

Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 July 2022

Quarter Four, 2021/22 Performance Management Report



Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present an overview of progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework and highlight key messages to inform strategic priorities and work programmes.
- 2 The report covers performance in and to the end of quarter four, January to March 2022.

Executive Summary

- 3 The government has now removed the last remaining COVID-19 restrictions and launched a plan for '[living with COVID](#)' based on choice and personal responsibility.
- 4 However, as we transition from the pandemic, the household budgets of many of our residents remain tight. As of January 2021, the cost of living was at a 40 year high, prices had increased by almost 6% over a 12-month period, inflation is rising faster than wages and expected to climb above 10% within the year, and private rents are 7% higher than pre-COVID levels. In addition, more financial pressures are emerging with energy bills expected to increase by 50% following the removal of the energy price cap, and a 1.5% rise in National Insurance contributions in April 2022.
- 5 The latest published data estimated that almost 15% of households across the county were experiencing fuel poverty. However, this data relates to 2020, before the latest cost of living increases and escalation in energy prices. It is therefore expected that the actual percentage to be both higher and to increase over the coming months, with people in rural areas and/or already struggling being disproportionately affected. As fuel prices increase, the cost of transport will increase and accessibility

of the poorest people to essential services is likely to decrease, again exacerbated in rural areas.

- 6 Through the Poverty Action Steering Group (PASG) we have adopted a coherent and co-ordinated strategic approach, both within the council and across our partners to address poverty across County Durham. We are currently consulting on a revised [Poverty Action Plan](#), which sets out a comprehensive response to the impacts of the wide-ranging poverty issues within the county.

More and Better Jobs

- 7 Although our tourism and cultural sector was particularly hard hit by the pandemic and we have seen a reduction in the number of core tourism business since July 2021, confidence across tourism businesses is beginning to improve and visitor numbers to core attractions and our cinemas, theatres, attractions and libraries are increasing. Although County Durham was not named UK City of Culture, we remain committed to delivering a cultural programme with a lasting legacy. As a runner-up, we received a £125,000 grant to support the development of this programme.

Long and Independent Lives

- 8 Although higher than pre-pandemic levels, the amount of household waste collected in 2021 is broadly in line with that collected in 2020 suggesting volumes are stabilising. This, combined with planned maintenance at the energy from waste plant and changing of regulations on the recycling of carpet, means a smaller proportion of waste was diverted from landfill – 89.4% compared to 93% for the same period last year. In addition, contamination of kerbside recycling bins continues to increase and is currently 33% (from a pre-COVID rate of 29%); we continue to tackle contamination, with more than 7,700 contamination notices issued in the last 12 months.

Risk Management

- 9 Effective risk management is a vital component of the council's agenda. The council's risk management process sits alongside our change programme and is incorporated into all significant change and improvement projects. The latest report can be found [here](#).

Recommendation

- 10 That Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter four performance, the impact of COVID-19 on performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of underperformance including

the significant economic and well-being challenges because of the pandemic.

Background

- 11 The performance report is structured around the three components.
 - (a) High level state of the County indicators to highlight areas of strategic significance. These are structured around the [County Durham Vision 2035](#).
 - (b) Council initiatives of note against the ambitions contained within the vision alongside a fourth 'excellent council' theme contained within our [Council Plan](#)¹.
 - (c) A long list of key performance indicators against the themes of the Council Plan.
- 12 It also includes an overview of the continuing impact of COVID-19 on council services, our staff, and residents.

Background papers

- County Durham Vision (County Council, 23 October 2019)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s115064/Draft%20Durham%20Vision%20v10.0.pdf>

Other useful documents

- Council Plan 2020 to 2023 (current plan)
<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/2366/Council-Plan>
- Quarter Three, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s152742/Performance%20Report%202021-22%20003.pdf>
- Quarter Two, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s149087/Q2%20Performance%20Report%202021-22%20-%20Cabinet.pdf>
- Quarter One, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s144872/Q1%20Performance%20Report%202021-22.pdf>

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¹ approved by full council October 2020

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

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

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality measures are monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

Climate Change

We have declared a climate change emergency and consider the implications of climate change in our reports and decision-making.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

A number of performance indicators and key actions relating to crime and disorder are continually monitored in partnership with Durham Constabulary.

Staffing

Performance against a number of relevant corporate health indicators has been included to monitor staffing issues.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

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

Procurement

Not applicable.



Durham County Council Performance Management Report

Quarter Four, 2021/22



More and Better Jobs

- 1 The ambition of More and Better Jobs is linked to the following objectives:
 - (a) A broader experience for residents and visitors to the county.

Council Services

A broader experience for residents and visitors to the county

- 2 County Durham was one of just four locations to be shortlisted for the prestigious UK City of Culture 2025 title, following the interview and judging process the winner of UK City of Culture 2025 title was announced on the 31st May. Unfortunately we were not named UK City of Culture 2025, which went to Bradford. However as a runner-up, County Durham has received a grant of £125,000 to support the development of key elements of our City of Culture bid.
- 3 Killhope Museum was awarded £475,000 from MEND (Museum Estate and Development Fund) which we will match with £50,000 to fund the emergency works required to address structural issues and flooding at the mine entrance allowing the full site to be reopened for public access. Works will not prevent the visitor centre from opening and a programme of activity has been planned for unaffected parts of the site.
- 4 There were 11,154 visitors to Killhope between mid-May and October 2021, this performance is above the pre-COVID level of 11,066 visitors between April and October 2019. 2021 was also a shorter season than usual and was adversely affected by inclement weather closures. Visitor feedback suggests the increased numbers are due to the removal of admission charges which had been a barrier for some, and the improvements to the food and beverage offer
- 5 At the end of quarter four, there were 545 core tourism businesses across the county, of which 43.3% (236) were actively engaged with Visit County Durham, which is on par with the baseline in July 2021. However, there has been a reduction in core businesses of 8% compared to the baseline due to some businesses ceasing to operate, being sold or using Airbnb as their sole promotional tool.
- 6 Audiences at our 2021/22 festivals are around 70% of previous figures. This is due to a combination of customer caution about returning, and restrictions put in place to create COVID-19 secure events, for example, limiting numbers to lighting installations within the peninsula as part of the Lumiere festival. However, the appetite to return to events seems to be building and we are confident of a full return in 2022/23.

- 7 Theatre audiences for 2021/22 show a reduction on 2019/20 figures due to the venues being closed for the first quarter of the year, and a slow post-COVID recovery in the second quarter. Gala figures for quarter four have shown a move towards pre-COVID levels, with the majority of performances now hitting sales targets, a greater number of sell out performances and an increasingly busy café/bar trade. Empire experienced slow sales in the opening months; however, the latest two quarters have seen attendances steadily increase.

	Ticket Sales		
	July 21 - March 22	Compared to 2019/20	
Gala	83,230	- 54%	↓
Empire	56,399	- 51%	↓

- 8 Durham Town Hall re-opened May 2021 and delivery of a Heritage Tour offer increased from one to six days until December to encourage the return of patronage. Due to COVID-19 restrictions for large gatherings, many events were cancelled but the Lunar New Year celebration in February saw more than 2,000 visitors over one weekend. The overall visitor number for the last financial year was 12,528. Large scale bookings are now picking up including weddings and festivals such as the week-long Durham Fringe event to be held in July and Mayor Making on 9 June.
- 9 Visitor figures to Bishop Auckland Town Hall have increased significantly since the building fully re-opened in May 2021, following the refurbishment during the first COVID-19 lockdown. In that time, the town hall had 18,800 visitors to the new gallery and café attendances have increased by 100% due to a new menu and the ground floor location. Cinema screenings have increased from one per week (pre-refurbishment) to six, with audience numbers now gradually building. Library visitors are slowly increasing. Our new arts engagement sessions attract an average of 15 participants in the weekly art group, 10 participants for the weekly creative writing group and 10+ participants each for the monthly family singing group and veterans drop-in sessions.
- 10 Visitors to Hardwick and Wharton Parks continue to be at higher levels than pre-COVID with approximately 600,000 in the last 12 months. Planning for future events and activities in the parks is underway.
- 11 There was a small increase in the number of registered members in our libraries during 2021, and we have maintained this small growth to the end of the year. Visitors to libraries pre-COVID were around 1.1 million, this dropped to just over 38,000 during 2020/21 due to closures or reduced hours, because of lockdowns and the pandemic response. Since April 2021 the number of people visiting

libraries in person has increased, with 339,639 visits during 2021/22. Library events have started to resume albeit on a smaller scale at present.

Long and Independent Lives

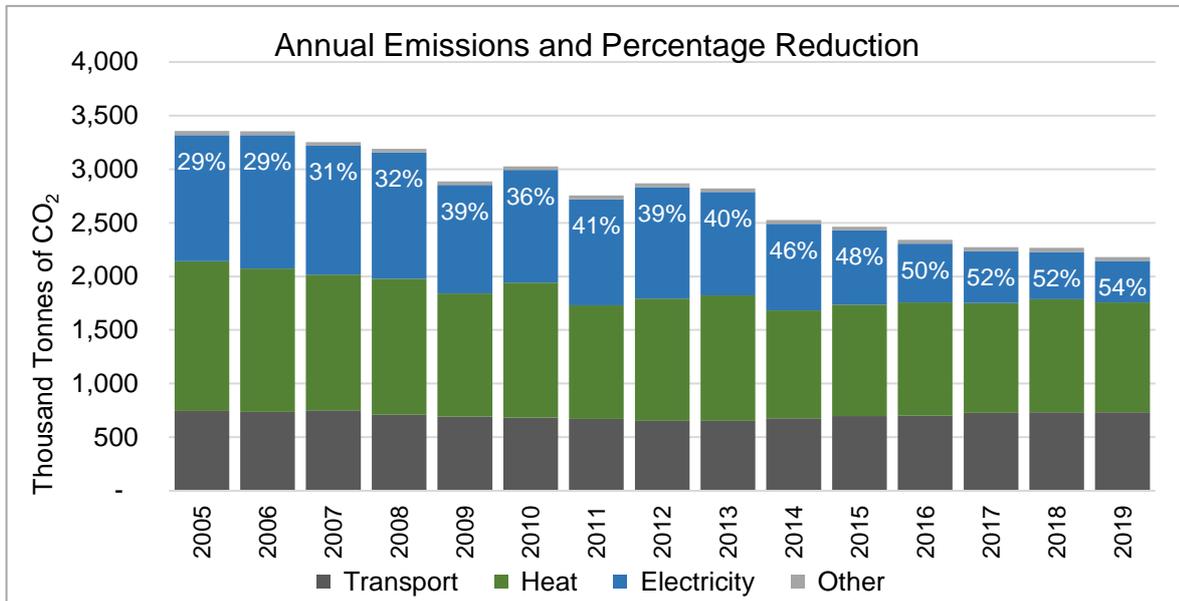
- 12 The ambition of Long and Independent Lives is linked to the following key objectives:
 - (a) County Durham will have a physical environment that will contribute to good health.

Council Services

A physical environment contributing to good health

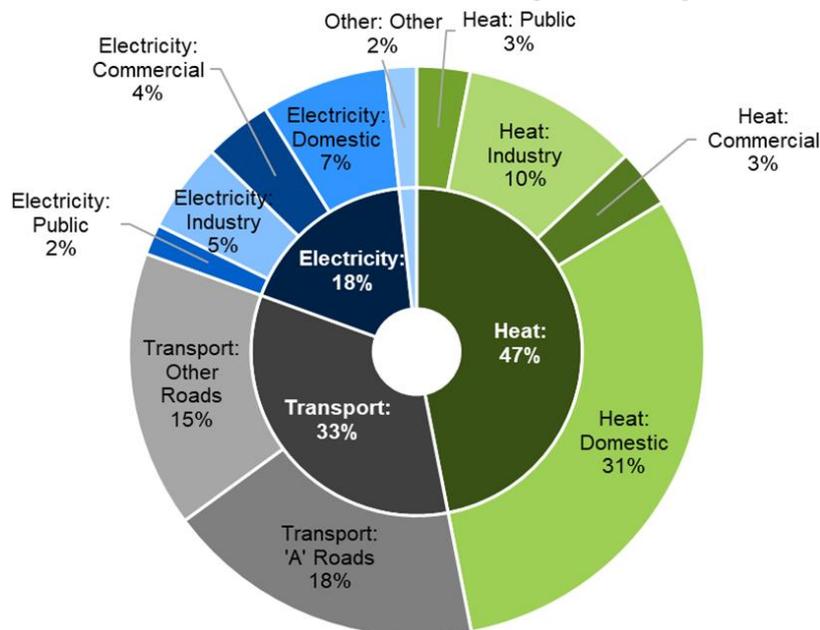
- 13 A £2.8 million grant from National Lottery Heritage Fund is being used to showcase coastal and marine heritage in the North of England between the Tyne and the Tees. A partnership scheme called SeaScapes has been established. SeaScapes works to improve access to beaches, explore the shipwrecks and habitats beneath the waves, improve biological recording, tackle marine litter and create opportunities for local people and visitors to enjoy. Currently, SeaScapes is liaising with Newcastle University Beneath the Waves (shipwrecks) project, which is attracting interest from the diving community. A short film in collaboration with the East Durham Artists Network, Durham University, Sunderland University and former miners has been made, based on Blast Beach. A “Source to Sea” workshop on the issue of plastic pollution for the River Wear has also been held.
- 14 Additional resources have been secured for both tree inspections and the provision of new trees and woodland. Initiatives are underway to increase tree coverage and improve woodland across the county, including the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, the North East Community Forest, Trees for Children and Durham Woodland Revival (DWR). We are working with landowners on the potential creation of woodland and have provided training to landowners and community groups, with contractor training planned for the autumn. DWR has also planted 1.9km of hedging and in the last year 37,368 trees have been planted across all the initiatives.
- 15 The latest CO₂ emission results released for 2019 show a reduction across the county of 54% on 1990 levels. The CO₂ tonnage on a per person basis shows that County Durham equates to 4.11 tonnes per person; lower than the North East at 4.49 tonnes and England at 4.24 tonnes.
- 16 The greatest source of emissions is heat at 47%; with domestic heating being the highest sub-category at 31%. To contribute to achieving our carbon emissions targets, households across the county must reduce their gas use, this could be

achieved by the equivalent of around 20,000 households fully decarbonising, or everyone sing about 8% less coal, gas or oil; this is achievable in part through improved home insulation.



17 Emissions from transport has reduced slightly since 2005. Transport emissions make up 33% of the county's total carbon emissions. Replacing around 24,000 vehicles with ULEV or reducing fossil fuel vehicle mileage by 8% over two years would keep us on track to achieve our carbon neutral county target. This could be achieved if everyone reduced their personal vehicle use, walked, cycled or used public transport more and avoided unnecessary travel through use of remote working and video conferencing.

18 Emissions from electricity have reduced from 35% in 2005 to 18% in 2019. In the main this is due to the decarbonisation of the grid moving from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources.



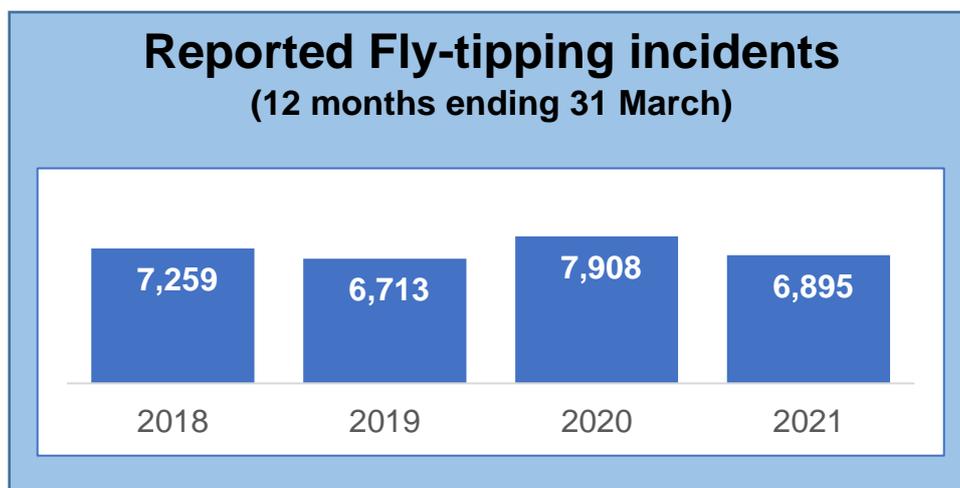
Connected Communities

19 The ambition of Connected Communities is linked to the following key objectives:

(a) Our towns and villages will be vibrant, well-used, clean, attractive and safe.

Council Services

20 2,640 fly-tipping enforcement actions were undertaken during 2021/22 which is an increase of 14.7%. This included further investigations, deployment of cameras, stop and search operations and the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.

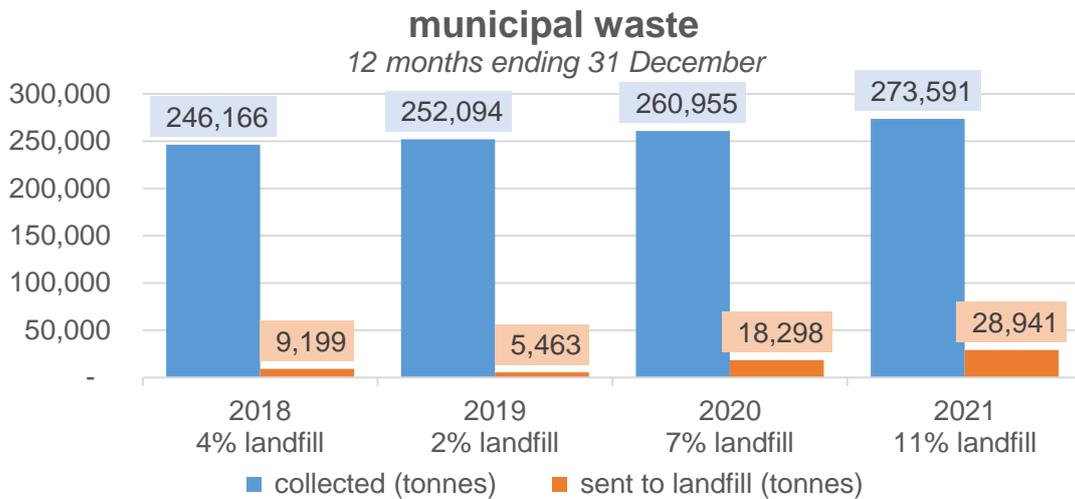


21 During quarter four, our Find and Fix programme continued to clear shrubs and vegetation, plant, edge pavements, paint street furniture, repair and replace fences, bins and play equipment, and remove fly-tipping and graffiti. The team also supported the wider clean-up following the winter storms, removing fallen trees, repairing fencing and tidying affected areas.

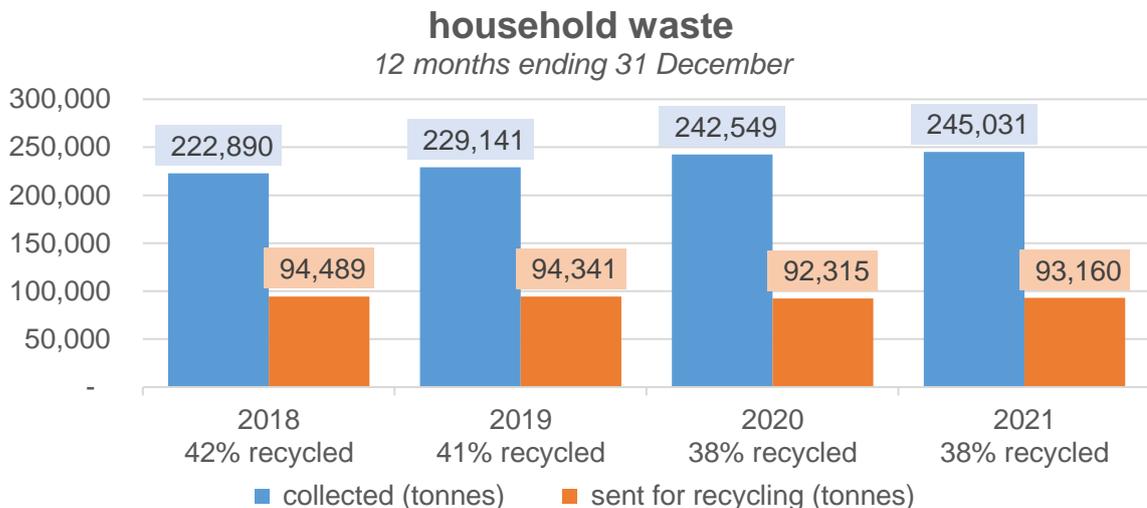
22 During quarter four, our Community Action Team reviewed previous projects in Shildon, South Moor and Blackhall Colliery and also at Horden collaborating with the Horden Together team. The review walkabouts identified 264 issues with 168 legal notices served. Issues included fly-tipping, dog fouling, untidy yards and gardens and problem commercial property. The latest CAT project has started in Easington Colliery.

23 During the 12 months ending 31 December 2021, 273,591 tonnes of municipal waste was collected and disposed of, 4.8% more than the previous year. The increased volume of waste reduced the spare capacity within the waste disposal system so, when planned maintenance at the energy from waste plant was required, more waste had to be sent to landfill. The issue has been further

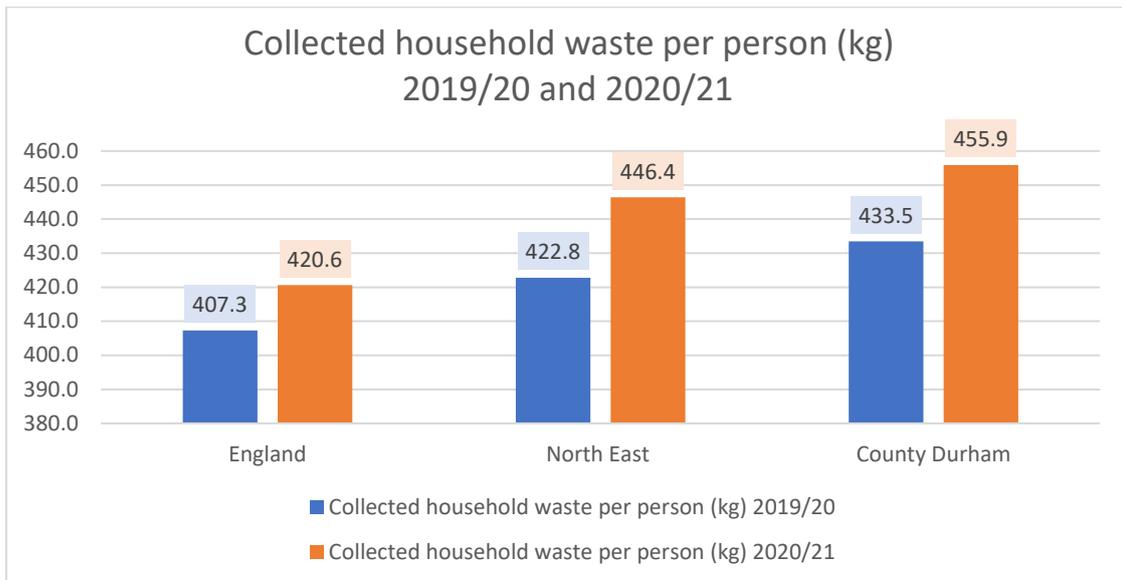
compounded due to the changing of regulations on the recycling of carpet. This decreased our landfill diversion rate to 89.4%, less than the 93% of last year.



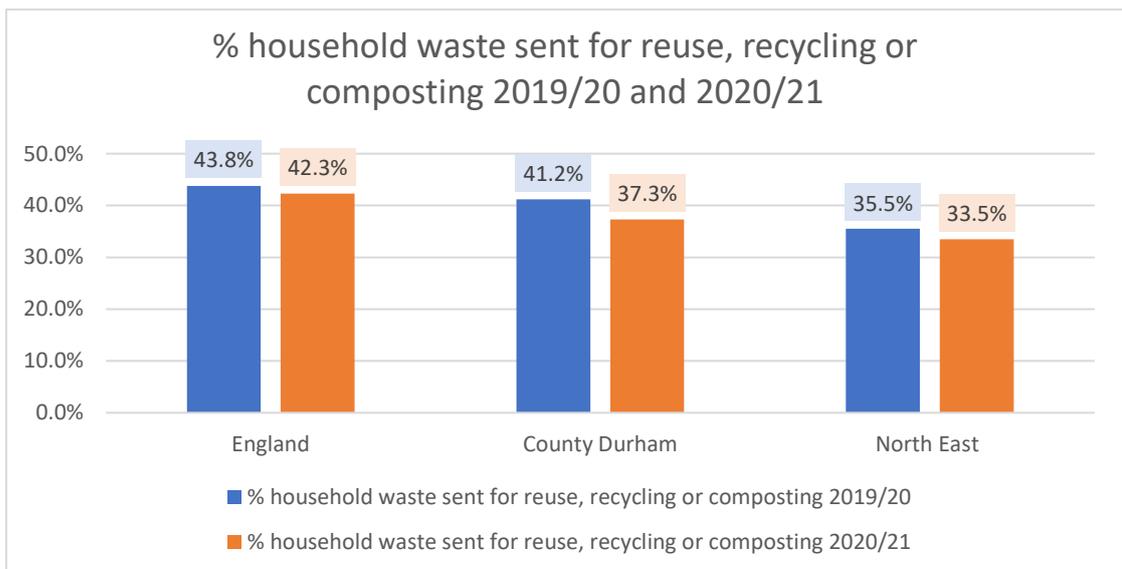
24 During the same period, 245,031 tonnes of household waste was collected and disposed of, an increase of 1% on the previous year and 6.9% higher than the same period pre-COVID. However, the increase is reducing suggesting a return to more normal levels.



25 Benchmarking data for 2020/21 saw an increase in the amount of household waste collected per person in most local authority areas. County Durham saw a greater increase (+5.2%) compared to the national level (+3.3%) but lower than the regional increase (+5.6%).

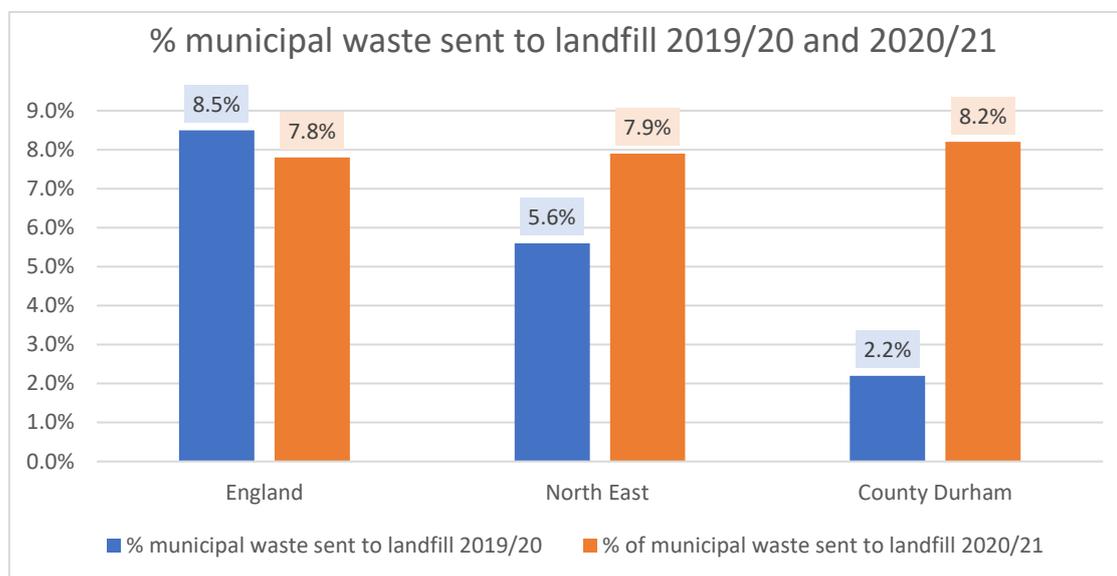


26 In relation to the recycling rate, deterioration was seen at both national and regional levels (-1.5pp and -2pp respectively) but to a greater extent within County Durham (-3.9pp).



27 The landfill rate shows a differing picture. Nationally, there was a slight improvement in the rate and a deterioration at the regional level and within County Durham, bringing the rate locally above both the regional and national averages, where previously it had been significantly below. This places us within the 3rd quartile of the 122 local authorities who have responsibility for the disposal of waste. Waste disposal arrangements differ across local authorities, with some having their own 'energy from waste' facilities; where others, like ourselves, have contracts with large waste companies. The latter of which can be affected when there is an increase in tonnage from a number of local authorities, impacting on the capacity in the system particularly when routine maintenance is needed. The change in the national rate suggests an increase in the amount of

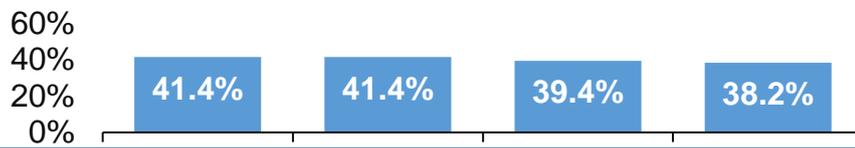
waste sent to 'energy from waste' sites, given the decrease in the recycling rate and the increase in the amount of waste collected; and the latest benchmarking data overall reflect the changes in behaviours due to the first year of COVID-19 restrictions.



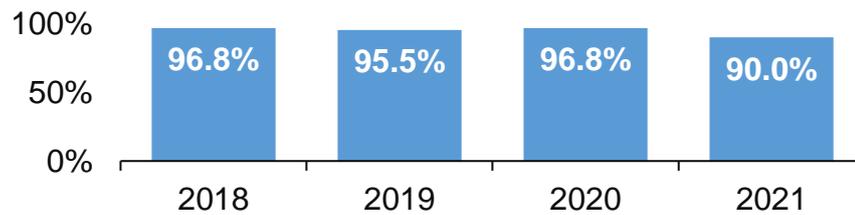
- 28 The levels of contamination of waste such as black bags, wood, food waste, nappies and textiles in household blue bins continues to be higher than pre-covid levels. The 12 months to the end of December 2021 showed contamination levels of 33.4%, lower than the previous 12 month figure of 34.4% but still over 2,000 tonnes more than pre-covid levels.
- 29 We continue to tackle contamination, with more than 7,700 contamination notices issued in the last 12 months, and have also undertaken door knocking of targeted households. A countywide contamination campaign is planned for the summer.
- 30 The small electrical recycling project continues to grow. Over 100 collection points are located in community buildings and schools across the county. Waste awareness events have taken place within schools, community groups and residents' groups.
- 31 16,877 tonnes of green waste was collected at the kerbside during 2021 and sent to the Joint Stocks composting site. Garden waste collections re-commenced on 29 March 2022.

Collection and disposal of waste (12 months ending 31 December)

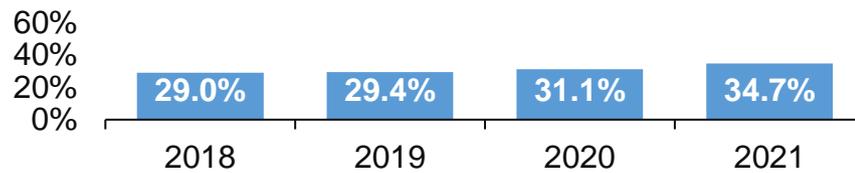
household waste re-used, recycled or composted



municipal waste diverted from landfill



dry recyclable household waste collected from the kerbside that is contaminated



Key Performance Indicators – Data Tables

There are two types of performance indicators throughout this document:

- (a) Key target indicators – targets are set as improvements can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the council and its partners; and
- (b) Key tracker indicators – performance is tracked but no targets are set as they are long-term and/or can only be partially influenced by the council and its partners.

A guide is available which provides full details of indicator definitions and data sources for the 2020/21 corporate indicator set. This is available to view either internally from the intranet or can be requested from the Strategy Team at performance@durham.gov.uk

KEY TO SYMBOLS

	Direction of travel	Benchmarking	Performance against target
GREEN	Same or better than comparable period	Same or better than comparable group	Meeting or exceeding target
AMBER	Worse than comparable period (within 2% tolerance)	Worse than comparable group (within 2% tolerance)	Performance within 2% of target
RED	Worse than comparable period (greater than 2%)	Worse than comparable group (greater than 2%)	Performance >2% behind target

National Benchmarking

We compare our performance to all English authorities. The number of authorities varies according to the performance indicator and functions of councils, for example educational attainment is compared to county and unitary councils however waste disposal is compared to district and unitary councils.

North East Benchmarking

The north east figure is the average performance from the authorities within the north east region, i.e., County Durham, Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-On-Tees, South Tyneside, Sunderland.

More detail is available from the Strategy Team at performance@durham.gov.uk

MORE AND BETTER JOBS

How well do tourism and cultural events contribute to our local economy?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
11	No. visitors to County Durham (million)	11.39	2020	Tracker	20.13 (red)					No
12	No. jobs supported by the visitor economy	6,794	2020	Tracker	12,133 (red)					No
13	Amount (£ million) generated by the visitor economy	506.75	2020	Tracker	980.72 (red)					No

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES – SUSTAINABILITY

How clean and tidy is my local environment?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
95	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of litter that fall below an acceptable level	4.74	Jan-Mar 2022	Tracker	6.4 (green)					Yes
96	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of detritus that fall below an acceptable level	10.07	Jan-Mar 2022	Tracker	10.68 (green)					Yes
97	% of relevant land and highways assessed as having deposits of dog fouling that fall below an acceptable level	1.68	Oct-Dec 2021	Tracker	1.35 (red)					Yes
98	Number of fly-tipping incidents	n/a		Tracker						No

Are we reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
99	% reduction in CO ₂ emissions in County Durham (carbon neutral by 2050)	54	2019	Tracker	52 (green)					No
100	% reduction in CO ₂ emissions from local authority operations compared to the 2008/09 baseline, 80% by 2030	58	2020/21	Tracker	51 (green)					No

How effective and sustainable is our collection and disposal of waste?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
101	% of municipal waste diverted from landfill	89.4	2021	95 (red)	93 (red)	92.2 (red)	92.1 (red)		2020/21	Yes
102	% of household waste that is re-used, recycled or composted	38	2021	Tracker	38.1 (red)	42.3 (red)	33.5 (green)		2020/21	Yes

Other additional relevant indicators

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Is it easy to travel around the county?

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
110	% of A roads where maintenance is recommended	3.1	2020	Tracker	3.0 (red)	4.0 (green)	3.0 (red)		2020/21	No
111	% of B roads where maintenance is recommended	3.0	2020	Tracker	3.3 (green)	6.0 (green)	4.0 (green)		2020/21	No
112	% of C roads where maintenance is recommended	2.6	2020	Tracker	2.3 (red)	6.0 (green)	4.0 (green)		2020/21	No

Ref	Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	National figure	North East figure	Nearest statistical neighbour	Period covered if different	updated this quarter
113	% of unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended	22.5	2020	Tracker	21.3 (red)	17.0 (red)	17.0 (red)		2020/21	No