

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 July 2019

PRESENT – Councillors B Jones (Chair), Barch, Boddy, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Durham, Howarth, McCollom, McEwan and Tait

APOLOGIES – Councillor Wallis

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Keir

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Ian Thompson (Assistant Director Community Services), Mark Ladyman (Assistant Director Economic Growth), Brian Graham (Head of Environmental Services), David Hand (Head of Service for Planning Policy, Economic Strategy and Environment) and Hannah Fay (Democratic Officer)

P1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/20

RESOLVED – That Councillor Brian Jones be appointed Chair of this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

P2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/20

RESOLVED – That Councillor Mrs Culley be appointed Vice Chair of this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

P3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

P4 TO CONSIDER TIMES OF MEETINGS OF THIS COMMITTEE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/20, ON THE DATES AS AGREED IN THE CALENDAR OF MEETINGS BY CABINET AT MINUTE C110/FEB/19

RESOLVED – That meetings of this Scrutiny Committee be held at 10.00am for the remainder of the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

P5 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 MARCH 2019

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 7 March 2019.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 7 March 2019 be approved as a correct record.

P6 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 4 2018/19

The Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications submitted a report (previously circulated) providing Members with an update on performance against those key performance indicators within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee for the

period 2018/19.

The submitted report provided performance information in line with an indicator set and Scrutiny Committee distribution agreed by Monitoring and Coordination Group on 4 June 2018, and subsequently by scrutiny committee chairs. The indicators were aligned with key priorities and the majority used to monitor the Corporate Plan 2017/21.

Members were advised that of the 39 indicators reported to this Scrutiny Committee 17 were reported annually, a further 21 reported quarterly, and one reported six monthly at Quarters 2 and 4.

It was reported that of the 25 indicators which had year-end targets, two of these did not have data available, 11 of these achieved year-end target and 12 did not achieve year-end target. Of the 14 indicators with no year-end targets, 11 of these did not have previous year's data to compare with, six had exceeded outturn performance and five showed performance worse than outturn performance last year.

In relation to CUL 037 – Number of shows held at the Hippodrome and CUL 038 – Number of individual attendances at Hippodrome theatre shows, it was reported that although the end of year targets were not met, in terms of financial targets it had been a successful year. Members requested that the Hippodrome be referred to as its proper name Darlington Hippodrome.

CUL 065 – Number of physical visits to the library had continued to decline in 2018/19, Members queried as to whether this decline was due to perception of the library closing and if opening Cockerton Library full time would help to address the decline in visits. Members were informed that the decline was a national issue; there was a strong programme of events to increase footfall; discussions were ongoing in respect of library services; and an update would be provided to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee. Members made reference to the good work of the book club.

Members highlighted concern in respect of ECI 329 – average annual income - Darlington residents which had seen a decline. It was reported that this was a general trend reflected across the Tees Valley and was being monitored by the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

Discussion ensued in respect of the Town Centre strategy including the consideration of mixed use buildings in Skinnergate and Members highlighted the need to provide support to businesses in the town.

In relation to REG 308 – percentage of premises broadly compliant for food hygiene, Members raised concern regarding the prevalence of online food establishments and delivery services and queried how these were monitored. It was agreed that a presentation in respect of the work of the Environmental Health team be provided at a future meeting.

Members sought clarification in respect of target times for the removal of fly tips and it was agreed that target times would be shared with Members for information.

Members also sought clarification as to which of the underperforming performance

indicators should be the main focus of this scrutiny committee and it was confirmed that work was being undertaken to include tolerance levels into the performance reporting and that this would provide context to Members when reviewing the performance indicators.

RESOLVED – That the submitted report be noted.

P7 LOCAL PLAN TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP - PROGRESS REPORT

The Chair of the Task and Finish Review Group submitted a report (previously circulated) updating Members on the work undertaken by a Task and Finish Group established to look at the proposed draft Local Plan 2016-36.

The submitted report stated that a Task and Finish Review Group was held with Members of this Scrutiny Committee to consider the draft Cabinet Report on the proposed draft Local Plan; that Members agreed to the recommendations contained within the draft report; and that these views would be fed back to Cabinet at its meeting on 9 July 2019.

Discussion ensued in respect of the planned access roads for the Skerningham development; a Member in attendance at the meeting questioned how critical the proposed road through Springfield Park was in terms of access to the development and stated that as this had not been modelled there was no evidence that the road was critical; and a member of the public highlighted the importance of Springfield Park to the community. Members queried the use of the existing road, Green Lane, which would minimise impact on the park and requested a formal response from the responsible Officer.

Concern was raised in respect of road classification, particularly in relation to Bishopton Lane which could be used to alleviate pressures on the roads; it was stated that this road was heavily used especially during peak times and that this was a C class road that was not recommended for an upgrade.

A member of the public in attendance at the meeting voiced their concern in respect of the number of access roads to Skerningham garden village and questioned the need for two developments with garden village status in Darlington. It was confirmed that the bidding system for garden village status was open to any developers who wished to apply.

RESOLVED – (a) That the recommendations from the Task and Finish Review Group be noted and agreed by this Scrutiny Committee and that Cabinet be advised of this decision.

(b) That Cabinet be advised of this Scrutiny Committee's view that, as there was no modelled evidence to suggest the Springfield Park access road was critical, that this should be removed from the Plan and that paragraph 6.10.13 be removed from the Draft Local Plan.

P8 WORK PROGRAMME

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that

consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme for the 2019/20 Municipal Year and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be included in the work programme.

RESOLVED – (a) That the work programme for the Municipal Year 2019/20, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.