



Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Thursday 8 March 2018
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 23 January 2018, 2 February 2018 and 12 February 2018 (Pages 3 - 28)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties
6. Media Relations
7. County Durham Environment Awards (Pages 29 - 32)
 - a) Joint Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services
 - b) Presentation by the Environment & Design Manager
8. Culture and Sport Services (Pages 33 - 36)
 - a) Joint Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services
 - b) Presentation by the Head of Culture and Sport Services
9. Community Action Team (Pages 37 - 46)
 - a) Joint Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services
 - b) Presentation by Senior Environmental Health Officer
10. Verbal Update on Review Activity
11. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Lynch
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
28 February 2018

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

Councillor E Adam (Chair)
Councillor O Milburn (Vice-Chair)

Councillors B Avery, D Bell, L Brown, J Carr, J Clare, J Clark,
R Crute, A Gardner, P Howell, P Jopling, C Kay, R Manchester,
C Martin, A Patterson, A Simpson, P Sexton, L Taylor, M Wilson
and S Zair

Co-opted Members:
Mr T Bolton and Mr D Kinch

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 23 January 2018 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor E Adam (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors B Avery, D Bell, L Brown, J Clare, J Clark, R Crute, A Gardner, P Howell, P Jopling, R Manchester, C Martin, O Milburn, A Simpson, P Sexton, L Taylor and M Wilson

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors J Carr, C Kay, S Zair and Mr D Kinch.

2 Substitute Members

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 23 October 2017, 13 November 2017 and 11 December 2017 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman subject to the amendment below:-

13 November 2017 – Item 8, Carbon Management Plan

Page 16, last paragraph be amended to read “Mr Bolton referred to some previous Economy 7 electricity tariffs when the cost of electricity between 4.30pm and 7.30pm was often lower, as demand from industry reduced and asked if this was still the case.

The Senior Carbon Management Officer responded that consumption patterns have changed and 4.30pm – 7.30pm was now a peak time and is charged at a higher rate.”

4 Declarations of Interest

Mr T Bolton declared an interest in Item 7, Highway Maintenance as he was Clerk to Staindrop Parish Council who were currently in discussion with Highways on a matter.

Councillor Sexton declared an interest in Item 7, Highway Maintenance as he was currently in discussion with Highways on a street lighting issue.

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 on Media Items

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:

- Cars of the future will spot potholes and tell us say Highways England – The report would be used to inform the government's next road investment strategy which is due to start in 2020. This links in with agenda Item 7.
- National Recognition for Wharton Park restoration – The restoration of Wharton Park in Durham City has been highly commended in the Landscape Institute Awards 2017, in the heritage and conservation category.
- UK faces build-up of plastic waste – The UK's recycling industry says it doesn't know how to cope with a Chinese ban on imports of plastic waste. Britain has been shipping up to 500,000 tonnes of plastic for recycling in China every year, but trade has now stopped. This links in with agenda Item 8.
- Consultation launched into £6.2 million flood prevention plans for town – Durham County Council is considering opening up a 90-metre stretch of the Cong Burn, which runs underneath Chester-Le-Street's Market Place, and is asking members of the public for their views. The consultation will run from 11 February 2018. The Chairman advised Members that flooding would be considered at the Scrutiny meeting to be held on 2 February 2018.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

7 Highway Maintenance

Members considered the joint report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Local Services and the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided Members with an update of highway maintenance (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Head of Technical Services and Highway Asset Manager were in attendance to provide Members with information relating to Highways Maintenance. The Chair had requested in advance of the meeting that the tables in the report be placed on power point slides to aid members, the slides contained the summary of the Inventory as at 31 March 2017; condition of the carriageway, footways, structures and street lighting; maintenance

backlog; results of the public satisfaction survey; budget and investment level (for copy of presentation, see file of minutes).

Members were advised that Durham County Council has a robust highway inspection regime and public reporting system. Inspections take place from fortnightly to annually and additionally the Council expects the public to report highway maintenance damage too.

Members were informed about section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 that sets out special defence in action against a highway authority for damages for non-repair of highway. That is if a pothole appears following a highway inspection, and has not been reported by members of the public how would the highway authority know about the defect.

The Highway Asset Manager explained that the Highway Maintenance Plan was available for anyone to view on the Council's website, but the Highway Safety Plan was not in the public domain. The Transport Asset Management Plan is updated and shared with Cabinet on annual basis.

The Head of Technical Services advised that it was a key objective to keep the maintenance backlog is kept under control, as it would not be realistic to clear it. Members were advised that the Council participates in the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey. It was highlighted to members that the public satisfaction survey key benchmark indicator 23 refers to highway maintenance and clearly indicates that DCC had a rating for 2016 was 45%, which was higher than both regional and national figures but is lower than the service would like it.

In relation to Capital budget, the Head of Technical Services advised that the Council has protected and continued to prioritise investment in programmed capital maintenance. Members were advised that programmed maintenance works improve the quality of the highway. The Council has achieved the maximum Band 3 efficiency rating under the Department for Transport incentive fund. This rating will help ensure the Council maximises funding from the DfT initiative fund going forward.

The Chairman thanked officers for their informative presentation.

Councillor Howell sought clarification on the date of the year end data. The Head of Technical Services responded that it was 31 March 2016 and that the 2017 data would be available shortly.

Members commented that the data was 21 months out of date, which made it difficult to obtain a true reflection.

The Head of Technical Services responded that the data was available in draft and would be reported to Members in due course.

Councillor Howell asked if the 2017 data was better or worse and was concerned about the declining figures in particular structures. He then referred to street lighting and if the data for repairs had reduced due to some street lighting been removed.

The Head of Technical Services advised Members that the removal of street lighting was part of a project to remove 7,000 lights county wide. The process had seen this figure

reduced to 3,000 and approximately 1,000 lights had been removed to date. Each year new developments were adopted which included street lights, which added to the database.

The Chairman commented that Members who had any issues with the removal of lights asked for a review and he sought clarification from the officer if any of the reviews had been successful.

The Head of Technical Services indicated that the policy was agreed with Cabinet in 2013 and they only removed lights when it was safe to do so. A risk assessment was always undertaken and local councillors and parishes were consulted on the removal.

Councillor Martin referred to unclassified roads being below the national average and were any measures in place to reverse the trend.

The Head of Technical Services responded that they do try to keep unclassified roads at a certain level, most unclassified roads were in residential estates or rural settings. Category A, B and C roads were prioritised and depending on budget and any spare resources are used on unclassified roads.

Councillor Martin then echoed Councillor Howell's comments in relation to street lighting and that his residents also had concerns where street lights were removed, even though there were no properties, the road was still well used.

The Head of Technical Services responded that savings had to be made and street lighting is not statutory.

Councillor Sexton referred to LED lights and asked if they could be adjusted to widen the illumination. The Head of Technical Services responded that adjustments could be made to the lights. The LED retrofit reduction project was a professionally designed lighting scheme, and the lights are only meant to light the highway and the majority of complaints received from residents was in relation to the lighting not lighting up their home or garden. If the lights did this it would be classed as light pollution and wasted energy and once this was explained to residents 95% were happy, but he could look at those lights that members had concerns with.

Councillor Sexton commented on the cost to remove the lights and if it was financially viable and his view keeping people safe and not feel vulnerable was an entitlement.

Councillor Jopling on behalf of Councillor Reed commented that she had reported a street light without a number on and was advised by the service to check with the Land Registry to find out who owned the light. She thought that planning permission would have been required for the light so the Council would be aware of the ownership of the light.

The Head of Technical Services advised Members that it was possibly a private light on private land, which they had no knowledge of as planning permission was not required for lights.

Councillor Jopling then referred to some lighting that had been removed in her ward which she could not understand the reasons for removal. The Head of Technical Services

advised that the removal of the lighting was a key decision and public consultation had been undertaken and a risk assessment.

Councillor Brown referred to LED lights being so bright and asked if the brightness could be adjusted.

Councillor Gardner asked if unclassified roads and footpaths in bad condition could be marked by other environmental conditions.

The Head of Technical Services commented that 24.1% of footways were structurally unsound, the safety of the footpaths was still paramount. The majority of the structurally unsound footpaths were on mature estates and was down to budget. Where there are new developments footpaths were constructed to a specified standard.

The Chairman asked if the Committee could be provided with up to date information to come to a meeting early in next year's work programme. Members asked if the meeting be aligned to the Cabinet meeting when the information is given so that they could look at last year's data.

Councillor Clare asked how many kilometres of footpath did the council have. Members were advised that there were 3.328 km of adopted footpaths.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That future meeting's be aligned so that Members were provided with up to date data.

8 Performance Quarter 2 2017/18

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Management Team which presented progress against the Councils corporate performance framework for the Altogether Greener priority theme for the second quarter of the 2017/18 financial year (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager was in attendance to give a presentation on the Altogether Greener priority theme performance and key performance messages. The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager provided information on the current situation with the Chinese import ban on plastics and how this would impact on kerbside recycling and Household Waste Recycling Centres. Members were advised that O'Brien's outlets were secure and the quality of plastics meets Chinese specifications. Contractual arrangements ensure there is a shared risk between the authority and the contractor and takes into account market price variability and contamination levels. With regard to Household Waste Recycling Centres plastics was a small proportion of throughput.

Members were then provided with a chart that showed the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting by Local Authorities in 2016/17, Durham County Council recycles approximately 42.4%, the authority with the best recycling figure was East Riding of Yorkshire, which recycles 65.4% of its waste and the authority with the worst figure was the London Borough of Newham, which recycles 14.1% of its waste. However recycling is different from authority to authority and depends on collections and how the

waste is sorted. Members were also provided with a graph indicating the number of fly-tipping incidents.

Councillor Jopling asked what the council were doing to increase the recycling rate.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager responded that a pilot had been undertaken with a third sector organisation and he would obtain further details on the pilot.

Councillor Jopling then asked in relation to fly tipping if the service undertook special targeting programmes similar to the police Drink-Drive campaign.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager indicated that they undertake a range of environmental campaigns on fly tipping but these were not seasonal. The service did education in particular with the building trade and used social media to publicise enforcement action taken.

The Chairman commented that there was no pattern to fly-tipping and the service used cameras and highlighted action taken.

Mr Bolton referred to a recent radio interview with the Portfolio Holder at Birmingham City Council who had asked for high quality plastics to be used in light of the government initiative. He asked what advice should be given to local residents as there was still a lot of uncertainty of what plastics can be recycled.

The Chairman responded that each authority had different schemes which made it confusing for anyone new to the area. Durham County Council produce an information leaflet which clearly indicates what can go into each bin, stickers are also placed on bins and information is provided to households. The Council also does a comprehensive sorting of the household waste.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager indicated that there was a wide variety of different plastics and the advice would be if in doubt place it into the recycling bin as it would be sorted at O'Brien's. He also referred to the new DEFRA regulations which could result in a change and maybe recycle more. The news at present is to avoid using plastics in the first place.

The Chairman referred to the Motion that was going to the next Council meeting on single use plastics which could be something that this committee would consider.

Councillor Sexton referred to the problems in his area with bulky waste in particular white goods and scrap metal dealers who trespass on people's property and steel metal goods. He asked if there was a list available of licensed scrap metal dealers.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager responded that the Safer and Stronger OSC did a piece of work on Metal Theft. Scrap metal collectors should have a Scrap Metal Dealers Licence which is issued by the local authority to collect scrap metal in a specific locations within County Durham. The Police and Trading Standards did carry out checks and there is a licensing system in place.

Councillor Clare commented that fly-tipping figures were down the last two quarters and were better than previous years. The advice he gave to his constituents on plastics was if in doubt place it in your general waste bin. General waste was burnt rather than sent to landfill. He then referred to the state of bridges not being a performance indicator and asked if this could be included.

The Head of Technical Services indicated that he was happy to facilitate the request.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager advised Members that there was a set list of performance indicators and the indicator could be added as a standard indicator or add as an escalation. Bridges could be a standard performance indicator or a feed in. He also clarified that advice about placing plastics in the recycling bin received from the service was in regard to hard plastics. Things like polythene bags and cling film are not recyclable and should be placed in the bin for residual waste.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That bridge structures be included in the standard list of performance indicators.

9 Budget Quarter 2 2017/18

The Committee considered the report of the Regeneration and Local Services Management Team which set out details of the outturn budget position as at Quarter 2 for 2017/18 and highlighted variances against revenue and capital budgets for Neighbourhood Services. The Finance Manager, Resources – Regeneration and Local Services, Phillip Curran gave a presentation (for copies, see file of minutes).

Councillor Howell sought clarification on the revenue outturn position and if the Quarter 2 figure of £101.246 million was forecast or actual income. The Finance Manager confirmed that it was actual income.

Councillor Howell then sought clarification on Business Support in the revenue 2017/18 table that had a variance of £86 million under. The Finance Manager responded that this figure should be nil due to recharges but would be adjusted by the year end.

Councillor Howell then sought clarification on the additional surpluses within Technical Services budgeting to make a surplus on trading activities of £0.9 million. The Finance Manager advised that that if it generates more money than anticipated it would be a surplus which has moved to highway services which had an overspend. He also sought clarification on whether the reported capital spend is actual cash spend or also contains approved commitments and whether the Finance Manager was confident that monies would be spent by the year-end.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10 Verbal Update on Review of Durham County Council's Allotment Services

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer gave Members a verbal update on the review of Durham County Council's Allotment Services.

Members were advised that the review group had met twice and at the first meeting Members had looked at the allotment service, the current policy and management arrangements.

The last session looked at the importance of a good policy, key elements of a good policy and regional examples of new policy implementation. They also looked at the comparison of the current policy and the proposed new policy and a comparison of regional allotment policies which generated lots of questions. In view of this it was decided to defer the transition arrangements to the meeting to be held on 1 February 2018 and to include the future management arrangements of category 3 allotment plots.

Arrangements have been made for an additional meeting to be held on 9 February 2018, which will look at the proposed arrangements for the future management of category 1 and 2 allotment plots.

The meeting scheduled to be held on 16 February 2018, Members will hear from some Town and Parish Councils representative who have been invited to attend the meeting.

The Chairman commented that the review was a detailed piece of work which was important and wished to thank those members that had attended the review group meetings.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Special Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 1A, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 2 February 2018 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor E Adam (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors O Milburn, D Bell, J Clare, J Clark, P Howell, P Jopling, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Martin, A Simpson, L Taylor and M Wilson

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton and Mr D Kinch

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Avery, L Brown, R Crute, A Gardner, A Patterson, P Sexton and S Zair.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor L Maddison substituted for Councillor Gardner.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

5 Water Management and County Durham Plan

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 a presentation from Spatial Policy providing an overview of the Water Management Policies within the County Durham Plan and presentations from the Flood Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) for County Durham (Durham County Council (DCC), Northumbrian Water Ltd (NWL) and the Environment Agency (EA)), detailing activity

undertaken in the county (for copy of report and slides of presentations, see file of minutes).

County Durham Plan – Water Management Policies

The Committee received a presentation from the Principal Policy Officer, Spatial Planning and Policy, Regeneration and Local Services that highlighted the following points:-

- County Durham Plan timetable
- Water Management Policies – policies developed in partnership, 2 policies water management and water infrastructure
- Water Management Policy – Flood Risk, SuDS and Water Quality
- Water Infrastructure – Disposal of foul water in new developments, sewerage and waste water infrastructure, flood defence infrastructure
- Evidence Bases – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Water Cycle Study (WCS)

Mr Kinch sought clarification as to whether the information in the presentation was taken from the 2010 County Durham Plan (CDP) or the emerging CDP. The Principal Policy Officer responded that he thought the information was taken from the emerging document but would confirm this.

Councillor Clare referred to the requirement for all new developments to take flood mitigation into account and asked for reassurance that this requirement was included in the planning process. He then referred to SuDS and the issue of maintenance and asked for clarification as to who would be responsible for maintenance in the future.

The Principal Policy Officer indicated that once the County Durham Plan is adopted then the water management policies will have more teeth and will stipulate to developers what is required from them in relation to flood mitigation and will allow the planning authority to say no to developments on the basis of flood risk. The Head of Technical Services advised Members that he would cover SuDS in his presentation.

Environment Agency

The Committee received a presentation from the Team Leader Partnership and Strategic Overview, Environment Agency that highlighted the following points:-

- The Six year Flood and Coastal Risk Management Committee (FCRM) Investment Programme - £135m 6 year programme, £72m grant in aid, requiring £46m partnership contributions, 231 schemes, 5626 properties better protected from flood risk and 688 properties better protected from coastal erosion
- Indicative Programme 2018 – 2021 for Northumbria Wide - the remaining 4 year capital programme totals £71.4m, £32m FCRM GiA, £9m Local Levy and £30m other sources
- Indicative Programme 2018 – 2021 for Durham County – 8 schemes by DCC, 1 EA scheme with a total of £11.3m including £1.9 m FCRM GiA, £2.1m NFM GiA and £1.0m local levy

- Northumbria Wide Indicative Programme Allocation for 2018/19 – Overall FCRM capital programme for 2018/19 is £32m, £13.7m FCRM GiA, £3.3m Local Levy, £9.1m public contributions and £6m private contributions
- Durham County – Indicative Programme Allocations for 2018/19 – 6 projects (1EA) with a total of £4.2m, £0.6 m FRCM GiA, £0.4m NFM GiA, £0.4m local levy and £2.7m public
- Durham County – Indicative 2018/19 programme allocations – Chester-le-Street Deculvert; Dipton SW Flood Management works; Dunelm Walk, Leadgate; Lanchester surface water; NFM – Weardale NFM Demonstrator (EA) and Shotley Bridge SW Flood Management
- Progress with EA Flood Alleviation Schemes in 2017/18 including Chester-le-street, Weardale Natural Flood Management Demonstrator
- Investment Pipeline Development
- Asset Maintenance – 168 Assets in County Durham, 107 defence walls and flood embankments and 57 FCeRM Structures and 2 land drainage pumping stations; 24km of maintenance channel and £216K allocation 2018-19
- The Future – Demonstrating new ways of working; contribution to economic regeneration/growth; integrated management of flood risk; preparing for the next investment period and Brexit.

The Chairman referred to the strategic work and partnership working demonstrating proactive work by FRMAs in County Durham and this partnership working had resulted in the county receiving a lot of grant funding for flood mitigation projects/schemes.

Councillor Clark referred to the excellent work in relation to Weardale Natural Flood Management Demonstrator and asked what work was being undertaken to promote/.publicise the scheme as we need to celebrate the project.

The Team Leader Partnership and Strategic Overview responded that they were initially talking with Farmers as they were hosting the work and that there would be a programme of community engagement including discussions with Area Action Partnerships (AAPs), active partnerships, local meetings with residents and councillors etc. and active partnerships.

Councillor Howell sought an explanation of the graph on the mitigated flood flows asking for clarification as to whether the objective of the graph is to move from the blue line to the red line and continued by asking what the benefit would be to the local community.

The Team leader partnership and Strategic Overview explained that measuring rainfall is complex and that the model looked at Upper Weardale where the impact is greatest and then moved down the catchment, looking downstream, however, it is difficult to say how significant the impact would be downstream. He concluded by highlighting that the Weardale Natural Flood Management Demonstrator project will identify the impact of the project at mitigating flood risk in Weardale including properties identified as being at flood risk.

Mr T Bolton referred to the flash floods in the 1980's which cost the council a considerable sum of money and asked if the impact of flooding on the infrastructure including bridges was taken into consideration when looking at funding/grants available. The Team Leader Partnership and Strategic Overview responded that they look at impact generally including

how much damage could be caused and the impact on houses, roads and businesses. However, Government gives much less grant to infrastructure rather than households although more funding is becoming available in the future for infrastructure.

Councillor Maddison referred to a development in her area on the hillside which had flood prevention measures in place consisting of water being stored in two ponds via a culvert however there had been no maintenance arrangements put in place which had resulted in the culvert becoming blocked and the areas around the ponds not protected. Residents further down the hill believed that the development had caused their area which previously had been dry to now be wet.

The Team Leader Partnership and Strategic Overview responded that he did not know the development but flood prevention was considered in the planning process and that maintenance was essential. The Head of Technical Services DCC advised the Member that he would look into the matter, if she could give him further details at the close of the meeting.

Councillor Jopling asked whether the Environment Agency and the Coal Authority engage with each other in relation to flood risk from the Coal Authority no longer pumping out the mines.

Members were advised that the Environment Agency and Coal Authority do engage and actively monitor groundwater levels. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager (DCC) commented that the Coal Authority monitor the situation and if water comes to the surface then the relevant partners work together to remedy the issue.

Durham County Council – Drainage & Coastal Protection Team

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

- Review for 2017/18 – 43 schemes; 141 requests for flood investigations since 1 April 2017; 4 kms of highway ditches cleansed; significant number of A-road issues investigated and resolved; 434 planning application drainage designs vetted; 3 SuDS adoption agreements signed off
- Grant Funded Schemes for 2017/18 – Chester-le-Street – study and Murton Attenuation Scheme
- Going Forward – 27 Schemes and studies are in the EA programme for 2017/26; Lanchester flood prevention scheme construction phase; Chester-le-Street flood prevention scheme currently undertaking a public consultation
- Medium Term Investment Plan 2017-2026 – Total value £4,474m
- Partnership Working
- Lanchester Flood Prevention Scheme
- Chester-le-Street Flood Prevention Scheme
- Murton Flood Prevention Scheme
- Joint Studies with Northumbrian Water at Barnard Castle, Sedgfield and Bowburn A177 Culvert

Councillor Clare referred to the Chapter Homes site where the developers had made a feature of the SuD scheme by way of a nature reserve.

Councillor Martin referred to the cost of SuDS for new builds and commented that this resulted in owners of new builds having an additional fee to pay which resulted in some residents paying this additional fee on top of their council tax, he continued that he was aware that this was a countywide issue. He then referred to the Civic Heart area in Chester-le-Street and asked whether consideration was given in relation to flooding issues. Officers responded that they had found documents dating back to 1894 which referred to flooding in this area which was a long term issue. In 2009 money was made available for residents for flood defence to their properties but not all residents took up the offer and the area flooded again in 2012.

Councillor Martin sought clarification on plan B if they weren't successful with the funding for the Chester-le-Street flood prevention scheme. The Officer advised that a flood wall was the other option.

Councillor Howell referred to the 4 kms of highway ditches cleansed and asked how many kms of ditches the Council have in the county. Officers responded that it is an ongoing programme and last year 24 kms had been cleansed. The officer agreed to get back to Councillor Howell with the total kms of ditches in the county.

Councillor Jopling commented that a lot of development is taking place on green areas in the county which causes drainage issues currently and in the future. The Head of Technical Services responded that historically development has taken place without full regard to flood risk however the 2010 Flood Water Management Act strengthened flood prevention with new controls to prevent flooding. Development can only proceed if it does not increase flood risk. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Team check data from developers to ensure that the proposed flood preventions were adequate.

Councillor Maddison commented that there are drainage issues where new development schemes feed into existing drainage systems which had resulted in a 'waterfall' appearing in the middle of the road due to a build-up of soil in the pipes and asked how frequently the maintenance of pipes is undertaken.

The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager responded that if the development had not been adopted by Durham County Council then the maintenance responsibility would be with the developer. He agreed to speak to Councillor following the conclusion of the meeting to get detail of the specific incident to which she was referring.

Councillor Clare referred to the drainage of new developments being better, the problem was patios and the front of houses being tarmacked (urban creep) and asked if there was anything in the County Durham Plan to control this. He also asked if in relation to the flood prevention schemes such as Murton scheme does it have to be a green space with depressions to capture the water or could it be concrete with depressions such as a skate park. Officer responded that one of the elements in a flood prevention scheme is infiltration into the ground however skate parks could be used to disguise a flood prevention scheme. In relation to urban creep Durham County Council now asks more from developers in flood risk areas by limiting what can be used for patios, driveways etc. so that they use materials which can be infiltrated by water.

Councillor Milburn referred to the Lanchester Scheme and asked if this scheme would end all flooding problems in Lanchester. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager responded that they had undertaken a study with the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water and had looked at all aspects including water from the cycleway and were confident that the scheme would resolve the problems but they could not guarantee. Councillor Milburn responded by referring to the scheme put in place in Lanchester by Derwentside District Council which flooded 10 years later.

Councillor Howell referred to the Medium Term Investment Plan for 2017-2026 and commented that he would like to see the list prioritised.

The Drainage and Coastal Protection Officer explained that the projects listed are all priorities and that the order in which they are progressed/actioned is dependent upon the project/scheme meeting funding criteria and funding becoming available for that particular scheme.

Northumbrian Water

The Committee received a presentation from the Sustainable Sewerage Manager that highlighted the following points:-

- Interactive portal – www.nwlcommunityportal.co.uk
- Update on completed sewer network schemes within County Durham
 - Park View, Chester-Le-Street
 - Pelaw Wood, Durham
 - Forrest Park, Aycliffe
 - Durham Road, Spennymoor
 - Murton Flooding
- Update on planned sewer network schemes within County Durham
 - Flass Vale
 - Elvet Waterside
 - Walkergate
- Sewerage treatment works investment
 - Barkershaugh Sewage Treatment Works
 - River Gaunless, Bishop Auckland
- Joint Working
- Update on adoption of SuDS
- Rainwise Areas – Crook, Seaham, Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Stanley & Annfield Plain and Easington
- Slowing the Flow – Using rain – not the main and rain garden planters

The Chairman referred to SuDS adoption scheme and sought clarification if the Committee could feed into the consultation. The Sustainable Sewerage Manager responded that it was a national consultation and she would share the link with members so that they could feed into the consultation.

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 and Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham receive further presentations from the Risk Management Authorities at a future special meeting of the committee arranged for February 2019.

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Special Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 12 February 2018 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor E Adam (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors L Brown, J Clare, J Clark, R Crute, A Gardner, P Howell, P Jopling, R Manchester, C Martin, A Patterson, A Simpson, P Sexton and M Wilson

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton and Mr D Kinch

Also Present:

Councillors J Atkinson, A Batey, L Maddison and Mr T Batson

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Milburn, D Bell, J Carr and L Taylor.

2 Substitute Members

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

5 The Heritage Coast and the Tourism Offer - Overview

The Committee considered the joint report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services that provided Members with background information on the Heritage Coast and work undertaken to promote it as a tourism destination prior to a presentation by officers from Regeneration and Local Services Service Grouping (for copy of report and slides of presentations, see file of minutes).

Visit County Durham

The Committee received a presentation from the Managing Director of Visit County Durham that highlighted the following points:-

- Introduction
- Destination Performance:
 - 19.25 million visitors in 2016 up 3% on the previous year
 - 93% day visitors, 7% staying visitors
 - Economic value £806m per annum up 2% on 2015
 - Food and drink and recreation main areas of expenditure
 - Mainly from the North East on a repeat visit, first time visitors are more likely to be national or international
 - Main age profile is over 45, visiting in couples
 - Main segments 'Country Loving Traditions' (48%), 'Fun in the Sun' (19%)
- Durham Coast Performance:
 - Economic value £120.7m in 2016 up by 3% on 2015
 - 3.16 million people visited Durham Coast in 2016 up by 3%
 - 94% day visitors, 6% staying visitors
 - 15% of expenditure in the county as a whole
 - 1.592 employed in tourism – directly and indirectly
 - 14% of overall tourism employment in the country
 - Food and drink sector made the biggest contribution
- Marketing the Coast - Social Media, Multi-Media, Email Marketing, Print Media and Direct Mail, Search, Website, Social Media, Video, Other Social Media, Public Relations, Blogs and Mobile
- Opportunities and Challenges

Mr T Bolton commented that he had looked at the Visit County Durham's website to see if it promoted the link to Lord Byron and asked if any promotional activity had been undertaken two years ago to promote the 200th anniversary of Lord Byron's marriage. He continued that if no promotion of the lord Byron link had been undertaken then it was a lost opportunity. He also referred to the need to promote the unique geology of the Durham coast line.

The Managing Director responded that they used the link to Lord Byron as a promotion but admitted that the 200th year anniversary was a missed opportunity. The Times supplement had a feature on the coast however, they did not promote the geology there is a need to make more of the geology of the coast in the future.

Councillor Jopling referred to the figures for visitor numbers and asked how many visitors were from abroad, other areas of the country and how many were local.

The Managing Director responded that the figures were unable to be broken down into that detail.

Councillor Jopling then referred to the accommodation currently available and commented that current hotel provision is expensive and that there is a lack of affordable accommodation for weekend visitors.

The Managing Director indicated that they promoted all types of accommodation on their website.

Mr D Kinch asked if the County had blue flag status for any of its beaches.

The Heritage Coast Officer responded that none of county Durham's beaches have blue flag status as County Durham does not have the funding to meet the requirements of the blue flag criteria it is very restrictive.

Mr D Kinch continued by asking as to whether any County Durham beaches have lifeguards.

The Heritage Coast Officer responded that none of County Durham beaches currently have lifeguards as there is no funding available.

Councillor Gardner referred to the cycling and walking routes and commented that currently there was no links with the East and West of the county and that a structure was needed to connect these routes.

The Managing Director responded that we currently have the Weardale Way and the Teesdale Way and that Visit County Durham promote the whole destination for walking and cycling.

Councillor Howell sought clarification if the figures were per calendar year or the municipal calendar year. The Managing Director confirmed that it was the calendar year.

Councillor Howell then asked about the performance in relation to economic value was up 3% and how did this compare to the rest of the country. The Managing Director advised that she would be able to provide the member with this information in due course.

Councillor Brown asked how the 2017 figures compared to 2016. The Managing Director responded that it was too soon to tell but the figures would be available May/June. Visit County Durham do speak to accommodation providers throughout the year and visitor attractions and they were reporting both good occupancy levels and visitor numbers.

Councillor Clare commented that following the loss of One North East the funding available for promotion had been cut significantly which had resulted in Visit County Durham having a very small budget to promote the county as a tourism destination and whilst recognising that blue flag beaches, walking and cycling were desirable the council were not responsible to provide many of these and it was about using available resources and making the most of what the County has to offer. He continued that it would be wrong to compare County Durham with North Yorkshire which have far more funding to spend on promotion. He asked if the number of visitors for 'Fun in the Sun' included day visitors. The Managing Director confirmed that the figures included day visitors.

Councillor Crute referred to the large disparity in day and staying visitors and sought clarification if they promoted local accommodation businesses and how far did they work with neighbouring local authorities and rail providers. He commented that the new rail link would address some issues.

The Managing Director responded that they promoted Durham as a destination for overnight accommodation under the 'stay a little longer' message. However there are challenges with accommodation and visitor attractions and used York as an example where you could get off the train and walk to 11 visitor attractions whereas Durham has a dispersed offer. The Tourism Management Plan identifies gaps in the current offer and Visit County Durham is working with other destinations including North Yorkshire, Cumbria, Northumberland and Scotland to address these gaps and get Durham a 'go to' destination.

Councillor Crute asked how they break down these barriers as people were not getting off the train at Durham.

The Managing Director advised Members that they were working with local businesses and the North East Tourism Alliance Group and further developing links with other authorities to promote hotels in the county for major tourist events for example the Tall Ships this is a joint promotion.

Councillor Atkinson sought clarification on how the visitor numbers were counted.

The Managing Director advised Members that the Scarborough Tourism Economic Assessment Model (STEAM) was used, which was a trend model which had been used since 2003.

Councillor Clark referred to Visit County Durham's website which currently had no reference to small accommodation provision and asked how often the website is refreshed and commented that she would like to see an increase in the promotion of smaller accommodation available within the whole of the county.

Councillor Maddison asked if they had links with the caravan club which produce a book of sites.

The Managing Director indicated that they worked with the caravan club nationally and that there were only two sites in County Durham, one in Durham City and one in Barnard Castle. Visit County Durham rely on businesses contacting them direct and then Visit County Durham will place them on their website, businesses need to agree to their information being placed on the website however she would look into the caravan club brochure and the possibility of more smaller caravan sites in the county being included.

Mr Batson commented that he was always asked as to whether Visit County Durham promotes Durham City (Durham) or County Durham and that this needed clarification. He indicated that Northumberland's model does not fit County Durham and that the Durham coast is magnificent and that we had the coast to coast cycle route and asked whether the coast or the countryside receives the larger share of funding.

The Managing Director responded that Visit County Durham represents the whole of the county and that the level of funding in relation to rural and coastal was balanced and that the coast was considered as rural under DEFRA's definition when it came to funding.

Councillor Jopling referred to Bishop Auckland's Food Festival and asked if there was anything similar in the rest of the county as huge numbers of visitors attend this tourism

event. It had taken several years to become popular and more however more still could be made of it and there was an opportunity to develop similar events in other areas of the county.

Seaham Marina

The Committee received a presentation from the Team Leader, Regeneration that highlighted the following points in relation to the Seaham Marina development:-

- Background
- Seaham Marina:
 - Regenerated from the North Dock and transformed into a modern marina with facilities and amenities to rival any across the North East
 - Facility offers first class business premises, visitor centre, viewing terrace, public toilet facilities, slipway and boat launch and a boatyard storage area
 - New dock gate installed that allows water to be retained within the dock at all times
 - Provides electric and water to cater for 96 boats on berthing and visitor pontoons
- Photographs shown of the site before and during site works
- Waterside Business Units - 12 units of 12 x 500 sq. ft.
- Coastal Communities Funding – Secured £1.74m to deliver a range of expansion plans:
 - Capital – Boatyard extension, fit-out and boat hoist, extension to pontoons to provide additional 19 berths, coastal/watersports centre, replacement fencing, access gates and improved height to Spiels wall
 - Revenue – Water Sports Development Officer and Water Sports Activity Instructor
 - Photographs shown of the Pontoons, Activity Centre and Water Sports
- Sports England Funding:
 - £149,532 successful funding application with Sports England to help develop the coastal activity/water sport centre
 - 19,429 attendances
 - Worked with Primary and Secondary School and local community groups
 - Delivered Sessions in Kayaking, Canoeing, Stand up paddle boarding, Climbing, Fitness Sessions, Boot Camp, Cycling, Orienteering, Walking and Water Safety
- Opportunities – Development of a programme of events/activities at the marina in association with other partners and further marketing of the Marina and Activity Centre and the opportunities presented by the ever developing Heritage Coast
- Recognition and Awards – RICS, RIBA, RTPI and Environmental Awards

The Chairman commented that it was interesting to see the amount of work and funding that had gone in to allow the Council to create what can be seen today.

Councillor Crute congratulated the Team responsible for the Seaham Marina Development which was a much needed regeneration scheme due to the closure of the three pits in the area. However, it is perceived within the county that there is an imbalance on the coast with a lot of funding going into Seaham, there is a need for development to attract tourists/visitors to the remaining Durham Coast to compliment the development at Seaham.

Councillor Howell endorsed the team work and asked how industry sat as part of the Seaham development.

The Team Leader, Regeneration responded that the development was a joint venture with the dock company who were very supportive of what they were wanting to achieve. The dock company had a warehouse and distribution facility and as a result of the development have the ability to move cargo easier due to the links with the A19. They have also gifted additional land for the further development of Seaham Marina.

Councillor Howell asked if the products brought into the docks were clean. The Team Leader, Regeneration responded that the products were not 100% clean, they had had some issues with coal dust however the dock company had worked with Durham County Council to resolve this issue.

Mr Bolton referred to the visitor centre being staffed by volunteers and that it was not always open and was quite constrained in terms of size and the amount of items on display. He also commented on the geology of the marina, He then referred to the docks which had been a thriving fishing port at one time however this seems to have disappeared and asked was there any plans to encourage the selling of fish from the local fishing industry.

The Regeneration Manager responded that they are trying to open up the visitor centre more and they were currently working to see if the opening hours could be extended. They were also looking at storage so that they could display more items. With regard to the geology of the marina they had regular visits from Newcastle and Durham University and were in the process of developing leaflets and signposts. Three commercial fishing boats still operated however there is not the capacity to increase the number of fishing boats operating on a commercial basis. There are plans this summer for a pop up seafood café in the form of a horse box.

Councillor Gardner referred to the 1 metre water level in the dock and commented that this was disappointing.

The Team Leader, Regeneration responded that they retain the water at a 1 meter level to ensure boats remained afloat at all times within the marina but they could take boats with a greater keel depth the extent of which was dependent upon tidal waters.

Councillor Sexton referred to the coast to coast cycle route and that there was no photo opportunity as evidence that you had completed the course. There was also little signage on the main coast to coast route and nothing to bring people into Chester-le-Street or Seaham and asked if the signage could be updated.

The Team Leader responded that work is ongoing regarding signage and that discussions are taking place to try and bring a triathlon to Seaham in the future. In addition the Regeneration Team is working with the Heritage Coast officer in relation to the Seascape Project and are in discussions concerning the development of Red Acre Point as a vantage point.

Councillor Manchester sought clarification on the benefits to the local economy of the Seaham Marina development.

The Team Leader, Regeneration responded that a snapshot of visitors are asked to complete a survey which shows on average that each visitor spends £10 per visit with 200,000 going to the Marina in 2017. The Local Authorities had contributed 700,000 to the Marina development.

Councillor Jopling referred to job creation and if it had been successful.

The Team Leader, Regeneration advised Members that 70 jobs had been created including apprenticeship opportunities however in the tourism sector generally the number of jobs created would be three fold.

Mr Batson referred to the amount of money used in land reclamation which achieved so little but the social value in this project was enormous and that local businesses selling fresh fish produce was ideal particularly as there is a good mix of fish restaurants and fish and chip shops.

The Team Leader, Regeneration advised that Seaham Hall bought some of the local catch and in the summer months cars were bumper to bumper trying to get into Seaham.

Mr Batson went on to ask if the Town Council was active in what was happening. The Team Leader, Regeneration indicated that they were proactive and had a comprehensive programme of events.

Councillor Maddison asked if the restaurants in Seaham also offered health options.

The Team Leader, Regeneration responded that East Coast Fitness had a unit, they had boot camps and work was taking place with local businesses looking at the possibility of healthy food options.

Our Heritage Coast

The Committee received a presentation from the Heritage Coast Officer that highlighted the following points:-

- Photographs of the Heritage Coast in 1992 and 2010
- Heritage Coast Objectives:
 - Preserve and enhance landscape quality
 - Access and Public Enjoyment
 - Nature Conservation
 - Education Opportunities
 - Greater Participation
 - Integrated Management
- Reach for the Beach Outdoor Festival – 28 May to 3 June 2018
- Management Plan and Annual Business Plan (to be published in March 2018)
- Partnership Structure
- Pictures of Crimdon in the 1930's – 1982 and now for nature and leisure
- Crimdon Challenges:
 - Key gateway site
 - Over 400,000 visitors per year

- No facilities – limits audience, family groups, repeat visits, limits use by schools and limits events
- High nature conservation value
- Key species – little tern 10% of UK breeding population
- Litter
- Currently:
 - Fencing for dune recovery and to control access
 - Colony will be fenced and wardened this breeding season
 - Enhanced signage
 - Scientific research
 - Final year of EU LIFE project
 - Facilities options produced
- Crimdon Facilities
 - Coastal communities fund
 - Using others experience
 - Four options produced and costed:
 - 40 seat café, toilets, volunteer space, interpretation space
 - Need to include whole site, events infrastructure
 - Currently £1.8 million, expect £2.8 million
 - Revenue
- Potential new build Crimdon café and staff facilities
- Tyne to Tees Shores and Seas – A Seascape Partnership
- Ambition:
 - Heritage – whether built, cultural or natural, will be better recorded, managed and in better condition
 - Coastal communities – better engaged with their rich heritage and can better access the amazing coast on their doorstep
 - £5 million over 6 years
 - Evidence base for future coastal and marine policy for England
- Build on:
 - North East Marine Planning process
 - Sunderland Tall Ships 2018
 - England Coast Path partnership
- Proposed Projects:
 - Hartlepool's high and low lights
 - Wreck, water and shore activities
 - Volunteer training and citizen science
 - Beach care and blue gym
 - Seascape stations
- Partners – The National Trust, Durham County Council, The Wildlife Trust, Northumbrian Water, Newcastle University, South Tyneside Council, Sunderland Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, North Eastern IFCA, Heritage Coast, Natural England, Roker Pier, Living History (North East), Environment Agency, East Durham Heritage Group, Groundwork NE, Marine Management Organisation, The Great British Coast, The National Lottery and Heritage Lottery Fund
- Transnational working Young People, Art and the Environment

Following the presentation the Chairman sought clarification of how often the Durham Heritage Coast website was updated as he could only find information up to 2016.

The Heritage Coast Officer responded that they tended to use facebook and twitter with the website used more as a register. He continued that there was a resources issue in keeping the website updated.

Mr T Bolton referred to the East Coast railway line and asked if consideration had been given to providing adult exercise equipment along the route.

The Heritage Coast Officer responded that funding had been concentrated on gateway sites with the new railway station at Horden, the restoration of the wages office at Easington Colliery with a café that overlooks the colliery site and the coast. He continued that work could be undertaken with health in relation to gym equipment however the installation of exercise equipment would have ongoing maintenance costs.

The Chairman commented that his parish council has installed adult exercise equipment which was meant to be vandal proof however the equipment had still been broken. He continued by asking about accessibility for the disabled.

The Heritage Coast Officer responded that they have well developed access for the disabled with key sites access friendly however what needs to be produced is a leaflet for the disabled and that this was on their list to be produced and that they were working with the Local Access Forum on this. There was the possibility that they could do some promotion around the introduction of the Horden Park run which was coming shortly.

Councillor Crute referred to promotion and community engagement and that people needed to be aware of schemes and that they had an opportunity to input and develop schemes to ensure that coastal sites have what local people want.

The Heritage Coast Officer commented that in relation to Crimdon it is only at the funding bid stage. When funding is agreed that will be the time to engage local communities and local members, looking at various development options to ensure that any future development has had significant input from the local community.

Councillor Clark referred to the Durham Coast Half Marathon which was publicised by the National Trust and was facilitated by volunteers and that arrangements are being made to have Horden host a park run.

Mr Batson referred to the need for clean public toilets for visitors and that such facilities had be publicised together with good signage. He then congratulated the team on their long term vision.

The Chairman indicated that public toilets were closing due to lack of funding and referred to public toilets in Europe which were unmanned and cleaned themselves automatically. He also indicated that litter was an issue with facilities.

The Chairman advised members that there was a site visit to the Heritage Coast on the 29 March 2018, he then thanked officers for their presentations and asked members to agree the recommendations outlined in the report.

Resolved: (i) That the report and presentations be noted.

(ii) That a report providing detail of the further development of the Heritage Coast be included in the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees work programme for 2018/19.

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



8 March 2018

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 current County Durham Environment Awards and the continued strengthening of the community, partner and Member engagement in the delivery of the programme.

Background

- 2 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2017 received an overview presentation of the development, progress and current processes of the County Durham Environment Awards. In the resulting discussion members of the committee made a number of suggestions to strengthen community, partner and Member engagement. These suggestions were provided to the relevant officers in the Real Service Grouping and arrangements have been made for their attendance at the 8 March meeting with a presentation covering:
 - Aims and objectives
 - Context
 - History of awards
 - Funding
 - Partners
 - Process
 - Ceremony and Winners
 - Further development and strengthening engagement

Environment Awards; Key Features

- 3 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 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 Award winner’s ceremony.
- 6 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.
- 7 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 is used annually and under the new corporate communications and marketing structure the use of video has been expanded to better share the messages of successful schemes.
- 8 The Awards programme continues to strengthen engagement and now engages with a diverse cross-section of the local community but there may be further engagement opportunities, particularly in the more people-focused 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.

- 9 The Service Grouping continues to explore further engagement opportunities using such channels 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.

Recommendation

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

Background papers : n/a

Contact: [Steve Bhowmick/Bryan Harris] Tel: 03000 267122

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – The Awards incur an annual cost of up to £10,000 of which DCC cover a maximum of 50% depending on sponsorship levels 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

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



8 March 2018

Culture and Sport Service

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

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with supporting information in advance of a presentation on the Culture and Sport Service

Background

- 2 At its meeting on 14 July 2017, Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed its work programme for the new municipal year. Included in the work programme was an overview on the Culture and Sports Service.
- 3 The Culture and Sports Service falls within the Regeneration and Local Services service grouping and covers a wide range of Culture & Sport services.

Detail

- 4 The service offer covers Leisure Centres, Libraries, Theatres & Arts, Collections & Museums, the Countryside Estate, Railways Paths & Parks, Festivals & Events, Outdoor Sports and Playing Pitches & Pavilions most of which are supported by volunteer, education and development initiatives.
- 5 The service has an expenditure of approximately £34m and generates over £11m income, and attracts an additional £3m external funding income. Employing around 1000 staff and engaging over 3000 volunteers the service contributes widely to the council's overall ambitions.
- 6 As part of the meeting Culture & Sport will give a presentation to provide an overview of the service covering the following:
 - a) Service Vision
 - b) Nature and Scope of the Service
 - c) Key Projects & Improvement Boards
Libraries

Leisure Centres
Parks & Countryside

- d) Challenges
- e) Opportunities

Recommendations

- 7 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to:
- a) Receive the information contained in the report and presentation.
 - b) Provide comment on the information received.

Contact: Tom Gorman

Tel: 03000 268027

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing – None

Risk – None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – None

Accommodation – None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – None

Consultation – None

Procurement – None

Disability Issues – None

Legal Implications – None

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

8 March 2018



**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 6 March 2017. It is therefore considered timely for the committee to receive a further update at the meeting on the 8 March 2018 and arrangements have been made for Jennifer Jones, Senior Environmental Health Officer to attend the meeting and deliver a presentation focusing on the work of the Community Action Team in the previous year
- 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 Team 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

5 A further programme was then planned for the following year:

2017/18

- New Kyo
- Wheatley Hill
- Dawdon
- Chester-le-Street Central
- Spennymoor (where the team is currently working)

6 In each location, an 8-10-week programme took place. Each initiative was divided into three phases:

- Engagement, Intelligence Gathering and Priority setting,
- Action, and
- Review, Exit and 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 walkabouts of the area, litter clearance, waste carrier licence checks, and talks to local schools. At the end of each project, an exit strategy was usually 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 2015-2018 Programme

7 The team carried out a total of 2048 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 205 legal notices served and 93 works in default were required where there was non-compliance with notices.

8 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 – Comparison of casework in CAT project areas up to 23 December 2017

Location	Casework	Notices	Work In Default
Easington Colliery	278	135	41

New Kyo	163	40	10
Wheatley Hill	93	37	8
Dawdon	189	37	5
Chester-le-Street	88	9	0
TOTAL - 2017-18	811	258	64

Table 1.4 - 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%

Table 1.5 - Percentage increase of casework in CAT project areas from 2016 to 23 December 2017

Year	Casework	Notices	Work In Default
TOTAL - 2016-17	764	209	50
TOTAL - 2017-18	811	258	64
% INCREASE	6%	23%	28%

- 9 As tables 1.4 and 1.5 show the CAT workload and output increased significantly between 2015-16 and 2016-17 and slightly in the past year. There are several reasons for this:
- There were 5 projects carried out in the year 2017-18, with only 4 projects compared the previous 2 years;
 - 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.
- 10 Removing rubbish accumulations was identified as a priority issue in all project locations, with improving housing standards and empty/derelict properties also being chosen in several of the projects.
 - 11 There were a number of 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.
 - 12 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.
 - 13 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.
 - 14 At the end of each project partners were invited to give feedback and development suggestions at the final partner meeting. The feedback received continues to be very positive on the joint working opportunities and the specific interventions that take place during each project. Community engagement remains an area that could be improved; and new approaches are being tried to attempt to combat this. It is, however, 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 it is common in areas with a high tenant turn over - people are reluctant to invest in communities where they may not be staying 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.
 - 15 New approaches have been tried in the past year to further engage with residents. These include:
 - a. distributing 'action letters' to residents at the start of the 'action' weeks to let them know the project priorities and how they can get involved;
 - b. continuing to try different approaches to holding 'drop-in' events for residents - such as inviting residents to join us on walkabouts or officers going along to popular community activities to speak to residents.

- c. offering to mark numbers on residents' bins to deter against bin theft and give residents more responsibility over their bins;
- d. offering to carry out rat surveys of individual yards to look for any evidence of pests or drainage defects; and
- e. offering to carry out dampness surveys of individual homes.

This door knocking work is usually done at the same time as the Fire and Rescue Service offer residents 'Safe and Wellbeing' checks of properties. The response from residents engaged in these activities has been positive – and advice about other environmental matters is often given as the activity is taking place.

It is acknowledged that the take up is still relatively small, but the activities do specifically target those in the geographical focus area. The best engagement through these activities was in Dawdon where 10% of households in the focus area either had their bins marked or drains surveyed. And at least 5 other residents talked to us about their concerns in the area, despite not wanting to take part in the activities we offered.

- 16 The resident and landlord survey response returns continue to be low, however we continue to seek views and some useful comments have been received which have helped improve the programme.
- 17 Feedback from landlords and residents has 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 review period 2017-2018

- 18 From 31 July – 24 August 2017 and 2 – 21 January 2018 the CAT undertook a period of review. A desktop review (comparing in-house and partner service requests) was carried out and several project locations were revisited: Coundon, New Kyo and Wheatley Hill. Horden and Easington Colliery were not revisited as part of the review as other initiatives were taking place during the review periods. The purpose was to look at the sustainability of the work carried out and address any ongoing issues.
- 19 The number of housing and environmental issues found on the review walkabout was lower than identified in the initial walkabout at the start of the original project.

- 20 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 1st walkabout	Review walkabout	% Change
Coundon	85	28	-67%
New Kyo	77	44	-42%
Wheatley Hill	53	25	-53%

- 21 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.
- 22 The exit strategies were largely followed however, there remains a need for further monitoring of previous CAT project locations following exit.
- 23 Any barriers identified by landlords and residents are referred to senior management to raise awareness and open departmental discussions.
- 24 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.
- 25 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

- 26 The Community Action Team will begin the 2018-19 programme in April 2018 visiting four new areas. The number of initiatives per year has been reduced from five to four to allow more time in each area for project work and partner activities. It is anticipated that this will enable better resident engagement which will in turn, embed the enforcement work that takes place and lead to sustainable change.
- 27 The focus when choosing locations continues to be on areas of greater need rather than following a geographical route round the county. This is established through a dataset of deprivation, empty homes, median house price and percentage private rented in receipt of housing benefit. This data was scrutinised and combined with EHCP public health complaint data to establish the project locations.
- 28 Potential locations were excluded where the CAT has visited in the past year, there is less than 10% private rented in receipt of housing benefit, and where Public Health team data/intelligence show that the area is not environmentally degraded.
- 29 Two of the four areas chosen for the next programme take in selective licensing areas. These areas have not been visited by the Community Action Team in the past, despite ranking highly on our criteria for a number of years. The Community Action Team plans to work closely with the Private Housing Initiatives team whilst working in these areas.
- 30 During the 2015 – 18 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 2018 – 19.
- 31 As the CAT goes into its sixth 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.
- 32 As part of Adult & Health Services, it is hoped that the CAT may 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