
OVERVIEW OF PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Place Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
 - (a) **Work Programme 2012/13** – We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2012/13 and possible review topics and in doing so, we have taken into account the reduced resources available within the Authority and ensured that, in recommending our work programme to Monitoring and Co-ordination Group, that any work we undertake will have demonstrable outcomes and contribute to the work of the Council and its strategic aims and objectives. Following discussion Scrutiny Committee agreed to receive an update on the Car Parking Strategy and the Creative Darlington Manager will be invited to brief us on Development in Cultural Services. In the New Year it is our intention to establish a Review Group to consider the business plan for the Town's Markets and also to look into the operation of the Civic Amenity Site.
 - (b) **Town Centre Fringe** – We received a report advising of the consultation that had taken place on the Town Centre Fringe Masterplan, the issues that were raised and the preparation of the plans for adoption in early 2013. Scrutiny was encouraged to note the level of consultation that had taken place and the responses received. It was particularly pleasing to see that, after discussions with residents, the Eastmount Road green open space was to be retained. Consultation with young people was an interesting feature of the process but Scrutiny suggested that Darlington College should be approached to host an exhibition as part of the on-going informal discussions. Committee was also encouraged to find that the proposed alterations to the Ring Road had been generally welcomed as improving access and general 'connectivity' between the town centre and the Fringe area. Housing issues were linked to changes in government guidance and on-going work on the Local Plan and formed part of discussion at the Special Meeting on 12th November detailed at (c) below. Members were especially interested in the heritage agenda which is to be pursued by the recently established Heritage Enquiry Group.
 - (c) **Waste Management (Wheeled Bins) Review Group** – This Group met to give consideration to the concerns and issues raised by residents following the consultation exercise undertaken on the introduction of the Wheeled Bins.
 - (d) **Local Plan** - We convened a special meeting of Scrutiny to give consideration to the Local Plan (formerly Local Development Framework (LDF)). Members received a number of presentations from Planning Officers on the Making and Growing Places scoping document which will form a key part of the up to date

Local Plan for the borough; Housing Planning which included how any houses the Council are planning for and where this housing should go; Housing Intensification and in particular the steady increase in the number of houses in multiple occupation in Darlington; Employment Land and the Local Policy Core Strategy to provide up to 335 hectares of additional employment land; Town Centre and Retail Policies with particular interest in the increase in number of vacant units in the town; Heritage Policy Options with its primary aim to conserve Darlington's heritage assets; and the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document to update us on the consultations responses and key amendments to the document, including a new section to be incorporated on Community and Member involvement. It is envisaged that the Plan will be adopted in December, 2014 following further targeted consultations in December/January 2013, a presentation of the preferred options in May 2013 and the public draft in January 2014 and submission to the Planning Inspectorate April, 2014.

2. Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended :-

- (a) Various meetings with Officers;
- (b) Joint briefings with officers and Portfolio Holders.

Councillor Dorothy Long
Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee