

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 7 October 2016** at **9.30 am**

### **Present:**

**Councillor B Graham (Chairman)**

### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors E Adam, J Armstrong, D Bell, J Clark, D Freeman, J Gray, G Holland, I Jewell, C Kay, B Kellett, A Liversidge, P May, O Milburn, S Morrison, P Stradling and L Taylor

### **Also Present:**

Councillor B Stephens

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Clare and Mr T Bolton and Mrs P Spurrell.

### **2 Substitute Members**

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

### **3 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held 8 July 2016 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

Councillor P May asked for clarification in terms of his request for letters to be sent to individuals who had thrown litter. The Head of Projects and Business Services, Alan Patrickson confirmed that such letters could be sent out, taking evidence received into account.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Diane Close noted that in relation to the Quarter 4 Performance Report (Minute 7) there was an ongoing consultation regarding the proposal to introduce a countywide Public Space Protection Order for dog control order, with the consultation closing on 5 December. Following the meeting, Members of the Committee would be provided with the link to the consultation providing an opportunity for Members to comment. An update for Members on the results of the consultation will be provided at the meeting on 24 January 2017 as part of the Quarter 2 performance presentation.

The Head of Projects and Business Services added that previous dog control orders would move over to the new legislation automatically, however, the consultation would allow people to input on aspects other than dog fouling such as enforcing having a dog on a leader, stray dogs, and other areas that Neighbourhood Wardens faced on a frequent basis.

#### **4 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### **5 Any items from Co-opted Members or interested parties**

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

#### **6 Media Relations**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to the recent prominent articles and news stories relating to the remit of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for copy see file of minutes).

The articles included: Pupils at Bishop Middleham School swapping learning for teaching as they educated people about responsible dog ownership, working with Durham County Council (DCC) to encourage dog owners to clean up after their dogs; Durham City winning a special class, Champion of Champions Award, in the Northumbria in Bloom contest; a man running an illegal dump has been jailed for 16 weeks, when waste found in Murton was traced back to the man; and Communities are working together to make positive changes to where they live as part of an environmental improvement scheme, with the 'Growing Forward Together Group' aiming to bring residents, children and businesses from Trimdon Station and Deaf hill village together to improve their community, the group has undertaken litter picks in hotspot areas, replacing seating and installing new planters.

The Chairman noted the success in terms of the Northumbria in Bloom award and thanked the department on behalf of the Committee.

Councillor C Kay noted some illegal dumping of waste at Binchester and asked if there was an update on the situation. The Head of Projects and Business Services noted he would look into the issue and get back to the Councillor accordingly.

#### **Resolved:**

That the presentation be noted.

## **7 Quarter 4 2015/16 and Quarter 1 2016/17 Revenue and Capital Outturn**

The Chairman introduced the Finance Manager – Neighbourhoods, Philip Curran to speak to Members in relation to the Quarter 4, 2015/16 and Quarter 1, 2016/17 Revenue and Capital Outturn (for copy see file of minutes).

The Finance Manager noted for the Quarter 4 2015/16 Revenue and Capital Outturn the areas that were reported upon were the General Fund Revenue Account and the Capital Programme for Neighbourhood Services. Members were reminded that as of this Monday, the Regeneration and Economic Development (RED) and Neighbourhood Services directorate had been merged into a new Regeneration and Local Services directorate, although in terms of reporting Quarter 2 reports would be split between RED and Neighbourhoods Services, with reporting on the new directorate from Quarter 3.

Members noted the service had reported an outturn position with a cash limit underspend of £0.860 million against a revised annual General Fund Revenue Budget of £107.819 million, in comparison to Quarter 3 with a £1.290 million cash limit underspend. Members noted the variances within the budget, with the detailed explanations as set out within the report.

As regards the Capital Programme 2015/16, the Finance Manager explained that there had been a £3.182 million underspend, relatively small in terms of the overall budget of £40.903 million, and that some projects were implemented over a number of years and would carry forward into 2016/17.

The Chairman thanked the Finance Manager and with no questions asked him to move on to the Quarter 1, 2016/17 finance report.

The Finance Manager noted for the Quarter 1 2016/17 Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn the areas that were reported upon were the General Fund Revenue Account and the Capital Programme for Neighbourhood Services.

Members noted the service was forecasting a cash limit underspend of £0.699 million against a revised General Fund Revenue Budget of £106.329 million. Members noted the variances within the budget, with the detailed explanations as set out within the report, with Direct Services having an overall underspend of £0.423 million, a result of early achievement of MTFP savings.

As regards the Capital Programme 2016/17, the Finance Manager reminded Members that the usual spend profile was such that there was greater spend at the year end and therefore there would not be any expected variances at this point, though any slippages or projects brought forward would be monitored and reported.

The Chairman thanked the Finance Manager and asked if there were any questions on the Quarter 1, 2016/17 finance report.

Councillor G Holland asked as regards the Culture and Sport budget, being outside of the cash limit.

The Finance Manager explained that for 2015/16 there had been a £244,000 capital contribution in respect of the GALA theatre/cinema partner and that for 2016/17 there would be a small overspend of around £11,000. Councillor G Holland asked whether those budgets included the reserves, and it was explained that they did. Councillor G Holland asked where the remainder of the £588,000 was spent. The Finance Manager noted that the deteriorating condition at the GALA had resulted in a draw down on reserves for the refurbishment, which then ends with a slight net overspend of £11,000.

**Resolved:**

That the reports and presentation be noted.

## **8 Quarter 1 2016/17 Performance Management Report**

The Chairman thanked the Policy and Performance Team Leader, Debra Kitching who was in attendance to speak to Members in relation to the Quarter 1, 2016/17 Performance Management Report (for copy see file of minutes).

The Policy and Performance Team Leader referred to the direction of travel and Members noted within this indicator set there were 4 behind target. It was noted that a Council Plan action that had been delayed related to the draft Air Quality Action Plan for Chester-le-Street, from July 2016 to December 2016.

Councillors noted that some of the key achievements in Quarter 1, representing April to June 2016, included: diversion of 96% of municipal waste from landfill; levels of litter, dog fouling and detritus remain better than the national average; Operation "Stop It" continues, with 6 prosecutions in Quarter 1; and the latest road condition survey showed improvements in A, B and C roads where maintenance should be considered.

Members noted the target for the percentage of household waste to be re-used, recycled or composted was 38% and this was regularly achieved, and there were active programmes that included: the garden waste scheme with 7,500 more properties signed up; the green move out scheme, clearing up when students finish in June/July; and the "Good to Know" campaign.

It was explained that there was a slight increase in littering and dog fouling, however, both had hit target and were better than the England average. Members noted a slight decrease in the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued for environmental crime, however, there would be more Community Protection Notices (CPNs) coming through regarding these issues.

The Policy and Performance Team Leader explained as regards the actions to improve environmental cleanliness including: local events/campaigns such as "Big Spring Clean"; Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) for dog control; targeting of hot spots through the multi-agency partnership, including secondary fires at Peterlee; and legislation, in terms of investigating whether Community Protection Notices (CPNs) could be strengthened to include other aspects such as absentee landlords, to avoid Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) and have issues resolved at court.

It was explained that fly-tipping had increased, and it was noted that there were problems in terms of tipping of: white goods; household waste; green waste via small or transit sized vans; and construction waste via small or transit sized vans. It was added that actions were being taken that included: the restructure of neighbourhood protection; rolling enforcement programmes bolstered by hotspot targeting; and research into the seizing of vehicles powers and attaching a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) if a prosecution is successful.

The Committee learned that the percentage of highways defects repaired within target had increased, though was below target. It was added that this was in the context of an increase in the number of defects, with a year-on-year increase in category 1 and 2 highways defects impacting upon the Council's ability to meet the target response times. Members noted the 3 major improvement works ongoing, namely: Leazes Bowl Roundabout; Villa Real Bridge; and Wallnook Bridge.

The Policy and Performance Team Leader reported on the reduction in carbon emissions, from Local Authority operations and from across the Authority area. It was added that activities included retrofitting of DCC buildings and also enabling school to access funding to implement energy efficiency measures. Members noted that other activities included: 276 referrals to "Warm up North"; Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) grant to investigate the potential for district heating in Durham City; and a Community Energy follow up event, building upon a previous event in June.

The Chairman thanked the Policy and Performance Team Leader and asked Members if they had any questions on the report and presentation.

Councillor P May noted the performance in terms of highways repairs and asked whether it was true that there was a £120 million shortfall in terms of being able to complete all outstanding repairs. The Highway Asset Manager, Brian Kitching noted that the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) was published annually and that this included all aspects of the highways network such as the roads, footpaths, lighting, structures and so on. It was added that the current backlog in terms of repairs was approximately £180 million and it was highlighted within the TAMP the funding required for a "steady state" of around £23 million per year, with current spending at around £18 million. The Highway Asset Manager noted that there had been several positives in terms of good capital programmes carried out in the last few years, and that the quality of A, B and C roads had been prioritised over the last 10 years, with the unclassified network being less of a priority and this may be an area to look at in the future. Councillors J Armstrong and P Stradling both noted that the improvement works at Leazes Bowl had improved the time it took to get across the city and the Chairman asked the Highway Asset Manager to thank all involved in the project.

Councillor C Kay noted that in terms of carbon emissions, he understood that Government were recording particles at PM2.5, rather than PM10 and asked whether this was correct. He then continued by commenting that he had followed an Enviro 5 Bus through Bishop Auckland and felt that he had been subjected to a high volume of emissions from the vehicle and asked for clarification as to whether major towns in the county such as Bishop Auckland met current emission requirements. The Policy and Performance Team Leader noted she would speak to the Officers involved and get back to the Member accordingly.

Councillor G Holland noted that the target in terms of household waste being re-used, recycled or composted was being met, however the energy generation from waste had fallen and asked whether this was a local glitch or was there a specific reason for this decrease.

The Head of Projects and Business Services noted the charge for garden waste collection, and that this could have impacted upon waste stream, as this may then have been composted for example. It was added that the percentage of recycling had reduced slightly, however the volume of waste had increased. Councillor G Holland asked was waste not converted to energy at the SITA sites. The Head of Projects and Business Services explained that the conversion to energy was already ahead of target and that the sites were allowed flexibility in order to manage issues such as maintenance. Councillor G Holland noted that the drop in energy output reported was huge and that the loss was significant as it represented more than the amount generated by other renewables. The Head of Projects and Business Services noted that it represented a high tonnage of waste and was a loss for all the plants, as within their contracts there was more profit for more energy produced as a means to encourage energy production from waste.

**Resolved:**

That the report and presentation be noted.

## **9 Winter Maintenance - Update**

The Chairman asked the Highway Asset Manager, Brian Kitching to give Members an update presentation in relation to Winter Maintenance (for copy see file of minutes).

The Highway Asset Manager noted the issue was regularly highlighted as a priority by Councillors and the public and indeed preparing for winter was a year round activity for the Council. Members noted the Authority's statutory duty in terms of maintaining the highway and that Winter 2015/16 had proved to be challenging, with many marginal nights. It was added that statistics for 2015/16 included: 5,245 pre-salt runs; 340 snow salt runs; 29,804 tonnes of salt used; 4,909 salt bin replenishments; with an overall total budget expenditure of £4 million.

Councillors noted that service changes and improvements included: a new snow blower, "multi-hog"; improvements to weather forecasting to introduce the "Roadmaster" system; the annual review of Priority 1 and Priority 2 gritting routes; extension of the "winter season" for the High/Low Pennines; a tracking system on all vehicles; and "Go Live", a system allowing the public to view gritting services via the DCC website.

Members noted images highlighting improvement works carried out at the Wolsingham Depot and the new plant purchased for 2015 and also of the weather stations that gave live updates every 10 minutes via the DCC website, highlighting road conditions and helping in terms of safe journey planning.

The Highway Asset Manager noted the updated Winter Maintenance Policy and the obligation of the Authority under Section 41 (1A) of the Highways Act 1980 that: "In particular, a Highways Authority are under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonable practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice". Members noted that the Winter Maintenance Policy was aligned with the national Code of Practice "Well-Maintained Highways".

The Committee noted that it was not practical to treat all parts of the adopted highway and that the policy prioritised routes for treatment such that:

|              |   |   |
|--------------|---|---|
| Carriageways | - | Priority 1 – precautionary salting and post treatment |
| Carriageways | - | Priority 2 – post treatment                           |
| Carriageways | - | snow clearance  |
| Carriageways | - | minimum winter network                                |
| Footways     | - | snow clearance  |
| Cycleways    | - | snow clearance  |

Members were shown a map setting out the Priority 1 and Priority 2 winter gritting routes and noted that in terms of the Priority 1 routes, precautionary salting and post treatment: 45% of carriageways were treated; the target treatment time was 2.5 hours; decisions were made by trained and experienced Duty Managers that were on call 24 hours, 7 days a week; specialist winter weather forecasts were received from Meteogroup; and the actual on the ground conditions were monitored via 12 roadside monitoring stations and with feedback from operational staff.

It was explained that for Priority 2 routes, post treatment, 10% of carriageways were treated and only treated during prolonged severe weather subject to available resources. Members noted these activities were undertaken mainly by local farmers under contract.

The Highway Asset Manager noted that during and after heavy snowfall more intensive resource is required to keep carriageways clear and resources are concentrated on the "Resilient Network", a smaller network of the most strategic Priority 1 routes. It was added once these had been cleared, then the remainder of the Priority 1 and Priority 2 routes would then be cleared in order.

Members were shown a table setting out the work carried out in terms of footpath clearance, highlighting that only Durham City Centre was a Category 1A area, and that in cases of severe weather then clearance would take place in terms of: Category 1A and 1 footways; public transport interchanges; hospitals; doctors surgeries/health centres; selected Category 2 footways; sheltered accommodation; and care homes.

The Committee noted the provision of salt and grit bins and associated issues and a slide setting out the key facts and figures in terms of Winter 2015/16. Members were reminded that an important aspect of winter maintenance was the partnership working, including a number of Town and Parish Councils across the County. The Highway Asset Manager noted that the public often query what is permitted in terms of clearing of snow and ice from the pavement in front of their properties and that the "Snow Code" as set out on the Met Office website provided advice in this regard.

The Highway Asset Manager reminded Members of the “Go Live” tracking system utilising “TrackYou”, developed in-house between Technical Services, IT and Communications. It was added that Durham was the only known Authority with such a live system in place, with data refreshed every 15 minutes. Members noted slides showing how the map showing Priority 1 routes would change to purple when a gritter was operating along a route and change again to green once a route had been completed. It was noted that the system was in its early stages and that the required disclaimers were included on the webpage.

The Chairman thanked the Highway Asset Manager and asked Members if they had any questions on the report and presentation.

Councillor P May noted the Go Live system and the winter weather alerts were all useful and asked who was responsible for the main arterial roads. The Highway Asset Manager noted that the A19 was maintained by Autolink and the A1(M) by A1 Plus, on behalf of Highways England, and that the Council did not grit these roads.

Councillor I Jewell asked what the optimum speed was for gritting vehicles while operating and whether there was duplication in terms of gritting.

The Highways Services Manager, Mark Readman noted that the optimum speed for gritting operations was between 20mph and 30mph and that he was not aware of any duplication on routes, however as many gritters were dual use and they would operate from our depots, some may appear to be following other vehicles when on other operations or heading in or out of the depots.

Councillor G Holland noted that the Go Live system was a good innovation and added that he felt this would be the type of ‘news item’ that the local television news, such as Look North, would be interested in and would provide far reaching coverage and promotion for our services. The Highways Services Manager noted that plans were in place as regards media coverage, with a balance in terms of not advertising too early prior to the winter period, and that the comments as regards television coverage would be taken on board.

Councillor J Armstrong asked if there was a shelf-life for gritting salt, and the Highway Asset Manager explained that the supply was stored in dry barns and that the lifespan of the salt was such it would be used before it was no longer effective.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the report and presentation be noted.
- (ii) That an update on the delivery of winter maintenance for 2016/17 and detail of winter maintenance plans for 2017/18 is included in the Environment and Sustainable Communities work programme for 2017/18.



## **10 Scrutiny Review of the Management of the Woodland Estate Owned by Durham County Council - Update on Recommendations**

The Chairman thanked the Landscape Delivery Officer, Sue Mullinger who was in attendance to update Members in relation to the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of the Management of the Woodland Estate Owned by Durham County Council (for copy see file of minutes).

The Landscape Delivery Officer reminded Members of the 3 key areas, including the management of DCC Woodland, with the Council's Forestry Team providing professional advice on carrying out maintenance of the woodland. It was added that another area was that of the number of woodlands in positive management, in agreement with the Forestry Commission and that there was a number of issues, such as EU grants, following the EU Referendum result. It was added that part of the process involved the registration of land on the rural land register, a long winded-process, in order to then receive grants to be able to fund the production of management plans. It was explained that the application for those grants would close at the end of September.

Members noted that a private company, The Stobart Group had approached the Council in relation to managing the land and also produce the management plans at no cost to DCC. There will be a trial period during which Stobart's will take the low grade timber for use in their biomass facilities and will manage the less desirable woodland sites. It was added that the company had worked with other Local Authorities and DCC would speak to those in respect of how their arrangements were working in practice.

The Landscape Delivery Officer noted the third key area was that of working with partners to be able to stimulate private foresting companies and it was noted that the Council was working with the Woodland Trust, Northwoods and the Forestry Commission in terms of the "Woodland Return Durham". Members noted the "planting up" of existing woodland and the management of woodland with volunteers and communities, as well as private owners. It was explained that DEFRA had noted they would not use their funds to match Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), although the Woodland Trust were looking to provide some funding and therefore it was hoped that a project could be submitted at the end of November.

The Chairman thanked the Landscape Delivery Officer for the updated position and asked what opportunities there would be in terms of employment and volunteers.

The Landscape Delivery Officer explained that the Woodland Return Project included a team of people and employers, working with the Woodland Trust to look to stimulate the woodland economy to create jobs in managing the woodlands, transport and other areas.

Councillor O Millburn asked what the timescales were in terms of replanting in areas which had been logged out, and whether there were issues in terms of snow drift in these areas. The Landscape Delivery Officer noted that in terms of DCC woodlands, the operations would be such to carry out a managed thin-out of an area and not large scale felling and clearance as in the past when areas were not managed there was detriment in terms of important flora. It was added that if there was a specific site that had been clear felled, this would be a private woodland, with Councillor O Milburn noting the area she had in mind may be Coal Authority land.

Councillor I Jewell asked what the process was in terms of replanting. The Landscape Delivery Officer noted that if there are no biodiversity issues then we must replant, the same area's worth of trees.

Councillor G Holland asked if there had been any exposure in terms of operation as a result of the "Brexit" vote. The Landscape Delivery Officer noted the main impact would be on the EU grant process which not only provided funding, but also acted as a lever in terms of bringing in other funding such as HLF, however as noted some private firms were coming forward with offers to help.

Councillor G Holland noted he felt if there was an effect from Brexit then this should be an area that Overview and Scrutiny should monitor very closely. The Landscape Delivery Officer noted that in order to access grants there was a need for a woodland management plan to be in place and this required land to be registered on the rural land register. It was reiterated that private companies had come forward in terms of helping with management plans and it was hoped to move forward to some trial sites and then report back on progress with these accordingly. Councillor J Armstrong reminded Members that EU grants that had been signed off now would be secure, however, going forward this could not be guaranteed. Councillor J Armstrong added that the Government's Autumn Statement in November would set out their priorities, although their priorities may not be the same as the Council's.

The Landscape Delivery Officer explained that as Local Authorities were no longer eligible for many grants, the issue was in being able to bring together funding in order to be able to lever in additional funding.

Councillor P May asked whether the Stobart Group were carrying out a mapping exercise of all the woodland in the County and when did a group of trees become a wood. The Landscape Delivery Officer noted there was not a strict definition for woodland and that the Stobart Group would look at sites in terms of their commercial viability, and it was believed they were proactive across the UK. Councillor P May asked if members of the public came forward with offers to thin out an area of woodland for amenity would this be looked at. The Landscape Delivery Officer noted that if the scale was economically viable and landowners could be brought together it may be possible.

Councillor J Clark asked in terms of negotiations with the Stobart Group and the potential for job creation and asked if those discussions with other Local Authorities that had worked with them had given any information in this respect. Councillor J Clark suggested that it would be important to build this in, with links to our local colleges such as Houghall, in terms of employment and apprenticeship opportunities. The Landscape Delivery Officer noted this, adding that the Authority would work with partners in order to look for opportunities in this regard.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted a typographical error in the recommendations within report referring to the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which should have read Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members noted and resolved accordingly.

## **Resolved:**

- (i) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the update report.
- (ii) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further update report at a future meeting.

## **11 Waste Programme - Update**

The Chairman asked the Head of Projects and Business Services to speak to Members in relation to the Waste Programme and give a presentation providing an update thereon (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Projects and Business Services thanked Members for the opportunity to speak and reminded the Committee of the Council's Garden Waste Scheme for 2016, which closed for subscribers on 1 September 2016. It was added that the number of subscribing customers had gone up from 2015, from 64,314 to 70,374, and that while some customers had not signed back up this year, there was an overall net increase. It was noted that bin exchanges had increased, and that the number of complaints had significantly decreased, from 327 down to 54.

Members were shown a breakdown of which channels customers had used to sign up to the Garden Waste Scheme, with the majority via our website, and that the main sign up months were January and February 2016.

In terms of the Capital Programme associated with Waste Management, it was explained that the refurbishment programme for the Waste Transfer Stations totalling £11 million was progressing well with the works completed at Stainton Grove (Barnard Castle); Heighington Lane (Newton Aycliffe); and Annfield Plain. Councillors noted that works were ongoing at Thornley Crossings (Shotton Colliery), with two Phases, Phase 1 having been completed, Phase 2 scheduled to be completed by January 2017. The Head of Projects and Business Services referred Members to slides showing completed and ongoing works and added that planning permission would be sought for the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Stainton Grove, with plans being highlighted within the presentation. It was noted it was anticipated that construction of the HWRC would take approximately 6 months and therefore completion would be in May/June 2017. Members noted that this HWRC would include a trade waste area, and highlighted the area with a weighbridge on the plans. It was added that this would be a commercial service and separate from the household waste.

The Head of Projects and Business Services noted that collection changes were taking place in the east operational area of the County from 10 October, to improve efficiency, deliver savings and absorb the additional workload from new housing developments. It was noted that some changes would be to collection days, some to the weekly cycle in terms of waste or recycling, and for some residents both. Members were aware of the promotion of the changes and reminded of the activities used, such as: individual letters to householders; individual householder calendars; the collection calendars being available on "MyDurham"; publicity and awareness raising; customers services; and via the Members' update.

The Committee noted that there were various alternative collection regimes across the country and a lot of media coverage in this regard. The Head of Projects and Business Services explained that in terms of reduced frequency collections, this would mean a reduced capacity in terms of refuse, with an increased capacity in recycling with examples in some parts of the country being: weekly recycling; weekly food collection; three weekly refuse collection; and a garden waste scheme.

It was noted that the main drivers in this respect were Government Policy and the financial business case for changing to such a routine. Members noted the balance had to be made between the cost of food collections and recycling collections against the threat of fines from government, the grants available and the savings made from disposal. For context, it was noted that the cost of disposal per tonne for Salford, an Authority utilising such routines, was £260, with the cost for Durham being £80.

The Head of Projects and Business Services noted that accordingly the position for Durham was that we our collections would remain as alternate weeks, with the Garden Waste Scheme also in operation, on the basis that:

- Durham has relatively low refuse disposal costs through its procurement process
- No statutory recycling targets/fines in England
- Not awarded funding for food waste trials through weekly collection fund
- The cost of implementing weekly recycling and food waste collection were greater than the savings this would make in terms of reduced refuse disposal
- Not cost effective

The Chairman thanked the Head of Projects and Business Services and asked Members for their questions on the report and presentation.

Councillor C Kay asked if recycling credits were still in effect. The Head of Projects and Business Services noted that the system still existed, however, it was not applicable to DCC, as it was intended for 2-tier Local Authority areas, where there were separate collection and disposal authorities.

Councillor P May noted the success of the Garden Waste Scheme and asked as regards the extending of the scheme and in terms of cleanliness of the operation, leaving some waste behind in the streets. The Head of Projects and Business Services noted that the current scheme was 16 weeks long, and that the 2017 scheme would be 17 weeks. It was noted some Authorities operated annual schemes, however it was not thought this was appropriate for County Durham. In terms of any garden waste having led to issues of street cleanliness, the Head of Projects and Business Services noted he would reinforce this issue to the operational crews, although it can be very difficult on extremely windy days due to the nature of the waste. The Chairman asked as regards the use of camera on refuse vehicles.

The Head of Projects and Business Services noted there were cameras and that these could be used to investigate should there be complaints.

Councillor I Jewell asked if rubbish blew down the street would a vehicle need to stop and go back. The Head of Projects and Business Services noted that all vehicles had brushes and shovels on board and some could be taken care of there and then, and in the cases where this was not possible, the Council's Streetscene Teams could be deployed as necessary.

**Resolved:**

That the update report and presentation be noted.

**12 Minutes of the County Durham Environmental Partnership Board**

The Minutes of the meeting of the County Durham Environmental Partnership Board held 27 June 2016 were received by the Committee for information.