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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 2014/15**

2. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2014/15 and possible review topics and, in doing so, we have taken into account the reduced resources available and ensured that, in recommending our work programme to Monitoring and Co-ordination Group, any work we undertake will have demonstrable outcomes and contribute to the work of the Council and its strategic aims and objectives.

**Changes to Refuse and Recycling Collection**

3. Scrutiny was pleased to receive a detailed report highlighting the two major changes to the refuse and recycling collection service in the past 18 months with the introduction of wheeled bins in June 2013 and the revised weekly collection in October 2014. It was encouraging to note that the implementation of wheeled bins was largely successful and improvement has been seen in the cleanliness of back lanes due to the result of containment of refuse on collection day.
4. Members noted that the £100,000 saving identified in the MTFP for 2014/15 will be achieved and that the ongoing annual saving of £400,000 for 2015/16 will also be delivered.
5. Scrutiny noted that kerbside collection had increased by 72 per cent with expected overall recycling tonnages in excess of 7,000 per annum.
6. In relation to concerns over increased fly tipping Scrutiny was informed that all Councils reported fly tipping through a national database, there were two classifications used nationally for fly tipping, namely small fly tips which were generally classed as bin bag size and larger fly tips which were multiple items from vans and other vehicles.
7. Smaller fly tips have risen during the past three years by approximately 34 per cent, as, since the introduction of wheeled bins, any collection not put within the wheeled bin was classed as fly tip and not removed as part of the refuse collection service.

## **Theatre Hullabaloo and Civic Theatre**

8. We received an overview of the current situation in relation to the Civic Theatre and Theatre Hullabaloo funding applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Arts Council respectively.
9. During October 2014, Stage 1 Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) support for a £5m bid had been successful for the Civic Theatre and Theatre Hullabaloo had also been awarded capital investment of £1.5m from Arts Council England at Stage 1 in order to provide a Children's Theatre adjacent to Darlington's Civic Theatre.
10. Committee was advised that the Council now owned buildings around the Civic Theatre which would be included in the blue prints for the renovations. Consultants and specialists had been appointed and were working on final submissions for both projects which had different requirements for both funding streams and Officers had also visited many Theatres across the UK to ascertain the best options for the Civic Theatre.
11. We were pleased to note that the Arts Council submission for Stage 2 would be made in July with the result being announced in November and the Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 2 submission would be made in October/November with the result being announced in Jan/Feb 2016. Works would then commence during Spring/Summer 2016 if a successful outcome was received.
12. We noted that the restoration works included renovation of the front exterior of the Theatre, the creation of a vaulted bar in the former water tower, more space for public circulation, improved seating and greater comfort for audiences, and better disabled access including a lift. Members were also pleased to note that there were plans for a new education centre and a gallery offering a changing programme of theatre-related exhibitions.
13. The plans also included major improvements to backstage areas to bring the Theatre up to modern standards and allow it to accommodate larger touring companies and bigger shows.

## **Public Events Safety Advisory Group**

14. We have concluded our Review which was established to contribute to the promotion and protocol for Darlington Public Events Safety Advisory Group (PESAG).
15. Various organisations were consulted during the review and contributions were received from Durham Police, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Sadberge Festival Organisers, Friends of North Lodge Park, Darlington Community Carnival, Principal Licensing Officer, Regulatory Services, Traffic Manager, Highways, Events and Programming Manager and Environmental Health Officer, Regulatory Services of the Council.

16. Place Scrutiny Committee has now approved findings and recommendations which will be forwarded to Cabinet for its consideration.

As this is my last report to Council, I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to all the Officers I have worked with. I have greatly appreciated their advice and expertise and working in partnership on policy matters has been very interesting in so many ways. In particular I would like to thank Steve Petch and Karen Graves who have been exemplary and a constant support. Members of all political parties on Place Scrutiny I feel have worked well together for the good of the Borough and, along with my Cabinet colleagues, I would like to thank them too.'

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