
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 2016/17

2. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2016/17 and possible review topics, the work programme is a rolling work programme and items can be added as necessary.

Managing Blue Badge Issues and Use

3. Scrutiny considered this issue in September 2016 and requested Officers to investigate the possibility of undertaking home visits where applicants were unable to attend the Town Hall.
4. Members were advised that the over-riding aim of the scheme was to enable the disabled badge holder to park closer to their destination and that it was not unreasonable to expect the person applying for a badge to park close to the Town Hall as the journey to the Town Hall was no different to any other journey the applicant may make.
5. Whilst Officers could attend to applicants in their cars, on an appointment basis, Officers did not have the resources to make home visits and the Council must be satisfied that the badge will be used by the person applying and not a family member taking advantage of a bed-ridden relative.
6. Scrutiny was also informed that posting of photos and copies of ID to the Council had been considered but the fundamental flaw in this action was that the Council could not be satisfied that the person applying matched the photo being provided which would create an opportunity for fraudulent applications to be made.
7. We were also informed of the process for replacement of lost and stolen badges; the seven minute decision time of a telephone application; and new technological advances such as 'gov.uk Verify' which allows an applicant to be verified, badge paid for, and driver licence or passport photo accessed all in one transaction.
8. Whilst considering this topic Scrutiny also listened to and welcomed the views of Darlington Association on Disability.

Red Hall Renewal Strategy

9. Scrutiny received a PowerPoint Presentation outlining the Red Hall Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and in doing so were advised that the two key areas of the Strategy were the improvement of the Council Stock and to work with local residents to build a more resilient and confident community.
10. Red Hall Estate has 642 low value properties built on the USA Radburn Design in the 1960's and 70's. One third were owner occupied and the non-traditional design has led to poor thermal efficiency.
11. Investments to date totalled £5.5m and included demolition of houses, construction of new flats for rent, reversal of front and back of properties, double glazing and doors to 383 properties, benches and walkways around the nature reserve and new play area and equipment.
12. Scrutiny was advised that there was now a demand for housing on Red Hall Estate, heating bills were less due to improved insulation and private housing had increased in value.
13. Members were pleased to note that it was intended to build a sustainable and resilient community with many people currently engaging with the Council and Groundwork Trust, the development project partner. The next step was to encourage Red Hall residents to lead consultations and community activities and not rely on the Council or Groundwork Trust for support

Healthy New Towns

14. Scrutiny received a further PowerPoint Presentation outlining the programme objectives of Healthy New Towns and in doing so was informed that planning has a direct link to Public Health in relation to healthy living and well-being of residents.
15. The programme objectives were to develop new and more effective ways of shaping new towns, neighbourhoods and strong communities that promote health and wellbeing, preventing illness and ensuring people were independent. To radically rethink how health and care services could be delivered whilst supporting the New Models of Care programme by learning how health and care services could be integrated to provide better outcomes at reduced costs.
16. Members were informed that the third and final objective was to accomplish objectives one and two in a way that could be replicated elsewhere. The approaches included building healthier homes and environments that support independence at all stages of life; tackling unhealthy (and 'obesogenic') environments by creating walkable neighbourhoods, delivering improved infrastructure for safe active travel and more accessible public transport; implementing a new 'operating system' for health and care that achieves triple integration between primary and secondary care, mental and physical health, and health and social care; creating connected neighbourhoods, strong communities and inclusive public spaces that enable people of all ages and abilities from all

backgrounds to mix; and designing healthy workplaces, schools and leisure facilities that make the most of opportunities to encourage physical activity, healthy eating and positive mental health and wellbeing.

17. Members noted with interest the development plans for the Darlington Eastern Growth Zone which included the building of 2500 houses; accessibility to services, schools and employment areas; and the transport links to ensure integration of the Darlington Eastern Zone.
18. Scrutiny also welcomed the four outcomes of the Darlington Healthy New Towns Delivery Plan.

Dementia Review Group – Final Report

19. Scrutiny received the outcomes and findings of the Review Group established by the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee to look at the dementia pathway, the support and advice services available in Darlington and to consider a specific recommendation within the remit of Place Scrutiny Committee namely, that Place Scrutiny Committee consider, through the Local Plan Process, the scope to support people living with dementia when designing future design builds.
20. Councillors S Richmond and Knowles provided Members with examples of what a dementia sufferer sees in their everyday life and explained how simple design elements could be incorporated into new buildings and developments to ensure a dementia sufferer felt safe in their surroundings and had a good quality of life.

Creative Darlington Board

21. We received the notes of the Creative Darlington Board held 12 December 2016 which provided updates on various topics including Experience Darlington, Culture Strategy and Arts Transition; Head, Hart, Hands Project; 'Evolve' Theatre Transition Programme; Creative Workspace and OddManOut Presentation; Accessible Arts, Culture and Heritage Presentation; and DCMS Tailored Review of Arts Council.

Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036 Highlight Reports 8 and 9

22. Members received two brief reports outlining the progress, governance, key tasks and milestones and risks in delivery of the Local Plan. It was noted that a Government White Paper had been released in January outlining changes to the formation of a Local Plan although the effect of its content was, as yet, unknown.

Councillor Bob Carson
Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee