

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 December 2015

PRESENT – Councillor Carson (in the Chair); Councillors Cossins, Donoghue, Lyonette, MR Nicholson, Wright and York. (7)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin and KE Kelly (2)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – (0)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Steve Petch, Place Strategy Manager and Lead Officer, Bryan Huntley, Planning Policy Officer, Economic Initiative, Stephen Wiper, Creative Darlington Manager and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

P29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interests reported at the meeting.

P30. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Scrutiny Committee held on 22 October , 24 and 26 November 2015.

RESOLVED – (a) That, in relation to the Minutes of 22 October 2015, the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

(b) That, in relation to the Minutes of 24 November 2015, ‘2016’ in the fourth line of the second paragraph on page 2 be deleted and ‘2036’ be inserted.

(c) That, in relation to the Minutes of 26 November 2015, the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

P31. MATTERS ARISING – There were no matters arising.

P32. WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16 – 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 Work Programme and requested Members to reconsider it to accommodate further issues that needed to be included.

The Lead Officer referred to the schedule in the submitted report and provided Members with an updated position in relation to individual items. It was reported that the Local Plan and a short presentation by Councillor Lee relating to Litter Reduction

would be considered by Scrutiny at its next ordinary meeting scheduled for 11 February 2016; Economic Strategy, to include Combined Authority, and Cycling in the Pedestrian Hear Action Plan would be submitted to the ordinary meeting of Scrutiny scheduled for 7 April 2016; and a Special Place Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 19 January 2016 would give consideration to the Bank Top Masterplan.

Discussion ensued on signing provision relating to cycling within Post House Wynd and progress relating to the provision of a library service at Cockerton Library,

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.

P33. HOUSING STRATEGY MONITORING REPORT – The Director of Economic Growth submitted a report (previously circulated) stating that the Housing Strategy 2012-17, approved in July 2012, contained a commitment to annually monitor and review progress against milestones and targets.

It was stated that each Action consisted of a number of milestones to track progress which overall had been good with 55 per cent of milestones achieved in the first three years of a five year strategy. A further 27 per cent of milestones were on schedule and the Council was on course to meet its six objectives.

As part of the monitoring exercise ten milestones (eleven per cent) had been deleted as they were no longer appropriate, six milestones (seven per cent) were behind schedule and no new Priority Actions had been added to the refreshed Action Plan.

Members noted that Objective 5 – Provide good quality and timely advice to prevent crisis, increase choice and enable access had been and continues to be achieved.

Particular reference was made to the three areas where the Council was behind schedule, namely, provision of housing to meet local needs, slow progress on gas holder removal and flood mitigation in the Town Centre Fringe and withdrawal of the Making and Growing Places DPD resulting in planning applications being considered under national planning policies.

Members were informed it was intended to seek approval to a set of Interim Planning Policies to ensure that there was some guidance in place alongside National Planning Guidelines when considering planning applications and residents were always consulted on any potential developments within their area.

Concerns were raised over the order in which external cladding and instalment of windows on Red Hall Estate were programmed to take place, leading to unnecessary expense, and the timescale of three years for the preparation of the Local Plan.

It was stated that developers and social housing landlords were to be invited to an event on 14 January 2016 outlining the Council's position and seeking assistance to meet the requirements of the Local Plan; and as 11,000 houses were required by 2036

full reasons and explanations had to be given to residents on the preferred development sites.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That this Scrutiny Committee endorses the Housing Strategy Monitoring Report for consideration by Cabinet.

P34. CREATIVE DARLINGTON - Submitted – The Minutes of the meeting of the Creative Darlington Board meeting held on 23 November 2015, which provided updates on Creative Darlington Development and Engagement with One Darlington, Civic Theatre and Hullaballoon Capital Programme Update and Audience Development Discussion Programmes and Festival Updates and 2025 Priorities in Terms of Legacy for Darlington.

The Creative Darlington Manager informed Scrutiny that Sharon Paterson had offered to Chair the Board meetings on a permanent basis; Darlington Building Society was considering taking up a place on the Board with a decision expected in Spring 2016; Festival of Thrift had received a North East Tourism Gold Award and it was hoped a National Award would follow; there were lots of opportunities for Creative Darlington and it was hoped to keep the momentum going for the Arts in Darlington.

Particular reference was made to the Tees Valley Authorities announcing its intention to bid for the City of Culture 2021 and the process for bidding was likely to commence in 2019.

Members learnt of the financial constraints for The Bridge Centre for Visual Arts and the difficulties faced by the Arts in Darlington generally.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be received.
