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**OVERVIEW OF PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Place Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

**Work Programme 2013/14**

2. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2013/14 and possible review topics. Following discussion we agreed to update the Work Programme to reflect the decisions of the Committee. We sought specific updates on on-going projects particularly the Economic Strategy, the Car Parking Strategy and the Local Plan during this Municipal Year. We have contributed to work on the Medium Term Financial Plan and given consideration to the proposals which fall within the remit of Place Scrutiny Committee.

**Performance Management Framework**

3. We received a presentation on the Performance Management Framework (PMF) currently being developed which outlined how the indicators aligned to the strategies and outcomes of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
4. Committee was advised that the PMF will assist Members in developing their work programmes over the next Municipal Year thereby ensuring that work undertaken will reflect the strategic aims of the Council.
5. We were informed that work is currently being undertaken on the high level indicators which have been devised as a set of key indicators to measure performance. The high level indicators are strategic indicators which include all the Partners and will be used to assess the outcomes of the Strategy.
6. We were assured that the indicators would show if Darlington was going in the right direction and flag any issues which would be included on Committee Work Programme for further investigation. It was stressed that high level indicators would take a while to move although low level indicators would give a better idea of movement.
7. We were keen to know why Darlington lacked so many apprenticeships and what could be done to improve that situation and our concerns were expressed at the deprivation level in some Wards.

## **Sustainable Community Strategy**

8. We were invited to contribute to the development of the revised Sustainable Community Strategy prior to consideration by Council on 20 May 2014.
9. We were advised that the role and priorities of the Local Strategic Partnership were now within the Strategy and that it now encompassed a statement regarding tackling plans together with a diagram outlining delivery plans.
10. Scrutiny was keen to include Darlington's cultural and engineering heritage as the steam railway heritage was a massive worldwide tourist attraction. We also suggested that the correct balance of skills of the workforce supported the economic growth of Darlington and that employment opportunities are now diverse and in the future will include opportunities arising from sub-sea engineering, biologics and digital business technology and the Hitachi supply chain.
11. We also suggested that there should be a reference to education providers as Darlington had good schools and excellent exam results.
12. Scrutiny Committee strongly endorsed the central aim to reduce inequality in the Borough and to mitigate its effects in all forms. It also applauded the style and plain English of the document and considers it a practical template for the future.

## **Regulatory Services**

13. We received a PowerPoint presentation which provided an overview of the Role of Regulatory Services and explained how it integrated in the Economic Growth Department.
14. We were advised that Regulatory Services supported and protected public health and safety, the natural and built environment and economic growth.
15. It was highlighted how Regulatory Services supported the economic growth through environmental health, development management, private sector housing, licensing, parking regulations and trading standards.
16. Members were keen to establish a Task and Finish Review Group focussing on the Public Event Safety Advisory Group (PESAG).

## **Cultural Review Group**

17. The Group were briefed on progress on projects the Head of Steam Railway Museum and Cockerton Library arising out of the MTFP and were able to add comments and suggestions.
18. We also received an update on activity at The Bridge.

## **Markets Review Group**

19. Members of the Review Group undertook a site visit of the Market Hall, Basement Area and Town Clock in order to gain an understanding of the heritage, architecture, layout, use and potential of the premises.
20. Members accepted that displays would differ due to goods on sale but had aspirations for unity and boundaries within the Hall and were advised that there was a possibility of Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) for the two 'book ends' of the Market Hall but not for the Hall itself.
21. The Clock Tower is a 'hidden gem' with access issues and investment is required prior to any further usage.
22. Councillor Cossins and I undertook a separate visit to obtain the views of the traders.
23. A further meeting of the Review Group was held and Traders were invited to discuss development and regeneration of the market.

**Councillor Dorothy Long  
Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee**