

# Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



18 April 2016

## Refresh of the Work Programme for the Environment & Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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### Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

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#### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide members with information contained within the Council Plan 2016 – 2019, relevant to the work of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This allows the opportunity for members to refresh the committee work programme to reflect the three objectives and subsequent outcomes identified within the Council Plan for the 'Altogether Greener' priority theme.

#### Background

2. The current Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programmes focus on the priority areas identified within the context of the Council Plan, Cabinet's notice of key decisions, Sustainable Community Strategy, Partnership plans and strategies, performance and budgetary control data and changes in government legislation.
3. In relation to the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members will recall that the work programme was refreshed at the committee meeting held on the 8 July 2015, ensuring that areas of focus were in line with current and forthcoming priorities within the committee's remit. Further areas of focus for the Committee have been added throughout 2015 to reflect changing government policy and at the request of Members.

#### Council Plan 2016 – 2019

4. The Council Plan is the overarching high level plan for the County Council, which covers a three year period in line with the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and is updated on an annual basis. The plan sets out how the Council will consider the corporate priorities for improvement and the key actions the Authority will take in delivering the long term goals in the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's own improvement agenda. Attached at Appendix 2 is the

‘Altogether Greener’ section of the Council Plan for members’ consideration.

5. This year it is proposed that the existing three year Council Plan is updated and rolled forward a year, with a more fundamental review to take place next year, in line with a refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
6. The ‘Altogether Greener’ priority theme is about ensuring that our communities have access to open space and neighbourhoods which are of good quality, well maintained and Clean; that we conserve our natural resources through effective energy efficiency measures and sustainable waste management in that we build resilience to extreme weather events and reduce carbon emissions. Key areas of focus include tackling the impacts of climate change; encouraging sustainability and energy efficiency; and maintaining the quality of our local environment.
7. To help address these issues the Council agreed last year to rationalise the structure of our objectives and outcomes framework to concentrate on three objectives. Council has agreed to a minor change in the wording of objective 1. In addition, two new outcomes have been added under objective 1 and the deletion of an outcome under objective 2. The set of objectives and outcomes are set out below:

**Deliver a clean, attractive and sustainable environment**

- Reduced environmental crime
- A sustainable approach to waste management
- Improved land and air quality
- Well maintained and accessible parks and public spaces

**Maximise the value and benefits of Durham’s natural environment**

- Natural assets are valued and conserved

**Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change**

- Communities are more aware and resilient to the impact of extreme weather events
- The Council, homes and businesses are more energy efficient
- Improved infrastructure to support sustainable transport

8. Over the next three years, the Council will work with local communities, businesses and other organisations to encourage behaviour change and participation in activities to achieve our goals.
9. The Council Plan identifies a series of actions detailing the work which needs to be undertaken by the authority in order to deliver the areas identified above.

**Current Work Programme**

10. During 2015/16, the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee has undertaken budgetary and

performance monitoring, in depth Scrutiny Reviews, systematic 6 monthly reviews of progress against recommendations and overview presentations in relation to the following areas:

### **In Depth Scrutiny Reviews**

- Management of the Woodland Estate Owned by Durham County Council – **Maximise the benefits of Durham’s natural environment** – Natural assets are valued and conserved.
- Parking on Council owned land - – **Maximise the benefits of Durham’s natural environment** – Natural assets are valued and conserved.

### **Systematic Review**

- Flooding - **Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change** – Communities are more aware and resilient to the impact of extreme weather events
- Reducing the Council’s Carbon Emissions – **Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change** - The Council, homes and businesses are more energy efficient.

### **Overview Activity**

- Contaminated Land Strategy - **Deliver a clean, attractive and sustainable environment** – Improved land and air quality.
- Waste Programme – **Deliver a clean, attractive and sustainable environment** – Reduce environmental crime – A sustainable approach to waste management.
- Garden Waste - **Deliver a clean, attractive and sustainable environment** –Reduce environmental crime – A sustainable approach to waste management.
- Community Action Team use of targeted interventions – **Deliver a clean, attractive and sustainable environment** - Reduce environmental crime.
- Winter Maintenance Plan – **Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change** – Communities are more aware and resilient to the impact of extreme weather events.
- European Structural and Investment Funds – Low Carbon Economy Update – **Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change** – The Council, homes and businesses are more energy efficient.
- Environment Improvement Campaigns – **Deliver a clean, attractive and sustainable environment** – reduce environmental crime – A sustainable approach to waste management.
- Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham Updates – **Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change** – Communities are more aware and resilient to the impact of extreme weather events.
- Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan – **Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change** - The Council, homes and businesses are more energy efficient.

- Warm Up North - **Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change** – The Council, homes and businesses are more energy efficient.
- Fuel poverty - **Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change** – The Council, homes and businesses are more energy efficient.
- Strategic cycle routes – **Maximise the value and benefits of Durham’s natural environment** – Natural assets are valued and conserved.
- Renewable Energy – **Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change** – The Council, homes and businesses are more energy efficient.

### **Budgetary and performance monitoring**

- Quarterly budgetary and performance monitoring for Neighbourhood Services Service Grouping.

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

11. Having considered the 'Altogether Greener' section of the Council Plan for 2016 – 2019 it is suggested that the following action areas could be considered in the update of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme.

#### **Deliver a clean, attractive and sustainable environment**

- **Well maintained and accessible parks and public spaces** – Further develop our wildflower planting scheme.

#### **Maximise the value and benefits of Durham’s natural environment**

- **Natural assets are valued and conserved** - Work in partnership to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character, including the North Pennines Area of Natural Outstanding Beauty, East Durham Limestone Plateau, Oak and Iron, Heritage Coast (Derwent valley) and Brightwater (River Skerne catchment area).

#### **Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change**

- **The Council, homes and businesses are more energy efficient**  
Relocate our fleet vehicles to align with service delivery areas to identify potential saving opportunities.

## Council Plan

### Cross Cutting Themes

12. Below are areas which have a cross cutting issues from other 'Altogether' themes that link into Altogether Greener

<b>Altogether</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Link to Altogether Greener</b>
Wealthier	Thriving Durham City	Improved infrastructure to support economic growth	Improved infrastructure to support sustainable transport
Safer	Reduce Anti-social Behaviour	Reduce incidence of anti-social behaviour and low level crime	Reduce environmental crime
	Protect vulnerable people from harm	Community and organisational resilience for emergency preparedness, response and recovery	Communities are more aware and resilient to the impact of extreme weather events
Healthier	Improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the population	Increased physical activity and participation in sports and leisure	Natural assets are valued and conserved
Better for Children and Young People	Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life	A range of positive activities are available for children and young people	Natural assets are valued and conserved
Altogether Better Council	Working with our communities	Communities and stakeholders are engaged and communicated with	Cuts across all Greener objectives and outcomes.
		Effective Partnership Working	Communities are more aware and resilient to the impact of extreme weather events.

### Next Steps

13. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the appropriate section from the Council Plan, Appendix 2 (copy attached) to inform the committee's work programme for 2016 - 2017, reflecting on the current work programme detailed in paragraphs 10 and 11 above.

14. Members will receive a further report at the next Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirming/agreeing the committee's work programme for 2016-2017 based on today's discussion and agreement.

### **Recommendations**

15. That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny note the information contained in Altogether Greener priority theme of the Council Plan 2016-2019, Appendix 2 (copy attached)
16. That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee refresh the work programme for 2016-2017 by discussing and considering those actions identified under the 'Altogether Greener' priority theme of the Council Plan 2016-2019 Appendix 2 and reflected in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the report.
17. That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 8 July 2016, receive a further report detailing the committee's work programme for 2016-2017.

### **Background papers:**

Council Plan 2016-19 – Cabinet report – March 2016

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**Appendix 1: Implications** (The following implications are taken directly from the report to Cabinet on the 16 March 2016, re the Council Plan and Service Plans 2016-19)

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**Finance**

The Council Plan sets out the corporate priorities of the Council for the next three years. The Medium Term Financial Plan aligns revenue and capital investment to priorities within the Council Plan.

**Staffing**

The Council's strategies are being aligned to achievement of the corporate priorities contained within the Council Plan.

**Risk**

Consideration of risk is undertaken in the preparation of the Council Plan and Service Plans.

**Equality and diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty**

A full impact assessment has previously been undertaken for the Council Plan. The actions underpinning the Council Plan include specific issues relating to equality and aim to improve the equality of life for those with protected characteristics. The Plan has been influenced by consultation and monitoring to include equality issues. There is no evidence of negative impact for particular groups.

**Accommodation**

The council's Accommodation programme is a key corporate programme contained within the Council Plan.

**Crime and disorder**

The Altogether Safer section of the Council Plan sets out the Council's contributions to tackling crime and disorder.

**Human rights**

None

**Consultation**

Council and partnership priorities have been developed following an analysis of available consultation data including an extensive consultation programme carried out as part of the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy and this has been reaffirmed by subsequent consultation on the council's budget.

**Procurement**

None

**Disability Issues**

Accessibility issues are considered in the design of our planning document.

**Legal Implications**

None

## Appendix Two