

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 22 February 2024

PRESENT – Councillors McGill (Chair), Coe, Cossins, Mrs Culley, Keir, Mahmud, M Nicholson, Snedker and Walters.

APOLOGIES – Councillor Garner.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor McCollom.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Brian Graham (Head of Environmental Services), Seth Pearson (Partnership Director), Andrew Casey (Head of Highway Network Management), Gill Hutchinson (Transport Planning Manager), Paul Dalton (Democratic and Elections Officer) and Olivia Hugill (Democratic Officer).

CLS29 INTRODUCTIONS/ATTENDANCE AT MEETING

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 11 JANUARY 2024

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 11 January 2024.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 11 January 2024 be approved as a correct record.

CLS32 TO RECEIVE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - TUESDAY 23 JANUARY 2024

Submitted – The Draft Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Committee held on 23 January 2024.

Members discussed the taxi replacement provided when the last bus has been cancelled and how costs can be reimbursed and the committee scrutinised how this has not been promoted.

RESOLVED – That the minutes be noted.

CLS33 PUBLIC SECTOR EXECUTIVES GROUP

The Partnerships Director submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform the members about the work of the Public Sector Executive Group (PSEG).

It was reported that the PSEG was formed as one of the arrangements to replace the

Darlington Partnership, following agreement by Council on 15 July; that the group included senior officers from key public sector bodies; and the key aims, and membership of the group was outlined.

Details were provided of recent activity of the group, including the announcement of the change in administration at the Council and that a new Council Plan is in development. It is expected that in this early stage of the plan the greater focus is equality and at the same meeting the group considered the forthcoming Health and Wellbeing Plan, which will support the Council Plan and the Forward Plan of the Integrated Care Board.

Members entered discussion how the PSEG is funded; how members can understand whether PSEG is viable; and the partnership working of the group.

RESOLVED – That the report was noted.

CLS34 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

The Assistant Director – Transport and Capital Projects submitted a report (previously circulated) providing members an annual update on the delivery of the Darlington Transport Plan which outlined delivery, performance, and public satisfaction in 2023/24 and will outline the 2024/25 programme, including the release of funding.

The submitted report stated that the Tees Valley Region had secured significant funding from the Government, which includes £310m City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme and £6.851m Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which will deliver improvements to the bus services. The report stated that there has been good progress on the development and delivery of the Transport Capital Programme.

It was reported that in 2022/23 there was a new Transport Strategy for the borough; a Town Centre Transport Plan and Parking Strategy which were adopted by the Council where work continues. A progress report on the schemes delivered in 2023/24 and the proposed programme of schemes 2024/25 was detailed in the report.

The submitted report demonstrated the focus of the Department for Transport (DfT) to be decarbonising transport and levelling up. Funding has been made available to the north which will ensure there is a balance between sustainable transport measures and options to support motorists. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is still in progress with the completion of Phase 1 of the Faverdale/West Park to town centre cycle route.

Reference was made to the Tees Valley region which has been allocated funding of £978m for the second round of CRSTS which will cover the period of 2027/28 to 2031/32. In addition to the CRSTS2, government have announced an additional minimum £100.1m of highways maintenance for Tees Valley between 2023/24 – 2033/34.

Discussion ensued around Electric Charging Vehicles and the parking spaces for them; Members criticised the amount of electric charging spaces and the lack of disabled electric charging spaces.

Members also discussed the health aspects around the plan and how it will provide Darlington residents with a reduction in air pollution and a cleaner environment. Members also discussed the new recyclable materials which are being used as alternative measures for roads.

Members scrutinised the 20mph limit in residential areas which are yet to occur, which were mentioned in a previous Transport Plan, Members were provided with calm trafficked areas of the town and how Durham Constabulary have reassessed the 20mph limit consideration.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CLS35 WORK PROGRAMME

The Assistant Director Law and Governance 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 being included in the previously approved Work Programme.

RESOLVED - That the work programme be noted.

CLS36 SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (IF ANY) WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR OF THIS COMMITTEE ARE OF AN URGENT NATURE AND CAN BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING.

CLS37 QUESTIONS