

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 June 2015

PRESENT – Councillor Carson (in the Chair); Councillors Baldwin, Cossins, Donohue, L Hughes, KE Kelly, Lyonette, MR Nicholson and Wright. (10)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Grundy and York. (2)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – ()

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Steve Petch, Place Strategy Manager and Lead Officer, Sharon Raine, Head of Organisational Planning and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

P1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interests reported at the meeting.

P2. TO CONSIDER TIMINGS OF MEETINGS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015/16 - RESOLVED – That meetings of this Scrutiny Committee be held at 9.30 am for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2015/16.

P3. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 9 April 2015.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

P4. MATTERS ARISING – The Chair reported that the Public Events Safety Advisory Group (PESAG) Review Group Final Report had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 16 June.

Cabinet had resolved to note the findings and recommendations within the Final Report and requested that Officers continue to action the recommendations deliverable within existing resources.

P5. WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16 – The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the current Municipal Year.

It was also emphasised that the work programme was a rolling programme and any Member of this Scrutiny could request an item to be included provided that a Quad of Aims had been submitted to the Scrutiny Committee prior to ensure that it contributed to the strategic aims of the Council.

The submitted report outlined the original Work Programme and requested Members to reconsider the Work Programme to accommodate further issues that needed to be included.

A Member requested that Markets be placed back onto the Work Programme to monitor any progress made and the Chair reiterated that it was important to monitor any Review which had been submitted to Cabinet by this Scrutiny Committee in order to ensure that the recommendations were implemented.

The Lead Officer referred to four major up and coming items which Scrutiny may wish to place on its Work Programme, namely, Railway Heritage, Bank Top Masterplan, Town Centre Business Plan and the Combined Authority.

A Member also requested Cockerton Library be placed on the Work Programme in light of the recent announcement regarding Evolution.

Particular reference was made to Railway Heritage and the Chair referred to the Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway Conference which he had recently attended. The purpose of the event was to promote the railway as a World Heritage Site and confirm that four or five years' work was required in order to submit a bid, for World Heritage Status, to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Committee considered that 2025 was paramount as the 200 years anniversary of the Railways although it was stressed that organisations had to be made aware that local authorities did not have funding for any anniversary celebrations. It was also noted that a Statement of Support had been drawn up by the three main Local Authorities.

A Member requested that the Cattle Market relocation was also considered as a possible future item for the Work Programme and Members were keen to progress this item as quickly as possible.

Members were informed of the process involved in requesting an item on the Work Programme which included the completion of a Quad of Aims form for submission to Monitoring and Co-ordination Committee for consideration and agreement.

RESOLVED – (a) That the current status of the Work Programme be noted.

(b) That the Work Programme be updated to reflect the decisions of this Scrutiny Committee.

P6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT QUARTER 4 – The Head of Organisational Planning gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Performance Management Framework including statistical data around the three key performance indicators that were relevant to this Scrutiny Committee – 'More businesses and more jobs' 'A place designed to thrive' and 'More people caring for our environment'.

Particular reference was made to Darlington's overall employment rate and the reduction in the amount of Job Seeker's Allowance claimants. Members were keen to monitor this indicator especially when Universal Credit comes into effect no later than

2017. The Head of Organisational Planning confirmed that future data would be based on the new Wards although the data would not be directly comparable and that it was possible to provide data on the types of claims being made by residents.

Scrutiny welcomed the work undertaken by Foundation for Jobs resulting in the creation of 126 apprenticeships for Darlington residents and noted with interest the percentage of 16-19 year olds achieving NVQ Levels 2 and 3 Qualifications. It was also pleasing to note that schools and colleges were engaging with each other in order to provide career advice and information to schoolchildren at an early opportunity.

Members also noted that although residents' earnings have increased since 2011 they did not necessarily work in the Borough.

With regard to 'A place designed to thrive' Scrutiny noted that the Community Survey was to be repeated this year and that updated data would become available based on the new Wards and that Darlington's schools were performing better than the National Average.

Discussion ensued on the indicators around the decline in Town Centre footfall which it was considered was relevant to Town Centres in general and Committee agreed that there should be a greater emphasis on provision of leisure and the night time economy.

The Lead Officer informed Members that this was a key indicator as it linked into the Town Centre Business Strategy and provided an awareness of how the Strategy was performing.

RESOLVED – (a) That the thanks of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to the Head of Organisational Planning for her informative presentation.

(b) That Scrutiny Committee looks forward to the Quarter 1 performance indicators when they become available.

P7. MEMBERS' TOOLKIT - The Head of Organisational Planning advised Committee that a Members' Toolkit was currently being developed to assist Members in their community roles.

Particular reference was made to the next stage of its development which was to consult with Members to ascertain their views. A working group was being established, comprising a mix of Scrutiny, Cabinet, new, existing and rural Members and Committee were requested to nominate a representative of Place Scrutiny to the Working Group.

RESOLVED – That Councillors KE Kelly and MR Nicholson be nominate to represent Place Scrutiny Committee.
