

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 13 February 2020

PRESENT – Councillors B Jones (Chair), Mrs Culley, Cossins, Donoghue, Howarth, McCollom, Tait and Wallis

APOLOGIES – Councillors Boddy and Durham,

ABSENT – Councillors Bartch

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Renton, Mrs H Scott and Snedker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Dave Winstanley (Assistant Director Capital Projects, Transport and Highways Planning), Brian Graham (Head of Environmental Services), Graham Hall (Head of Community Safety), Sue Dobson (Sustainable Transport Manager), Andrew Casey (Head of Highway Network Management), Alex Kay (Transport Planning Officer), Louise Neale (Transport Policy Officer) and Hannah Fay (Democratic Officer)

CLS30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CLS31 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY HELD ON :-

(1) 19 DECEMBER 2019

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 19 December 2019.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 19 December 2019 be approved as a correct record.

(2) 10 JANUARY 2020

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 10 January 2020.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 10 January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

CLS32 COMMUNITY SAFETY - UPDATE

The Head of Community Safety gave a presentation (previously circulated) updating Members on the development of Community Safety which had been identified as a core resource; and outlined the DBC Service Plan, including objectives and priority actions set for 2019.

Details were provided of key achievements which included the introduction of PSPO's to tackle alcohol misuse, begging and antisocial behaviour in Darlington Town Centre;

introduction of mobile CCTV; and the award of Purple Flag status.

In relation to crime and incident figures for the year to date for Darlington and the Town Centre it was reported that, when compared to the previous year, all crime had increased by 6 per cent in Darlington, whilst antisocial behaviour had decreased by 1 per cent; and for the town centre all crime had increased by 24 per cent whilst antisocial behaviour had decreased by 4 per cent. Further information was provided in respect of violence against the person, sexual offences, retail crime, public disorder and antisocial behaviour.

Members were informed of the measures in place to address the increase in crime rates in the town, including five additional mobile CCTV units; violence had been identified as a key priority for Durham Constabulary, with additional resources put in place; work was being undertaken with licensing and pub watch to address alcohol related incidents; a multi-agency problem solving group was in place to address antisocial behaviour; and Whatsapp groups had been trialled as a mechanism to share intel.

The presentation outlined the service priorities for 2020-21 which would support the development of the town centre economy by putting appropriate measure in place and demonstrating it was a safe place to visit.

Concerns were raised in respect of the neighbourhood boundaries used by Durham Constabulary to report crime and antisocial performance data; as these did not correlate with the ward boundaries in Darlington, Members were not able to easily identify the data relevant to their wards. Members requested that discussions be held with Durham Constabulary to review and update their crime reporting system.

Discussion ensued on the antisocial behaviour relating to motorcycles and quads which had seen a significant increase over the winter period; crime detection rates; details were provided of funding from the Police, Crime and Victim's Commissioner to implement a road safety initiative with schools in Darlington; and reference was made to benefits of mini courts and mini police to address road safety around schools.

RESOLVED – (a) That the thanks of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to the Head of Community Safety for his informative and interesting presentation.

(b) That discussions be held with Durham Constabulary to review and update their crime reporting system to align neighbourhood boundaries with wards in Darlington.

(c) That Members undertake a visit to CCTV control room.

(d) That Members receive regular updates from CCTV via newsletter.

CLS33 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking Members views on the outlined Local Implementation Plan for transport in Darlington in advance of public consultation in the summer 2020; and to update Members on highways and transport from a national, regional and local perspective, including delivery, performance and public satisfaction in 2019/20, and

the proposed priorities for 2020/21.

A PowerPoint presentation given by the Transport Planning Manager accompanied the submitted report, outlining the Governments transport commitments; the ministerial commitments of which decarbonisation was a priority area; and details were provided of the transport budget, with TVCA investing £256.7 million into transport projects for 2019-2029.

It was reported that the statutory responsibility for the Local Transport Plan now sat with the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA); a Strategic Transport Plan had been approved by TVCA Cabinet at its meeting on 31 January 2020; and the Local Implementation Plan would be developed to meet the requirements at a local authority level.

The submitted report detailed the four ambitions for the Local Implementation Plan as set out in the draft policy framework, namely to support economic growth, create opportunity, to acknowledge the impact of transport on the environment and climate change and improve public health.

Reference was made to the current Transport Plan in Darlington (2011-2026); that this was based on a prioritised approach to maintain, manage and improve the highway network; and noted the recommendation that this approach be continued until the adoption of the Local Implementation Plan.

Members raised concern in respect of the bus service reliability, the bus routes currently available, and cost of fares. Members felt that this should be an area of focus for this Scrutiny as the plan develops and that consideration should be given to a specific piece of work within the work programme. Members also commented on the current subsidy in relation to town centre car parking offers versus the lack of incentives to use more sustainable modes such as bus, walking or cycling.

An observation outside of the committee Membership related to the Sustainable Transport initiatives, highlighting that the plan should be bold and more than just encouragement, 'enabling' preferential choices.

RESOLVED – (a) That Cabinet be advised;

- i. that the draft ambitions for the Local Implementation Plan be endorsed by Members;
- ii. Of Scrutiny Members recommendation for a section of the new plan relating to town centre and how the transport policy links to delivering the Town Centre Strategy;
- iii. Of Members intention to input individually to the consultation;
- iv. That public Transport (bus services), and in particular, routes available, service reliability, passenger facilities and fares be identified as an area the committee would like to focus on as the plan develops.

(b) That Members review the results of the consultation later this year to inform the development of the final Local Implementation Plan.

(c) That the progress made on delivering the Third Local Transport Plan through an

approach of Maintain, Manage and Improve, be noted.

CLS34 WORK PROGRAMME

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be included in the previously approved work programme.

Members were advised that reports in relation to Grass Verge Management and the Bank Top Masterplan would be submitted to this Scrutiny Committee in April 2020.

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.