

**13<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**School Carbon Reduction Programme and  
other Outdoor and Sustainability Education  
School Initiatives**

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**Report of Ian Thompson, Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local  
Services**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members of the Environment & Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an understanding of a number of school programmes that engage pupils with outdoor and sustainability learning.

**Background**

2. The School Carbon Reduction Programme began in 2010 following research developed through the County Council Carbon Management Plan, which identified schools as a key sector and priority area with growing carbon emissions and associated costs.
3. The Outdoor and Sustainability Education Service was re-structured in 2012-13. It had previously been an informal partnership between DCC and two charities. During this period, DCC took the decision to close the residential outdoor centres that it ran in Richmond, Middleton-in-Teesdale and Westgate in Weardale. As part of this restructure, a new partnering agreement was negotiated and the service was rebranded as OASES (Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists). It is now heavily reliant on the charity partner with only one member of staff remaining with Education Durham working on this agenda.
4. Much of this work contributes to The Environment Partnership predominately through the Climate Change group, a multi-agency thematic group. Activities that support schools through initiatives such as the Eco-Schools programme and campaigns such as Earth Hour are discussed through this group and opportunities to add value through partnership working are identified.

**Overview**

5. Members of the Committee will receive a short presentation from the Education Development Advisor – Sustainability regarding some of the key schools programmes that has been undertaken.
6. The presentation will cover the following projects:
  - a. School Carbon Reduction Programme
  - b. Climart (Climate Resilience Arts Project for Secondary schools)

- c. STEM Challenge with Thorn Lighting
- d. Harmony Programme
- e. Examples of school projects led by OASES
  - i. Doorstep Orchard
  - ii. Growing Together
  - iii. Illuminating Waste
  - iv. Active Learning
  - v. Hamsterley Forest

### **School Carbon Reduction Programme**

- 7. This programme has been operating since 2010 and is working with over 90% of the schools in the County. Schools engage through the Energy Management SLA. It has made a significant impact on energy use in schools through:
  - a. Learning sessions with pupils and teachers
  - b. Support for School Business Managers, Premises Managers, Senior Management and Governors.
  - c. A focus on wasted electricity use
  - d. A focus on out of ours gas use
  - e. Investigating opportunities for investment in renewables and energy efficiency
  - f. Environment Awards Climate Change Category Winner 2016
  - g. Involved with REBUS Interreg Europe programme

### **Other Programmes**

- 8. **Climart** – a programme developed through the Climate Change Group (part of Environment Partnership). It's an arts programme working with six secondary schools (Bishop Barrington; King James; Parkside; Polam Hall (Darlington); Seaham High; Wolsingham). The students involved will develop artwork that is only visible when it rains following engagement with climate resilience education lessons. Artists from Bearpark Artists Cooperative are leading the arts sessions. The artworks will be completed by mid-May with artwork in the individual school grounds and in community sites.
- 9. **STEM Challenge with Thorn Lighting.** This took place on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016. Students from Wolsingham School involved with their STEM Club visited Thorn Lighting in Spennymoor, had a tour of the factory and the Research and Development laboratories. The students then pitched their ideas to a team of

experts from Thorn and DCC. It students loved the experience and appreciated potential career opportunities in STEM. It is hoped that the event will be repeated again.

10. **Harmony Programme.** This initiative has been developed by the Prince's School of Traditional Arts in London using a book written by the Prince of Wales as inspiration. It is the first time the programme has been delivered in the north of England. There are four teacher training sessions based on each season over the course of the year supported by excellent learning resources. The first two sessions ran at Durham Johnston art department, the second two at Elemore Hall Outdoor Learning Classroom. An exhibition will take of the work developed in the 16 schools involved in the Durham Room at County Hall, week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> July.

### **A Selection of Programmes Developed by OASES**

11. **Doorstep Orchard** – this project based at a site at Newton Hall has been funded by the Postcode Lottery and run between June 2016 and April 2017. Five schools have been involved to develop the site. In addition, four family events have taken place to engage the local community.
12. **Growing Together** – this is one of the growing related projects that OASES delivers with schools. This one is funded by Children in Need and is working with schools with high levels of deprivation indicators until summer 2017. The schools involved are:
  - Our Lady Star of the Sea Primary, Horden
  - Fulwell Primary (Sunderland),
  - Yohden Primary, Horden
  - Initially Easington Village Primary and now Gilesgate Primary.
13. **Illuminating Waste** – this project developed with Derwent Valley AAP has run for the past two years working with primary, special schools and youth groups to learn about issues relating to resource use, waste materials and the local environment. Pupils developed displays made from reused materials that are then displayed and lit within shop windows in Consett Town Centre for a week. In 2016 the event was run in conjunction with the Christmas Lights Switch On.
14. **Active Learning** – an accredited learning programme that has been written and developed by OASES using the latest research highlighting the benefits to learners from learning outdoors. Individual teachers can engage though standalone CPD or through whole staff in school training. The active nature of the learning means that it is suitable to be funded by schools using the Sport and PE Premium funding.
15. **Hamsterley Forest** – OASES holds the Forestry Commission Learning Licence for the forest. It works with approximately 40 schools a year to deliver a range of activities in the forest engaging pupils with the natural world and excellent facilities. A new interactive Gruffalo app has been recently launched which provides a virtual reality experience into the forest.

The summer term offers from OASES at Hamsterley are:

Gruffalo Discovery for EYFS

Fauna & Flora Identification – KS1

Homes & Habitats – KS2

Orienteering – KS3

Schools can also run their own self-led sessions if they would prefer.

### **Recommendations**

16. Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the wide range of initiatives being developed and offered to schools across the County.

### **Background Papers**

Presentation to be issued.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** - None

**Staffing** – These programmes are staff intensive. The in-school support for the School Carbon Reduction programme is funded by schools buying into the Energy SLA. The other programmes are funded separately through various sources (external and DCC grants).

**Risk** – None

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** - None

**Accommodation** - None

**Crime and Disorder** – None

**Human Rights** - None

**Consultation** - None

**Procurement** - None

**Disability Issues** - None

**Legal Implications** – None