

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20th December, 2012

PRESENT – Councillor Long (in the Chair); Councillors Carson, Cossins, Harman, L. Hughes, Lawton, Lewis and E.A. Richmond. (8)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Grundy and Wright. (3)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor McNab. (1)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning, Mike Crawshaw, Cultural Services Manager, Stephen Wiper, Creative Darlington Manager and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

P20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – In relation to Minute P24/Dec/12, Councillor Long declared a personal interest as a member of Vane Women, Darlington For Culture and a Board Member of Theatre Hullaballoo, Councillor Harman declared a personal interest as a member of Darlington for Culture.

P21. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Scrutiny Committee held on 25th October and 12th November, 2012.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as correct records.

P22. SCRUTINY – WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13 – The Director of Resources 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.

The submitted report outlined those areas where this Scrutiny Committee had previously identified it would like to focus its work over the next Municipal Year namely, Civil Parking Enforcement, Town Centre Fringe, Local Development Framework, Housing Strategy and Economic Strategy.

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 need to be included.

Members were advised that as Digital Inclusion was considered a wider topic than originally envisaged with the involvement of businesses and outside agencies it was suggested that this Review Group be not pursued. There was the possibility that Scrutiny would be able to contribute to this wider piece of work at a later date. Councillor Hughes gave further information to Members advised the Committee of a presentation she had given to Monitoring and Co-ordination on this subject.

Discussion ensued on the Car Parking Strategy being submitted to Place Scrutiny in the New Year as the work being undertaken on the Town Centre would have an effect on this Strategy's outcome; Business Site and Premises Review being submitted to Scrutiny in the New Year; and a possible walkabout the town by Members to assess the Pedestrian Guardrailing.

The Chair also advised that the Town's Market Review Group would need to be established in January and that Local Transport Plan 3 and Remodelling of Stonebridge would need to be added to this Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme.

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

(b) That arrangements be made for the inaugural meeting of the Town Market Review Group in order to establish Terms of Reference.

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

P23. HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CHANGES – The Director of Place submitted a report (previously circulated) which provided an update on the changes implemented at the Household Waste Recycling Centre as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The submitted report stated that in April 2012 use of the site was restricted to household waste only as part of the MTFP with an identified saving of £45,000 per annum. A height restriction barrier was installed to stop vans and large trailers entering and a permit scheme introduced to allow residents who only had access to a large vehicle to dispose of genuine household waste.

It was also stated that there had been 33 comments received from residents of the Borough following the changes, fly tipping had increased slightly from the previous year and there had been a 41 per cent reduction in waste going through the Household Waste Recycling Centre however for the same period an increase in waste collected from households through the weekly refuse collection service.

Reference was made to the introduction of a 'Pay as You Throw' service for small amounts of non-household waste that residents transported in their cars. The contractor makes no profit from this charge which is to cover haulage and disposal.

The overall financial saving for six months totalled £74,771.05 however as waste tonnages are generally lower in the summer months it was expected that overall a saving of £100,000 could be achieved.

Discussion ensued on the location of licenced facilities within the Borough for the disposal of trade waste; the cost per tonne to dispose of the various varieties of waste; and the amount of recyclable waste that was taken to the Household Waste Centre.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

P24. CULTURAL PROVISION IN THE BOROUGH – Stephen Wiper, the newly-appointed Creative Darlington Manager gave an update to Scrutiny Committee on Cultural Provision in the Borough. A PowerPoint presentation accompanied the update.

Discussion ensued on the excellent work done by staff to re-locate the organisations from the Arts Centre; whether there was now a need for a new Arts Centre; occupiers of The Bridge supporting each other; the frequency of meetings of the Creative Darlington Board; and the Business Plan of the Creative Darlington Board.

Following a question as to why the Board would want to invest in Arts for Darlington and the role of the Council for Arts Provision in Darlington it was stated that this could be investigated at a future meeting of the Cultural Review Group

Particular reference was made to the inclusion of schools and academies within the Creative Darlington vision; and the financial report of The Bridge.

RESOLVED – (a) That the thanks of this Committee be extended to Mr. Wiper for his informative presentation.

(b) That the thanks of this Committee be conveyed to the staff for the excellent work on relocating the occupants of the Arts Centre.

(c) That a meeting of the Cultural Review Group be arranged to give consideration to the points made by Scrutiny Committee.

P25. POLICY REVIEW – REVIEW OF PROGRESS ON POLICY REVIEW ITEMS – REFUSE COLLECTION (WHEELED BINS) REVIEW GROUP – Submitted – The notes of the meeting held on 19th November, 2012.

The Chair advised Scrutiny Committee that she would like to submit an interim report to Cabinet on the work undertaken by the Group to date and requested for recommendations from the Committee to accompany that report.

Discussion ensued on the work undertaken by the Group and the recommendations to be forwarded to Cabinet as part of the interim report.

RESOLVED – That the following recommendations form part of the interim report to Cabinet on the work of the Refuse Collection (Wheeled Bins) Review Group :-

- (a) That residents be advised that it is essential that wheeled bins are not stored outside the curtilage, or on the street of properties, before or after collection unless there are unusual circumstances;
 - (b) That the individual consultation and visits to residents continue as they have proved to be a very useful exercise;
 - (c) That monitoring recycling rates is essential to assess the impact of the introduction of wheeled bins and therefore Place Scrutiny Committee should review this aspect after a year of operation in 2014;
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- (d) That, as there is a continuing need to encourage recycling, a label be attached to the lid of each bin with the 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' message or a variation of it;
 - (e) That the comprehensive plans for on-going publicity be applauded as residents need to be made aware of new collection dates from 29th April, the deployment of the bins in mid-June and necessary information as and when thereafter;
 - (f) That the use of collection points be kept to a minimum and the bins be collected from the immediate vicinity of the household wherever possible;
 - (g) That a consistent approach to the design of bin stores on public and private housing estates be encouraged;
 - (h) That householders be encouraged to make use of the space provided on the top of their bins for their house number to ensure a consistent solution to the identification of the bin with the premises;
 - (i) That, as there could be a business opportunity for the cleaning of wheeled bins, households be given guidance relating to the potential increase in traders as residents need to be made aware that such traders need to be licensed;
 - (j) That discussions be held with the Durham Constabulary and the Anti-Social Behaviour team regarding potential anti-social behaviour as there is a risk that anti-social behaviour could increase with regard to wheeled bins being stolen, set on fire or used as a means of entry;
 - (k) That further advice be provided on storage of wheeled bins at the end of farm tracks and similar households in rural areas;
 - (l) That further advice on the regulatory framework be received.
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