
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.

Cycling in Darlington Pedestrian Heart

3. Scrutiny Committee considered the findings of an Attitude Survey, completed May 2016, undertaken by an independent market research company.
4. The findings of the research indicated that 50 per cent of respondents were in favour of cycling in the Town Centre as opposed to 62 per cent in 2008 and the number against cycling in the Town Centre rose from 36 per cent to 38 per cent in the same period.
5. Respondents who expressed a preference for restrictions placed on cycling in the Town Centre were provided with a list of potential restrictions with 'no cycling in the Town Centre at all' gaining the highest response. This did however represent a reduction from 58 per cent to 44 per cent compared to the 2008 survey.
6. Scrutiny were also supplied with details of problems experienced because of people driving or parking cars, vans, lorries or mobility scooters in Darlington Town Centre.
7. Overall the Attitude Survey continues to indicate that the majority of those offering an opinion are in favour of cycling in the Pedestrian Heart, though the percentage in favour has fallen significantly.
8. Scrutiny was advised that a Safety Audit is being undertaken on behalf of the Council and is scheduled for completion in June 2017. The Audit is being done by a qualified Road Safety Auditor who has have been commissioned to investigate the potential road safety impact of banning cycling in the Town Centre; undertake an assessment of what additional signage could be provided to better inform cyclists of where cycling is allowed; and identify an alternative cycle route around the edge of the Town Centre.
9. Scrutiny will consider the Road Safety Audit at a future meeting.

Monitoring Outcomes From The Medium Term Financial Plan 2016-20 – Street Cleansing, Environmental Crime, Litter And Ground Maintenance

10. Members undertook a scoping exercise to establish requirements of a detailed report, for Committee's consideration on 1 June 2017, following the impact of cuts to Street Scene Activities.
11. The issues which we have requested further information include statistics relating to Enforcement of Fly Tipping and Environmental Crime covering the period from the last three years to current date; frequency of litter bin emptying (including dog waste bins and bins on trunk roads around the Borough), known hot spots where litter is more prevalent and provision of replacement bins.
12. Members were also interested to receive details of the number and type of formal complaints from the Public both before and after the budget cuts; and information on the programme of chewing gum removal around the Town Centre.
13. In relation to service requests we requested the number of requests received and the response times to those requests.
14. The work of Street Champions, mobilising traders to clean up litter from their own shop fronts and a quick refresh on the Waste Contract at the Household Recycling Centre were other areas which we requested further information.
15. I will provide a detailed report on the above issues at the next meeting of Council.

Creative Darlington Board

16. We received the notes of the Creative Darlington Board held 6 February 2017 which provided updates on various topics including One Darlington Magazine article, entitled Culture by Numbers; work of the Durham Music Service in Darlington; current activity and development work of Theatre Hullabaloo; Civic Theatre/Hippodrome's work with children and young people; work and role of Culture Bridge North East; Creative Darlington's organised meeting to consider commissioning services for children and young people in Darlington; and the Creative Darlington Brand.

Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036 Highlight Report 10

17. Scrutiny Committee received a brief report outlining the progress governance, key tasks, milestones and risks in delivery of the Local Plan. As a Member of the Local Plan Members' Reference Group I was able to provide a verbal update to Committee on the report.

Councillor Bob Carson
Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee