
OVERVIEW OF PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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.
3. Two special meetings of Scrutiny have been convened, one to give consideration to the Local Plan, particularly the housing allocation feedback and the second to consider the Durham Tees Valley Airport Master Plan. Representatives from Peel Airports and Stockton Borough Council have also been invited to attend.

Public Event Safety Advisory Group (PESAG)

4. Following consideration of a report on the role and operation of the Darlington Public Event Safety Advisory Group (PESAG) Scrutiny have agreed to establish a Task and Finish Review Group. All Members of Scrutiny have been invited to participate in the Review which will identify the implications of PESAG on the residents of Darlington and consider how PESAG and its benefits can be widely promoted.
5. Scrutiny was advised that the police had requested the establishment of a multi-agency group to consider public events in Darlington. PESAG has no statutory role and is not accountable to any body or organisation. Core members of PESAG included representatives from the emergency services (Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Ambulance NHS Trust) and Council services (Highways, Traffic Management, Building Control, Environmental Health and Licensing).
6. Scrutiny were advised of the main objectives of PESAG which were to promote high levels of safety and welfare at events, promote good practice in safety and welfare planning for events and ensure events cause minimal adverse impact. There is no obligation on organisers of events to consult PESAG or follow its advice.

7. Scrutiny was also advised that contrary to popular belief the Police had no authority to approve or ban events and their powers to regulate traffic for planned events were limited.

Markets Review Group

8. We have concluded our Review of Markets which was established to ensure promotion of Darlington as a vibrant market town. We met with representatives of both Indoor and Outdoor Traders to hear their views and suggestions for invigorating the markets. Scrutiny has now approved a number of findings and recommendations which will be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.
9. There was all party agreement that the building must be considered architecturally as a whole however it is likely that grant aid may be forthcoming for the Town Clock and Old Town Hall. The Market Hall remains the responsibility of the Council. All the elements of the building are important to Darlington and its residents and will be maintained.
10. The Covered Market must be radically and bravely re-examined; imaginative solutions must be assessed professionally; and a proposed stage investment programme is a priority as funds allow.
11. Place Scrutiny Committee hopes to monitor the economic, development and funding opportunities for Darlington's Markets.
12. Scrutiny Committee will continue to take a close interest in the Heritage Campus and Cockerton Library and developments at the Old Town Hall and Clock Tower.

Cultural Review Group

13. We have also concluded our Review which was established to gain an understanding of the issues around provision of culture for Darlington and to identify potential solutions. Place Scrutiny Committee has now approved findings and recommendations which will be forwarded to Cabinet. Scrutiny Committee noted that the strategic role for arts within the Borough had now passed to Creative Darlington and that it was important that a close interest in Creative Darlington and its governance model be taken. It is hoped that this can be done via regular reporting to Place Scrutiny Committee.

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