

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



19 March 2021

**Refresh of the Work
Programme**

Report of Paul Darby, Interim Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ESE OSC) with the opportunity to review and refresh the work programme for 2021/2022.

Executive summary

- 2 The ESC OSC reviews its work programme each year to reflect the objectives and associated outcomes and actions identified within the Council Plan and is set in the context of the County Durham Vision 2035 three ambitions of:
 - More and Better Jobs
 - People Live Long and Independent Lives; and
 - Connected Communities.
- 3 The report (paragraphs 10-13) provides information for members to note activity undertaken by the committee during 2020/21 and enables discussion to suggest areas for review activity or agenda items to be included in the committee's work programme for 2021/2022.

Recommendations

- 4 The ESCOSC is recommended to:

- a) Note the proposed ESCOSC work programme in relation to the current Council Plan 2020 – 2023. (copy attached at appendix 2)
- b) Note that a further report detailing the ESCOSC work programme for 2021/2022 will be submitted at the first meeting of the 2021/2022 municipal year.

Background

- 5 The current overview and scrutiny committees' work programmes focus on the priority areas identified within the context of the:
 - Council Plan
 - Cabinet's Notice of Key Decisions
 - County Durham Vision for 2035
 - Partnership plans and strategies
 - Performance and budgetary control data
 - Changes in government legislation.
- 6 In October 2019, public, private and voluntary sector bodies that make up the County Durham Partnership jointly agreed a Vision for County Durham 2035. This vision was based on a strategic assessment of need using our intelligence platform Durham Insight and was developed following extensive consultation with the public. The vision document that was agreed sets out our strategic direction and what we would like to achieve over the next 15 years and is written around three broad ambitions for the people of County Durham:
 - More and Better jobs
 - People live long and independent lives
 - Connected communities
- 7 As well as being of key importance to local people's long-term priorities, they remain key strategic ambitions in our response to the COVID-19 crisis, where key impacts relate to employment, health and wellbeing, and communities.

Council Plan 2020 - 2023

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

ambition of an excellent council has been developed for the Council Plan to capture the corporate initiatives that the council has identified and that it wants to undertake to transform its operations and enable achievement of the ambitions within the vision.

a) More and Better Jobs

- A broader experience for residents and visitors to the County
- Fewer People will be affected by Poverty and deprivation in the County

b) People Live Long and Independent Lives

- A physical environment that will contribute to good health

c) Connected Communities

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

Current Work Programme

- 10 During 2020/21, the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee had to prioritise items to come to a reduced number of formal meetings and items to be electronically circulated as briefing reports due to the Coronavirus. However, although there was a reduced number of formal meetings the committee has undertaken budgetary and performance monitoring and overview presentations:

Overview Activity

- **A broader experience for residents and visitors to the County**
 - Stockton to Darlington Railway Bicentennial Celebrations – Briefing Report
 - Heritage Assets
- **Fewer people will be affected by poverty and deprivation in the County**
 - Fuel Poverty
- **A physical environment that will contribute to good health**
 - Walking and Cycling Delivery Plan – Briefing Report
 - Climate Emergency Response Plan – Briefing Note & Formal Meeting

- Carbon Management Plan – Briefing Report
 - Urban Tree Challenge – Briefing Report
 - Heritage Coast and Tourism Offer - Briefing Report
 - Single Use Plastics – Briefing Report
- **Our towns and villages will be vibrant, well used, clean, attractive and safe**
 - Air Quality – Briefing Report
 - Community Action Team – Briefing Report
 - Environmental Campaigns
 - Overview of Household Waste Management
 - DCC Fleet – Briefing Report
- **People will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities**
 - Gala Theatre – Briefing Report
 - Leisure Centre Transformation – Briefing Report
 - Bereavement Services
 - Libraries and Museums – Briefing Report

Performance Monitoring

- 11 The committee has considered and commented on quarterly budget and performance reports for the Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Service Grouping.

Cross Cutting Areas

- 12 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also considered the following areas which cut across all objectives within the Council Plan:

- Overview of the work of the Environment Partnership – (Covers all objectives and outcomes)

- 13 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also considered the following areas which cut across objectives within the Council Plan or cut across the remit of other Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- Impact of COVID 19 on the Regeneration, Economy and Growth Service Grouping – invite to Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 July and 30 October 2020 and 23 February 2021
- Visit County Durham, update – invite to Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 October 2020
- Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document and Parking and Accessibility Supplementary Planning Document Consultations –

invite to Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 February 2021

- Town and Village Centres Programme, update – invite to Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 February 2021.
- Transport activity regional and local – Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Briefing report.

Areas for consideration in the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

- 14 Paragraphs 10 - 13 of this report identifies the activity undertaken by the committee during 2020/21. The committee has identified a number of these areas for further progress updates and will need be included in the committee's work programme for 2021/2022.
- 15 With regard to review activity, members will recall that a review of refuse and recycling collections was identified in the committee's work programme for 2020/21 however this review was put on hold due to the reduction in Overview and Scrutiny meetings resulting from the introduction of virtual meetings by DCC and the additional support required to manage this type of meeting. Members are invited to consider whether this review is undertaken in 2021/22 or whether there are other potential topics for review activity to be undertaken in the 2021/22 work programme.
- 16 The committee will receive a further report at its first meeting of the new municipal year 2021/2022 detailing the proposed work programme for 2021/2022 and subject to both meeting and service capacity will be asked to agree a topic for future review activity following today's discussion.

Conclusion

- 17 The report and attached appendices provide information for members to note and comment on activity undertaken during 2020/2021 and requests suggested areas to consider for potential review activity or agenda items within its 2021/2022 work programme.

Background papers

- 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

The committee will continue to include within its work programme future reports detailing progress made in relation to the actions identified within the Climate Emergency Response Plan, DCC's Carbon Management Plan and any further relevant policies developed by the authority.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable