

**PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

7 December 2017

**PRESENT** – Councillors Carson (in the Chair), Cossins, Donoghue, L Hughes, KE Kelly, Lyonette, Marshall, Tostevin and Wright. (9)

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor M Nicholson. (1)

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – (0)

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Dave Winstanley, Assistant Director, Highways, Design and Projects; John Anderson, Assistant Director, Economic Initiative; Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services; Bill Westland, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services; Dawn Taylor, Principal Officer (Trading Standards and Animal Health) and Lead Officer; Jill Thwaite, Senior Economics Project Manager; and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

**P26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were no declarations of interests reported at the meeting.

**P27. MINUTES** – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 19 October 2017.

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes be approved as correct records.

**P28. MATTERS ARISING** – There were no matters arising.

**P29. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 2 2017 TO 2018** – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) providing an update on performance against key performance indicators (KPI's) within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee.

It was reported that the KPI's were aligned with key priorities and the majority used to monitor the Corporate Plan 2017/21.

As the majority of indicators for Place Scrutiny Committee were reported annually data was not currently available, however, 15 indicators were reported quarterly and one indicator six monthly.

Members were pleased to note that planning indicators (ECI 104 to 106) and fly-tipping indicators (ENV 021 to 022) were currently reaching or exceeding year-end targets, the percentage of 75 transects inspected that pass the Litter Code of Practice were also currently exceeding year-end target and the number of street champions (ENV 002) were close to year-end target.

Members were confident that lower performance indicators including noise complaints (REG 312) and visits to the Dolphin Centre which currently showed performance at Quarter 2 to be down from this time last year, would reach year end targets.

A further eight annual indicators reported this quarter related to The National Highways and Transport annual survey of the public perspectives on highways and transportation services. These indicators (TCP, 200, 202 to 203, 600 to 603, and 900) showed overall satisfaction slightly up at 60 per cent on the previous year, but slightly below the National Average of 61 per cent.

Members noted that new homes delivered against five year supply (ECI 401) was reported six monthly and currently showed significant improvement with anticipation that end of year target would be achieved.

All relevant Assistant Directors attended the meeting to provide Members with performance updates and background information on indicators within their remits.

Discussion ensued on footfall decline in the Dolphin Centre (CUL 030) and it was reported by the Assistant Director – Community Services that leisure services was a competitive market, swimming had fallen due to the pool being closed for three consecutive days and that weddings had now relocated to the Town Hall Building resulting in less people in the Dolphin Centre.

Members requested a further indicator relating to the percentage of seats filled in the Hippodrome and Hullabaloo.

The Assistant Director – Community Services reported that in relation to ENV 001 there were eleven Members involved, although there could be further Members active which were not known to Officers, and that in the New Year further advice and guidance would be circulated to encourage more Members to participate.

In relation to ECI 104 and 105 the Assistant Director – Economic Initiative reported that the majority had reached 100 per cent. ECI 106 was a measure set by Government and local authorities had to reach 70 per cent. Darlington was generally around 80 to 90 per cent and Officers were confident that this indicator would be met. It was also reported that there was a continued programme of IT investment to improve efficiencies together with public access from next year which may result in a training session for Members.

Following a question from the Chair, Members were advised that applications outside of the local plan contributed to the five year supply. They were allocated shortened commencement dates and although numbers were low it was working. High Stell, Middleton St George had three months to run but work was ongoing with reserved matters and it should succeed.

Following the OAN undertaken in 2015 which identified that 500 dwellings per year were required, ECI 401, it was stated that the Council was moving in the right direction partly due to granting of planning permission in the outlying villages. A recent OAN had indicated that fewer dwellings, 420, were now required and a paper would be presented to Cabinet in due course. It was assumed that land allocations in the Local

Plan would help the Council to meet its targets. The draft Local Plan would be submitted to Cabinet in May outlining sites and economic growth targets.

The Chair suggested that this indicator should be separated into further indicators as it was of interest to the whole of the Borough.

The Assistant Director – Economic Initiative also advised Members that there was a quarterly monitoring system in place to ensure that the five year supply was robust and that he would be happy to provide a briefing session to Members.

Members indicated that they would like information on the OAN data set for Darlington as the Government had quoted a lower figure of dwellings for Darlington.

In relation to ECI 321 to 330 Members were advised that these indicators were formed from a national data set and whilst there were some issues relating to NEETS, Darlington's economy was growing and jobs were being created.

The Assistant Director – Regulatory Services confirmed that REG 301 to 308 were annual reports and good news was anticipated as these indicators were monitored regularly.

It was reported that although REG 312 was currently under target Officers were not worried as this was a new indicator and it was uncertain whether it was set at the right level. The Summer quarter was generally very busy as people were outdoors much more and windows were open resulting in more complaints.

The Lead Officer reported that REG 803 was an annual indicator and of the nine premises inspected one was a local trader from another local authority. The remaining eight were tobacco retailers and had been inspected due to current legislation. There were no problems foreseen to achieve target.

The Assistant Director, Highways, Design and Projects stated that TCP 200 to 900 were all annual indicators based on 2016 figures. The first quarter of 2017 would be updated with 2017 figures.

TCP 200 and 202 had seen road conditions improve although TCP 203 had declined due to winter conditions in previous years. It was also reported that the sum of £0.5m had been secured in the MTFP to address and treat Darlington's roads resulting in 116km of the road network being treated with micro asphalt to restore road surfaces and make them waterproof.

Road accidents had shown a slight increase on the 2005 to 2009 average, the base line figures used, although there were no accident hot spots in the Borough. Officers worked closely with the Police and other partners to provide road safety education and help reduce road accidents.

TCP 900, overall public satisfaction with public transport was based on a MORI survey which showed the Council scored high on safety education and low for road conditions. It is hoped that this would change following the road maintenance programme.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That a further indicator relating to the percentage of seats filled in the Hippodrome and Hullabaloo be provided.

(c) That Members training be provided on the IT investment programme for planning applications.

(d) That a Members briefing be organised relating to the quarterly monitoring system in place that ensured the five year supply of housing was robust.

**P30. BANK TOP MASTERPLAN** – The Assistant Director, Highways, Design and Projects provided a PowerPoint Presentation on the updated position in relation to the Bank Top Masterplan a Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) Project.

Members were informed that Darlington 2025 was a Strategic Transport Priority for the TVCA focussing on strong regeneration proposals with partners to support the case to deliver rail infrastructure improvements.

Scrutiny Committee noted that the Masterplan ensured Darlington was an integral part of the rail network for HS2, Network Rail and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), a major strategic rail programme designed to transform the northern economy and meet the needs of people and business.

It was reported that as Bank Top Railway Station was on the East Coast Main Line local services had to cross the North/South line resulting in longer journey times. Schemes were being considered that would potentially unlock these constraints, which were starting to impact on Rail Services, at both Darlington and Middlesbrough Railway Stations.

Members noted the elements of the vision which included relocation of the Cattle Market to provide a new residential neighbourhood next to the station; a public realm connecting Victoria Road and the portico to the Town; a renovated railway station with improved traveller experience and enhanced east west connection; the Town Centre Fringe connecting the Town Centre with the Cattle Market development; Station East providing a new gateway square and regional business hub; Northern Station Approach improving travellers arrival experience; Parkgate Public Realm linking the Market Square to Bank Top Station and Central Park; and Station North Development providing a new commercial space for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Particular reference was made to the next steps which included publication of the East Coast Route Study; management changes of the ECML; changes to franchise and operation of the ECML; adjustments to funding and delivery of projects; and Transport for the North becoming a Statutory Transport Body and publishing a Strategic Transport Plan in coming weeks.

In relation to the elements of the vision further feasibility and development work was to be undertaken to explore options and potential solutions; and delivery of the bridge to Central Park was expected during 2018/19.

Details were also provided of the next stages of the Rail Infrastructure which included continued lobbying for Network Rail and Department for Transport for investment in the rail infrastructure; Rail Economics work to support the Regeneration vision; investigations into what train service could be delivered for the Tees Valley if the constraints at Darlington were unlocked; running a series of tests in a model to understand the benefits; identifying the most appropriate train services for the Tees Valley; and the required rail infrastructure solution to accommodate the service pattern.

The results would be used to inform the best rail solution at Darlington and identify interventions across Tees Valley for new and improved rail services for the Tees Valley.

Discussion ensued on a possible reversal of The Beechings closures undertaken in 1963 which identified the closure of 2,363 stations and 5,000 miles of railway line; the need for a four line railway as opposed to the current two line railway; the need for a Station that allowed interchanges to other trains for travellers to have a smooth journey; and private and public sector funding opportunities;

The TVCA Mayor was due to meet with the Secretary of State to discuss the Masterplan with a view to securing funding as each scheme was now considered on its merits.

**RESOLVED** – That the thanks of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to the Assistant Director, Highways, Design and Projects for his informative and interesting presentation.

**P31. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18** – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the revised methodology for this Scrutiny Committee's current work programme.

It was reported that the proposed work programme has been reviewed and revised to enable the Committee to analyse information for each topic area aligning it to the eight outcomes and three conditions in the Sustainable Community Strategy, and relevant performance indicators from the Performance Management Framework.

The proposed structure of the work programme will provide Members with the opportunity to develop each topic through a series of questions and drill down to investigate particular aspects of extensive topics.

The Lead Officer provided Members with an updated position in relation to individual items within the schedule.

The Chair advised Scrutiny that the Creative Darlington Manager was unable to attend today's meeting due to a prior commitment and would attend the next meeting of Scrutiny Committee to give a full update on the work of Creative Darlington.

Discussion ensued on a meeting being arranged to give consideration to the MTP and the Local Plan; current street scene services; and private sector enforcement being investigated for litter and fly-tipping. It was also stated that a report on Car Parking

could be submitted to the February 2018 meeting as all Christmas figures would then be available.

Members also questioned whether future Place Scrutiny Committee meetings could be held at alternative locations such as The Bridge, Head of Steam or Hippodrome.

**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.