

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 October 2014

PRESENT – Councillor Long (in the Chair); Councillors Carson, Culley, Donohue, Harman, Lawton, EA Richmond and Wright. (8)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin and Cossins. (2)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Jane Salisbury, Flood Risk Manager, Stockton Borough Council.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Bill Westland, Assistant Director – Regulatory Services, Steve Petch, Place Strategy Manager, Sharon Raine, Head of Organisational Planning and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

P22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

P23. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of meetings of this Scrutiny Committee held on 3 and 25 September and 2nd October 2014.

RESOLVED – That, with the addition of Councillor Donohue and the deletion of Councillor Grundy and Councillor Lawton in the list of attendees of the 25 September meeting, the Minutes be approved as correct records.

P24. SCRUTINY – WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15 – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and 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.

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.

Discussion ensued on the newly implemented alternate weekly collection arrangements and the need for an update report relating to Grounds Maintenance and Litter Reduction being submitted to the next ordinary meeting of this Committee.

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.

P25. THE FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010 – The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services and the Flood Risk Manager, Stockton Borough Council gave a joint presentation outlining the role of partners for Flood Risk Management within the Borough and surrounding Tees Valley area.

It was stated that Sir Michael Pitt undertook a comprehensive review of the lessons to be learned from the summer floods of 2007 which greatly affected the southern part of the United Kingdom. It was reported that the impact of climate change meant that the probability of events on a similar scale happening in future was increasing and that there was a need for urgent and fundamental changes in the way the country was adapting to the likelihood of more frequent and intense periods of heavy rainfall.

Details were provided of the provisions for Local Authorities within the Act which included leading investigations into flooding (investigations are undertaken if five residential properties or two commercial properties flood), compiling a register of features, determining consent applications for ordinary watercourses, compiling a local flood risk strategy and undertaking in partnership working.

The role of Stockton Borough Council (SBC), which operates as a contractor and delivers services to Darlington, was outlined and it was stressed that Stockton was not the emergency response to flooding; Darlington undertook that role with support from Durham County Council.

Reference was made to the provision of various sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), particularly in relation to new housing developments, where water would naturally have drained away and was now hard surfaced. Members were advised that it would become law in 2015 that any major development must have a SUDS scheme and that there were various schemes available, some of which became features within a development. SBC took the lead on technical assessment of SUDS and local standards were being developed at Tees Valley level. Darlington Borough Council could adopt and be responsible for approved schemes once they were bedded in. SBC also provided flood mitigation advice on development proposals (anything above ten properties was considered), such as outfall rates into watercourses, assessed the site for flood risks, advised on land drainage consent, if required and provided technical advice on SUDS if provided. For work that impacted on water flow in an ordinary watercourse consent was required and there had been five consent applications to date.

Discussion ensued on the need to ensure that Planning Committee Members were given appropriate training in flood management risks in order to aid any planning decisions and whether there was a role for Northumbrian Water Limited in Flood Risk Management.

Councillor Harman advised Members that he was this Council's member on the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC) which oversaw funding on a strategic basis for the North East. NRFCC had £30m for flood defence and mitigation proposals and had to make decisions on which project to award money to based on a complicated points scoring system.

It was stated that Northumbria was quite efficient and had gained a decent share of the funding. Flood defence walls had been built at both Redcar and South Shields and a dam had been constructed six miles upstream from Morpeth to protect the town from future flooding.

He reported that as well as government funding all local authorities contributed a local levy, DBC's contribution was £97k, to assist with flood management schemes. Project downpour was an example of using local levy funding, the aim of the Project was to engage with local householders in identified areas through an awareness campaign to create or improve defences against future flash flooding. Examples of how small projects could help against flash flooding were given and Councillor Harman stressed that educating the public of the benefits of the project was key

Members were advised that any flood defence walls were expected to be maintained by the property/landowner which meant that along the stretch of a river ownership could change many times and that Northumbrian Water would only repair a sewer once it had collapsed. It was also stated that many people were not aware if a culvert was located under or on their property and that they were liable for any repair work required.

RESOLVED – (a) That the thanks of this Committee be conveyed to the Assistant Director, Regulatory Services and the Flood Risk Manager, Stockton Borough Council for their informative presentation.

(b) That it be requested that Planning Committee members undergo any necessary Flood Defence training to enable the correct decisions to be made on planning applications.

(c) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee in 2015.

(d) That Members contribute to the Register of Features as they have local knowledge of the Wards they represent.

P26. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – Pursuant to Minute P47/Apr/14, the Head of Organisational Planning gave a further presentation on the Performance Management Framework.

It was stated that the Framework included statistical data around the key performance indicators that were relevant to this Scrutiny Committee and which would be used to demonstrate and measure how those indicators were performing and contributing to the eight key objectives and overall vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

It was highlighted that work has been undertaken on the high level indicators which have been devised as a set of key indicators to measure performance. The high level indicators were strategic indicators which included all the Partners and would be used to assess the outcomes of the Strategy. The delivery indicators set out what the Council is doing to ensure the strategic indicators are achieved.

It was reported that the eight strategic outcomes had been assigned by the Monitoring and Co-ordination Group to the relevant Scrutiny Committee and that this Scrutiny

Committee had been assigned to the strategic outcomes – More Business and More Jobs, More People Caring for our Environment and a Place Designed to Thrive.

It was stressed that the economic indicators required more work and that due to a data lag a further report would be submitted to the next meeting of Scrutiny. All data, once collated, would be in one place and could be looked at in a variety of ways and variables.

Particular reference was made to the Community Survey which is a postal survey undertaken every two years. Although no longer a national Government policy the survey was still undertaken by Darlington Borough Council and gave an excellent statistical overview.

Discussion ensued on the need to get a variety of views from all types of individual people including employed, unemployed, retired and living in deprived wards. Members were advised that it was hoped to undertake the survey again next year so that a more realistic like for like comparable would be achieved and that although there had been austerity measures the satisfaction survey had increased. Members were pleased to note that data would be available on a ward basis and that a ward report could be made available if required.

It was highlighted that the information would inform the budget process and that areas where there were issues could be investigated in more detail. It was confirmed that data would need to be re-aligned once the boundary changes were made and that changes would be highlighted in any affected wards.

RESOLVED – That the Head of Organisational Planning be thanked for her informative presentation.

P27. CREATIVE DARLINGTON BOARD - Submitted – The Notes of the meeting of the Board held on 16 September 2015.

Discussion ensued on the current governance of the Board and the need for a review.

RESOLVED – That the notes be received.

P28. PESAG TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP – Submitted – The Notes of the meeting of the Group held on 1 October 2014.

Discussion ensued on the format and attendees of the next meeting of PESAG.

RESOLVED – (a) That the notes of the meeting be received.

(b) That the Democratic Officer arrange the next meeting of PESAG in conjunction with the Environmental Health Officer and advise members accordingly.
