

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



4 November 2019

**Fly tipping (Operation Stop It) and
Operation Spruce Up**

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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members of the Environment & Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee with a progress report on flytipping in County Durham including work being undertaken to reduce flytipping (Operation Stop It) and detail of the evaluation of 'Operation Spruce Up' scheme.

Executive summary

- 2 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis has received an overview of various Environmental campaigns undertaken by the Regeneration and Local Services Service Grouping to tackle issues such as dog fouling, littering, graffiti and flytipping.
- 3 When determining the future work programme for the committee at the July meeting it was agreed by members that a progress update would be provided to the committee focusing on flytipping, providing detail of flytipping incidents, locations, response times, what is being flytipped, how we are tackling this issue and future plans/projects. In addition, the meeting would also provide members with detail of 'Operation Spruce-Up' including the evaluation of the project.
- 4 Arrangements have been made for the Civic Pride Officer and the Neighbourhood Warden Manager to attend the meeting on the 4 November 2019 to provide more detail in a presentation on. A copy of the presentation is attached as Appendix 2.

Recommendations

- 5 That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the information provided in the report and presentation.
- 6 That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee include in its future work programme for 2020/2021 a progress update on flytipping in the county and the various initiatives being undertaken to tackle this issue.

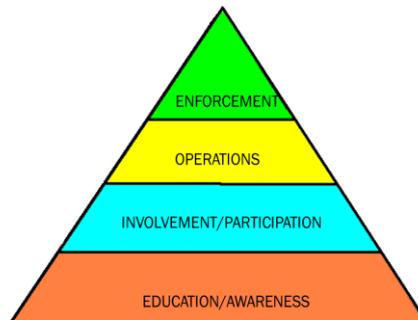
Background

- 7 Members will recall that the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2018 received an overview of various environmental projects and initiatives in the county including detail of various initiatives to tackle the issue of flytipping.
- 8 When determining the committee's future work programme it was agreed by members that a special meeting would be arranged which would include detail of flytipping in the county, providing relevant statistics together with detail of what initiatives or projects are being undertaken to tackle the issue. It was also agreed that this meeting would receive detail of the evaluation of the 'Operation Spruce Up' scheme. The committee during 2018 had included in its media items detail of when 'Operation Spruce Up' was visiting various villages in the county and the activity to be undertaken.
- 9 The local environment is crucially important to quality of life in our communities. Residents regularly report issues and concerns to the Council, Area Action Partnerships, Town and Parish Councils and elected Members on a wide range of matters from dog fouling and littering, to graffiti and flytipping. Not only do these matters impact on community safety and fear of crime, but they are also recognised as forms of anti-social behaviour, which the British Crime Survey consistently identifies that resident's feel is a big or fairly big problem in their area.
- 10 Whilst the Council does deploy considerable resources through its clean and green teams in ensuring the County is clean and attractive as possible, it is recognised that behavioural change is the key to a more sustainable environment as well as lower costs. The civic pride approach in Durham, applied since Local Government Reorganisation (diagram below) utilises programmes of education/awareness and community involvement as a key foundation to its approach to environmental services. Operations and enforcement will always have a part to play, but their role is lessened, if this more holistic approach to the local environment is taken.

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

The ‘Pride in Durham’ approach

- 12 In Durham we take a holistic approach when tackling the key areas of concerns from our communities. This means that we invest on trying to change behaviours through education and involvement along with having good operations and tough enforcement. The diagram below depicts this approach.



Flytipping - Operation Stop It

- 13 Flytipping is the most reported environmental issue to the Council and remains a high priority for our communities. In November 2014 Operation ‘Stop It’ was established to tackle this in a multi-agency way and includes various DCC sections, Police, Environment Agency and Crimestoppers and it has 3 main aims:
- (a) to reduce the number of incidents
 - (b) to target fly-tippers and;
 - (c) educate householders and businesses to understand their responsibilities in making sure their waste is disposed of properly

- 14 Rural crime (including flytipping) has recently become a National Policing priority with the good practice in Durham and our partnership working being recognised nationally.
- 15 Since the start of Operation Stop It flytipping has reduced by 26% in comparison to the national picture that has seen incidents rise to nearly 1 million each year.
- 16 The approach in Durham has seen a partnership approach and one that engenders the Durham Pride approach. This presentation will provide further detail about how the Council is performing and provide further information on what gets fly tipped and where.
- 17 There has been good progress made with ensuring that the Council provides good services that make it easier to dispose of waste. This has seen the increase in the use of bulky collections, a large increase in the number of permits for the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC). There is now the facility for businesses to take their waste to our Waste Transfer Facilities along with a new HWRC at Stainton Grove which can accommodate trade waste too.
- 18 The presentation will also describe current work with the Fire Service along with future plans for a new campaign, the introduction of a fixed penalty notice for householders duty of care and the use of money generated from the sale of seized vehicles for community projects.

Operation Spruce Up

- 19 Councils services undertake their work to a high standard, for example, levels of street cleanliness being well above national levels, reducing fly tipping, investment in highway infrastructure, and regeneration schemes all provide improvements to a local area.
- 20 Despite this, many of the Councils services are limited by the amount of time they spend in each area meaning they are not able to provide a thorough cleans. In addition, many of these services work on different rotas meaning that the work they do carry out are completed at different times resulting in the overall effect to the area having less impact.
- 21 To combat this Operation Spruce Up was launched in 2016, the scheme involves one town or village. In order to provide a Countywide approach each month a different Area Action Partnership (AAP) is covered. Receiving a 'clean up' and 'green up' to make environmental improvements and foster civic pride.
- 22 In addition, the spruce Up Officer works with the local community in order to ensure that there is a local viewpoint in the issues being tackled.

Town/Parish Councils, Housing Providers, Community Groups, Businesses and others are engaged in each area.

- 23 The Officer responsible for Spruce Up works with Schools in each area to deliver educational assemblies and classroom sessions on the importance of caring for your local environment.
- 24 Since the scheme started, over 6,800 children and young people have been involved in activities such as litter picks, planting sessions, bird and bat box building and poster competitions.
- 25 A further aspect of the campaign is the involvement of the Dogs Trust who carry out a community dog health check event at a local community space. To date there have been over 300 Dogs with their owners engaged with at events organised during Spruce Up.
- 26 The work continues and is due to run until 2022. This work gained National Recognition in 2017/8 becoming the Keep Britain Tidy – Campaign of the Year and finalist in the 2018 LGC Awards.

Conclusion

- 27 The committee will receive statistics in relation to flytipping in the county and various initiatives to tackle the issue. In addition, the committee will receive detail of the performance of the 'Operation Spruce Up' scheme. It is intended that the committee will receive a future update report in relation to various initiatives to tackle flytipping as part of its 2020/2021 work programme.

Background papers

None

Other useful documents

None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Climate Change

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

The environment and how it looks is linked to crime and disorder and working to ensure that Durham remains a clean and safe place helps contribute to this agenda.

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable