
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 2015/16

2. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2015/16 and possible review topics. Any work we undertake will have demonstrable outcomes and contribute to the work of the Council and its strategic aims and objectives.

Quarter 4 Performance

3. Members received a further presentation from the Head of Organisational Planning on the Performance Management Framework which included statistical data around the three key performance indicators that were relevant to this Scrutiny Committee – ‘More businesses and more jobs’ ‘A place designed to thrive’ and ‘More people caring for our environment’.
4. We gave particular consideration to Darlington’s overall employment rate and the reduction in the amount of Job Seeker’s Allowance claimants. Scrutiny is keen to monitor this indicator especially when Universal Credit comes into effect.
5. We welcomed the work undertaken by Foundation for Jobs resulting in the creation of 126 apprenticeships for Darlington residents and noted with interest the percentage of 16-19 year olds achieving NVQ Levels 2 and 3 Qualifications.
6. Members also noted that although residents’ earnings have increased since 2011 they did not necessarily work in the Borough.
7. With regard to ‘A Place Designed to Thrive’ we noted that the Community Survey was to be repeated this year and that updated data would become available based on the new Wards. It was also pleasing to note that Darlington’s schools are performing better than the National Average.
8. The indicators around the decline in Town Centre footfall prompted discussion on Town Centres in general and the emphasis on provision of leisure and the night time economy.
9. We will continue to receive relevant performance management in order to monitor and understand more clearly the services being delivered.

Members' Toolkit

10. The Head of Organisational Planning advised Committee that a Members' Toolkit is currently being developed to assist Members in their community roles. The next stage in its development is to consult with Members to ascertain their views and a working party is being established, comprising a mix of Scrutiny, Cabinet, new, existing and rural Members. We have appointed Councillors Kelly and Nicholson, as newly-elected Members, to represent our Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Bob Carson
Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee