
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.

Durham Tees Valley Airport Masterplan

3. A Special meeting of Place Scrutiny was held to consider a report of the Director of Economic Growth on the Durham Tees Valley Airport (DTVA) Master Plan together with the critical evidence that underpinned that plan.
4. Scrutiny was informed that Peel Group, the owners of the Airport, had produced a Master Plan with the objective of improving its financial and operating base in order to create more certainty about its future serving the Tees Valley, Durham and Yorkshire economies. Peel Group had led this work in close liaison with Tees Valley Unlimited, Stockton Borough Council, which took the lead from public sector partners, and Darlington Borough Council.
5. Professor Peter Nears, Strategic Planning Director, Peel Group advised Scrutiny Committee of the current position of DTVA, provided case studies relating to other Airports in the UK and the Master Plan of DTVA 2020 and beyond.
6. Scrutiny was advised that Schiphol Airport (Amsterdam) served a wide-range of Airports and believed it was vital that DTVA retained that route as an international gateway for businesses seeking global markets. Scrutiny welcomed the news that, in relation to the reinstatement of a domestic route to Heathrow Airport, Tees Valley Unlimited would support any work and lobbying to the Airports Commission and Transport Select Committee to ensure a certain proportion of flights are ring-fenced to regional airports.
7. It was acknowledged that DTVA was an asset essential to the economic growth of the Tees Valley and we were keen that a robust and imaginative marketing of what DTVA had to offer was undertaken including liaison with local companies to determine their needs.

Local Plan : Making and Growing Places revised Preferred Options Housing site Allocations Consultation Responses and Next Steps

8. A special meeting of Place Scrutiny was held to consider the outcome of public consultation on the Local Plan : Making and Growing Places (MGP) Draft Revised Housing Site Proposals which was extremely well attended by members of the public wishing to express their views on individual sites.
9. Scrutiny's brief was to consider Officer responses to the consultation comments received rather than the Council's final consultation on points raised.
10. The Revised Preferred Options housing policy planned for 5,800 new homes to be provided by 2026 and identified land that could accommodate 6,200 home to ensure delivery of 5,800.
11. Scrutiny was advised that there was strong local opposition to development on some of the proposed allocated housing sites. The concerns raised included potential impact on traffic, access difficulties, impact on the local amenity of existing properties, biodiversity concerns, flooding, surface water and drainage issues, loss of recreational space, loss of views, impact on property values and availability of more appropriate alternatives.
12. At the meeting concerns were also expressed that large housing sites would place a strain on existing community services such as GP surgeries, hospitals and schools.
13. Members were pleased to see the number of responses received as this measured the success of the consultation and supported the recommendations within the report which has been considered by Cabinet and appears elsewhere on this Agenda for Council.

Flood and Water Management

14. We received a presentation from the Assistant Director, Regulatory Services and Jane Salisbury of Stockton Borough Council in relation to the Flood and Water Management Act duties and the role of both Councils within that Act.
15. Scrutiny learnt 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.
16. Members noted the role of Stockton Borough Council (SBC), which operates as a contractor and delivers services to Darlington, and that the emergency response to flooding was undertaken by Darlington Borough Council with support from Durham County Council.

17. Scrutiny was made aware of 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 and that it would become law in 2015 for any major development to have a SUDS scheme. The Council would adopt and be responsible for approved schemes once they were bedded in.
18. Councillor Paul Harman, who represents this authority on the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee outlined his work and in particular the 'Project Downpour' scheme which was aimed at encouraging householders to take simple measures to reduce water run off by growing plants and installing water butts as examples of measures which could be taken.

Performance Management

19. Members received a further presentation from the Head of Organisational Planning on the Performance Management Framework which 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).
20. Scrutiny was advised that the economic indicators required more work and that due to a data lag we would receive further information at our next meeting.
21. It was pleasing to note that all data, once collated, would be in one place and could be looked at in a variety of ways and variables.
22. We were pleased to note that, although no longer a national Government policy, the Community Survey was still undertaken by Darlington Borough Council and gave an excellent statistical overview.
23. 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.

Public Events Safety Advisory Group (PESAG) Review Group

24. We considered the notes of the meeting of the Review Group held to consider the Quad of Aims and to agree a planned approach for the Group.
25. A further meeting **is to be held/was held** with the Environmental Manager, Principal Licensing Officer, Traffic Manager, Highways and the Events and Programming Manager to gain their views on the work of the PESAG.

Creative Darlington Board

26. We received the notes of the Creative Darlington Board as one of the recommendations of the Cultural Review Group noted that the strategic role for arts within the Town had now passed to Creative Darlington and that it was within the remit of the Director of Economic Growth.
27. Scrutiny felt that it was important that a close interest should be taken in Creative Darlington and its governance model and agreed that this was undertaken via regular reporting to the Place Scrutiny Committee.

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