.

The Chairman responded that members of the committee were aware of the need to report flooding incidents and the contact details of the relevant DCC officers.

Councillor May commented that in relation to the Medium Term Investment Plan 2015-2026 mention was made of a scheme at Cherry Banks, Chester-le-Street and as a local member he was not aware of this scheme. He asked if it was possible to inform local members of any scheme in their localities detailing the nature of the scheme, what work was entailed and the amount of funding available. The Drainage and Coastal Protection

Manager responded that local members would be provided with this detail in future and that in relation to the proposed scheme at Cherry Banks, there had been no recent communication received from the resident so it was possible that the recent flood mitigation work undertaken on the A167 had solved this flooding issue.

Councillor Milburn informed members that Councillor Nearney and herself had recently been involved in an interview process regarding a flooding study and had provided detailed information of local flooding incidents however she had received no feedback concerning the input she had provided and assumed this had been shared with the appropriate DCC officers and partners. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager responded that the interview was part of a dissertation and that the information provided had not been shared with DCC officers. The Head of Technical Services responded that members could speak to his team directly and report flooding incidents as there was an issue of under reporting. The Assistant Sustainable Sewerage Manager, NWL commented that the data in any dissertations they were involved in was fed into their data collection systems..

The Chairman requested clarification as to whether the turning off of pumps in local collieries had resulted in any flooding incidents in the county. The Team Leader Partnerships and Strategic Overview, EA commented that the Coal Authority had to undertake a full evaluation of the implications of reducing the pumping of mine water.

Councillor Kellett commented that in relation to Low Pittington there was a regular problem with flooding involving a mixture of sewerage and water, work had been undertaken to alleviate flooding which had required the cleaning of a culvert. An application had now been submitted for open casting in the same area which potentially could cause further flooding issues. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager responded that the planning application had been put back so that further investigations could be undertaken regarding the proposed site.

Councillor Armstrong asked how the Brexit decision would affect the funding of flood mitigation schemes. The Head of Technical Services commented that those schemes identified in the Medium Term Investment Plan 2015-2026 were funded from the Local Levy and Government. It was the schemes which required EU funding that could be affected. For example, Environment Agency led schemes such as the Chester-le-Street (NELEP) culvert scheme. However, this scheme would be pursued as far as possible until a decision was made regarding funding and should EU funding not be available then alternative sources of funding would be investigated.

Northumbrian Water Limited

The Assistant Sustainable Sewerage Manager gave a presentation that included detail of the following:-

- Interactive portal – www.nwlcommunityportal.co.uk
- Completed Sewer Network Schemes 2016
- Planned Sewer Network Schemes 2017– Murton Phases 1 and 2
- Sewage Treatment Works Investment
 - Completed – Tudhoe Mill
 - Commencing investment – Tanfield, Browney and Aycliffe
 - Investment currently planned in the next 24 months – Wolsingham, Ramshaw, Butterknowle, Cockfield, Chilton Lane, Windlestone, Bishop

Middleham, University, Aldin Grange/Bearpark, Seaham, Consett and Barkers Haugh

- Joint Working – Lanchester integrated hydraulic model
- The Future – more sustainable approach
 - Dwaine Pipe – talks in the community and app created for mobile phones
 - Every Drop Counts – water conservation projects
 - Super Splash Heroes – 100 primary schools across the North East involved in play and short workshop sessions
 - More Sustainable Approach
 - Blue Green Pledge
- Coming Soon – the Green Light of Durham City

Councillor Milburn commented that Stanley and Tanfield had been involved in the 'Every Drop Counts' project and asked about take up. The Assistant Sustainable Sewerage Manager (NWL) commented that take up had been good and that experience had shown that where projects resulted in a saving for customers then take up was always good.

Councillor May commented that the Government were currently encouraging more housing development and it was anticipated that Government's Housing White Paper would place further requirements on local authorities to further increase housing development. He asked if we had any detail on what the increase would be in the White Paper and if NWL would be able to cope with the additional flood mitigation requirements resulting from increased housing development. The Assistant Sustainable Sewerage Manager (NWL) commented that NWL see further housing development as an opportunity not a problem as there were so many different options available to deal with flood mitigation resulting from increased development including Retention Basins and Swales. The Senior Policy Officer, DCC added that it was still not known as to how the White Paper would affect housing development in County Durham as the formula to be used by local authorities to calculate the number of new homes to be provided in the county had not been released.

The Chairman commented that she was pleased to see the investment of £3m in the Tudhoe Mill sewage treatment works as she had previously expressed concerns about capacity following the approval of further housing development. The Assistant Sustainable Sewerage Manager (NWL) responded that NWL had worked with the developer and phased the further development of the sewage treatment works with the housing development.

Environment Agency

The Committee received a final presentation from the Team Leader Partnerships and Strategic Overview that highlighted the following points:-

- Indicative Allocations 2017-2021
- Six Year FCRM Investment Programme – Wolsingham, Stanhope, Staindrop, Tindale Beck, Chester-le-Street, Weardale, Barnard Castle and Chester Burn
- Completed EA Flood Alleviation Schemes (FAS) in 2016/17
- Developing FAS in County Durham
- Asset Maintenance – 168 assets in County Durham with £460k allocation for 2017-18
- The Future

- Integrated management of flood risk
- Strong partnerships
- Funding challenges
- Local Flood Risk Action Plan

Councillor May asked that in relation to the Chester-le-Street (NELEP) culvert, what would the cost be and the timescale for the project. The Team Leader Partnerships and Strategic Overview (EA) responded that the project was currently being assessed and that part of this process would be determining the cost of the project although it was currently known that Government funding would not be enough to meet the total cost and that EU funding would be required. It was anticipated that the project could take between 3 to 5 years for completion.

Councillor Armstrong commented that the strong message coming through from all three presentations was the excellent partnership working between the RMA's.

The Chairman agreed that the presentations had shown how excellent partnership working had resulted in the development and delivery of successful flood mitigation schemes in the county however she highlighted the need for RMA's to ensure that local members were kept updated on schemes and projects in their local communities.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their presentations and asked Members to agree the recommendations outlined in the report.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham note the information provided in the presentations.
- (ii) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Management Committee for County Durham receive further presentations from the Risk Management Authorities at a future special meeting of the committee in February 2018.

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

6 March 2017



**Work of the Community Action
Team and the use of targeted
interventions**

**Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation
and Partnerships and Jane Robinson, Corporate Director of
Adult and Health Services**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the work of the council's Community Action Team (CAT) and the use of targeted interventions.

Background

- 2 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 10 November 2014 received an overview on the Community Action Team and the use of targeted interventions. Following that meeting the committee has received further updates on the work of the CAT with the last update provided to committee on 8 July 2015. It is therefore considered timely for the committee to receive a further update at the meeting on the 6 March 2017 and arrangements have been made for Kelly Gilmore-Craze, Senior Environmental Health Officer to attend the meeting and deliver a presentation focusing on:
 - data from the 2015/16 and 2016/17 programmes
 - our work with partners
 - feedback received from the communities involved
- 3 The CAT is a small and ambitious team consisting of members of the Environmental Health & Consumer Protection department who are responsible for delivering Community Action Schemes at identified locations within County Durham. They work alongside Planning officers, Housing officers, Neighbourhood Wardens, Police and Community Support Officers, and Fire and Rescue teams and with local communities. The aim of the Community Action Schemes is to bring together key partners with specialist skills, as well as local residents, working proactively to tackle local housing and environmental issues.

- 4 In February 2015, the CAT began a two-year work programme visiting identified degraded communities across County Durham. Time was allocated within the programme to review previous schemes. Locations were chosen geographically across the county against set criteria based on health deprivation, visual environmental degradation, commercial buildings, high level of private rents and where existing community groups were operating within the area.

Communities visited were:

2015/16

- Bishop Auckland Town,
- South Moor (revisit),
- Eldon & Coundon Grange (revisit),
- Blackhall Colliery,

2016/17

- Ferryhill South & Station,
- Shotton Colliery,
- Horden Central (revisit),
- Coundon & Leeholme, and in
- Easington Colliery (where the team is currently working)

This programme will end in March 2017.

- 5 In each location, an 8-10-week programme took place. Each initiative was divided into three phases:
- Engagement/Priority setting,
 - Action and Review, and
 - Exit/Feedback.

There were opportunities for the community to get involved through a residents' engagement event, drop-in sessions, and a community litter pick in some projects. Partners met during the engagement period, carried out a walkabout of the area and, following input from the community, prioritised 3-4 issues. A strategy was put in place to carry out targeted interventions in the action period. Partners carried out a variety of interventions including weekly, and in some locations bi-weekly, walkabouts of the area, litter clearance, waste carrier licence checks, and talks to local schools. At the end of most projects, an exit strategy was put in place with partners. Residents and community groups received a feedback letter at the end of each scheme outlining the action that had taken place, the exit strategy, ways to contact the council and partner agencies, and a survey inviting project feedback. A similar letter and survey was also sent to landlords.

Key findings from the 2015-2017 Programme

- 6 The team carried out a total of 1140 pieces of casework, which includes follow-up work in previous project locations. Core casework related to common issues such as rubbish accumulations and defective drainage, with housing disrepair, fly tipping, and open to access properties also being investigated. There were

161 legal notices served and 86 works in default were required where there was non-compliance with notices.

7 Table 1.1 – Comparison of casework in CAT project areas up to 5 April 2016

Location	Casework	Notices	Work In Default
Bishop Auckland Town	53	5	3
South Moor	61	27	7
Eldon & Coundon Grange	140	62	21
Blackhall Colliery	122	20	5
TOTAL - 2015-16	376	114	36

Table 1.2 – Comparison of casework in CAT project areas up to 24 December 2016

Location	Casework	Notices	Work In Default
Ferryhill South & Station	173	58	11
Shotton	77	7	3
Horden Central	336	101	33
Coundon & Leeholme	178	43	3
TOTAL - 2016-17	764	209	50

Table 1.3 – Percentage increase of casework in CAT project areas from 2015 to 24 December 2016

Year	Casework	Notices	Work In Default
TOTAL - 2015-16	376	114	36
TOTAL - 2016-17	764	209	50
% INCREASE	103%	83%	38%

- 8 As table 1.3 shows the CAT workload and output has increased significantly in the last two years. There are several reasons for this:
 - The CAT projects are constantly evolving and open to better ways of working;
 - Work is allocated to partners at the start of each project;
 - The CAT's 'no job is too big or too small' approach means all issues will be considered;
 - CAT are better able to identify and target communities that would benefit from intervention;
 - As the CAT's reputation builds partners & members of the public become more proactive in reporting issues.
- 9 Improving housing standards and removing rubbish accumulations were identified as priority issues in all locations, with empty/derelict properties being chosen in several of the projects.
- 10 There were a number additional partner activities carried out per project depending on the location which included test purchases of alcohol, mini health checks for residents, home fire safety checks, untidy sites tackled by planning colleagues, and empty homes were pursued by housing colleagues. Groundwork North East was also involved in working in most areas with communities to improve the immediate environment within the project area.
- 11 Positive press articles were published for all projects and the work of the CAT has found a high profile in Durham County News, Buzz and member briefings.
- 12 Establishing good links with residents, businesses and community groups, in each area was vital to the success of each project. Initial residents' meetings have where possible, been linked to existing community meetings, for example PACT meetings, while drop-in sessions were linked in with local community events.
- 13 At the end of each project partners were invited to give feedback and development suggestions at the final partner meeting. The feedback received was very positive on the joint working opportunities and the specific interventions that had taken place during each project. Community engagement remains an area that could be improved; however, it was noted that many agencies find this to be a challenge in the locations chosen for the CAT projects. There are a number of complicated reasons for this but is common in areas with a high tenant turn over- why do people want to invest in communities they may not be staying in for the long-term. Following the loss of heavy industry, lack of investment, and recent years of austerity, a lot of people in deprived North East towns and villages feel disenfranchised from 'the establishment'. Consequently, CAT and partner agencies can face considerable challenges when trying to engage with communities though this is no doubt an issue felt throughout various Council & agency Departments.
- 14 The resident and landlord survey response returns continue to be low, however we continue to seek views and some useful comments were received which have helped improve the programme.

- 15 Feedback from landlords and residents highlighted a number of barriers that prevented them from being able to quickly respond to specific issues identified by the CAT namely associated with refuse in yards:
- Fly-tipping in back yards by people not connected to the property;
 - Residents moving rubbish between properties;
 - Bins going missing;
 - Cost of replacing refuse & recycling bins;
 - Cost for landlords to dispose of tenant waste at household waste recycling centres;
 - Cost of pest control;
 - Landlords who don't live locally struggle to manage their property & tenants;
 - Criminal damage to properties.

Key findings from the summer review period 2016

- 16 From 18 July – 14 August 2016 and 03 – 22 January 2017 the CAT undertook a period of review. A desktop review (comparing in-house and partner service requests) was carried out and the busiest project locations were revisited: Coundon Grange & Eldon Lane, Blackhall Colliery, Ferryhill South & Station. The purpose was to look at the sustainability of the work carried out and address any ongoing issues.
- 17 The number of housing and environmental issues found on the review walkabout was significantly lower than identified in the initial walkabout at the start of the original project.
- 18 Table 2.1 – Comparison of casework found on the original project walkabout compared to the review walkabout and the % change by location

Location	Original project 1 st walkabout	Review walkabout	% Change
Coundon Grange & Eldon Lane	140	49	-65%
Blackhall Colliery	122	14	-60%
Ferryhill South & Station	173	29	-69%

- 19 The figures in Table 2.1 indicate that the work the CAT do is having lasting results in each area. The use of enforcement work in conjunction with community engagement is thought to provide a much-needed role of education along with a zero tolerance approach.

20 Table 2.2 – A breakdown of casework in each review area.

Location / Breakdown of work	Coundon Grange & Eldon Lane	Blackhall Colliery	Ferryhill South & Station
Food/Noxious Accumulations	21	5	11
Open Access	3	0	0
Drain Defects	5	0	3
Empty Properties	0		0
Other CAT cases	2	0	1
Wardens – inert accumulations	14	4	13
Street Scene Referrals	0	0	1
Clean and Green Referrals	1	2	0
Other referrals	3	3	0
Total	49	14	29

21 The exit strategies were largely followed however, there remains a need for further monitoring of previous CAT project locations following exit.

22 Policy changes at a local and national level continue to impact on the incidence, build-up, and disposal, of refuse, as well as the turnover of tenancies, and instability of the local housing markets:

- Change from weekly to fortnightly bin collections;
- Increase in number of two plus bedroom properties becoming empty following changes to the benefits system;
- Increase in Council Tax to 150% for properties left empty longer than 6 months leading to landlords feeling pressured to occupy properties and allowing tenants to move into properties without reference checks;
- Tenants often feel afraid of reporting issues of disrepair due to the very real risks associated with the fear of eviction. Anecdotal information suggests that tenants often move into sub-standard dwellings, as this is the only type of property they can secure e.g. no deposit required. Landlords of these properties tend to do less initial checks on potential tenants knowing that in the majority of cases, the income from benefits payments are guaranteed and the likelihood of having to spend money on property maintenance is slim.

23 During review periods, it is evident that certain areas have far-reaching and complicated issues to contend with e.g. areas to the east coast of Durham such as Horden and Easington Colliery. It remains our hope that the CAT will make an impact while working in these areas while acknowledging that long-term improvements are likely to be reliant on policy changes at a strategic or even national level.

Next Steps

- 24 The Community Action Team will begin the 2017-18 programme in April 2017 visiting five new areas. The focus when choosing locations is on areas of greater need rather than following a geographical route round the county. This is due to projects in the more deprived areas of the county providing a higher caseload of work and partners proactively approaching the CAT highlighting areas of greater concern.
- 25 The barriers identified by landlords and residents are referred to senior management to raise awareness and open departmental discussions.
- 26 During the 2015 – 17 programme, the CAT continued to work with Groundwork North East and Cumbria who support and enable the CAT to leave an environmental legacy as part of the exit strategy in each location. This partnership will be extended into 2017 – 18.
- 27 As the CAT goes into its fifth year in operation it brings with it great partnership working capabilities and a wealth of data on some of the most deprived areas in County Durham. The CAT has a dual purpose- to make effective housing and environmental improvements on the ground, and to raise awareness among partners of areas where a greater strategic approach is needed in order to make long-term improvements.
- 28 As part of the newly formed Adult & Health Services, it is hoped that the CAT may have future opportunities to become involved in other aspects of wider “public health” work and develop even greater opportunity for partnership working.

Recommendations

- 29 Members of the Committee are asked to note information contained within the update report on the work of the CAT and the use of targeted interventions and comment accordingly.
- 30 That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further update on the work of the Community Action Team at a future meeting.

Background Papers

None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Recovery of work in default costs through debt management strategy or by way of land charges register

Staffing – None – CAT officers are part of the Environment Protection team within EHCP

Risk – N/A

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – N/A

Accommodation – N/A

Crime and Disorder – Most issues tackled are statutory responsibilities for the local authority under the Altogether Safer objective of the Council Plan

Human Rights – N/A

Consultation – N/A

Procurement – N/A

Disability Issues – N/A

Legal Implications – Challenges to statutory notices served by CAT officers and partners

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



6 March 2017

**Review of the County Durham
Environment Awards**

**Joint report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and
Partnerships and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director of
Regeneration and Local Services**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the development, progress and current processes of the County Durham Environment Awards with a view to continuing to strengthen community, partner and Member engagement in delivery. The report will be supplemented by a visual presentation to the Committee.

Background

- 2 The County Durham Environment Awards (referred to as 'the Awards') were established in 1989 and initially focussed on the built and natural environment. Their overarching objective is to reward great design, environmental guardianship and community spirit in County Durham. Until Local Government Review they were delivered solely by Durham County Council. Subsequently, responsibility for the strategic development of the Awards has rested with the County Durham Environment Partnership with day to day management provided by DCC staff.
- 3 The remit of the Awards has continued to develop to reflect the changing environmental agenda and align with the corporate direction of the bodies involved. Consequently, issues such as climate change, greener business development and operations, community partnerships and volunteering are now represented. Arrangements have been made for a presentation to be provided to the committee at the meeting on the 6 March 2017 which will focus on: aims and objectives; context; history and development; funding and budget; partners; process and ceremony; winners and next steps.
- 4 As the scope and scale of the Awards has changed, so has the method of funding. Whilst still receiving core funding from DCC, an annual call for sponsorship is now made with a view to at least matching the DCC contribution. This has enabled the overall process to be developed in to a more high profile celebration of the many facets of good environmental practice across County Durham, culminating in a prestigious annual Awards

winner's ceremony. This is supported by an ongoing media partner arrangement with the Northern Echo group which ensures media coverage at appropriate points to maximise publicity, engagement and involvement.

- 5 As the programme has evolved so have the methods of engagement:
 - a. The Awards have now moved to an online application format.
 - b. Calls for applications are shared by traditional methods and increasingly through the use of social media in order to engage better with certain parts of the community.
 - c. A live social media feed from the presentations at the ceremony has been trialled and under the new corporate communications and marketing structure, the use of digital technologies are to be further explored, perhaps using video feed to better share the messages of successful schemes.

- 6 The Awards programme now engages with a diverse cross-section of the local community but there remain opportunities to further develop this, particularly in the more people-focussed categories including community partnership and volunteering. This will ensure that as many deserving groups and individuals as possible are recognised for their achievements in improving the county's environment. Committee Members are asked to consider and support options for increasing community engagement through channels such as AAP's, community networks and locally elected councillors at all levels, given that they have a close understanding of the scope of environmental work underway in their communities. These, along with other salient points for the delivery of the Awards are invited for discussion at the meeting.

Recommendation

7. That the Committee note the information contained within the report and presentation and comment accordingly.

Background papers : n/a

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – The Awards incur an annual cost of £10,000 of which DCC cover 50% along with staffing support. The balance comes from external sponsorship and it is anticipated that this commitment shall continue into the future.

Staffing – A cross service team exists to service all elements of the programme

Risk – Funding is dependent on external sponsorship in support of core costs and should this be significantly reduced then continuation of programme in current form will be jeopardised.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - not applicable

Accommodation – n/a

Crime and Disorder – n/a

Human Rights – n/a

Consultation – n/a

Procurement – n/a

Disability Issues – n/a

Legal Implications – n/a

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