

**COUNCIL**  
**26 NOVEMBER 2020**

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**OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

**Darlington Station**

2. Scrutiny welcomed a PowerPoint presentation from the Assistant Director, Transport and Capital Projects, updating Members on the background and progress made to date on the Darlington Station project.
3. The project, which is being funded by the Department for Transport and the Tees Valley Combined Authority aims to transform Darlington Train Station into a modern transport hub, provide more frequent and faster local and national services, futureproof the station for the future needs of the railway and will support and enhance the wider Darlington regeneration initiatives.
4. Scrutiny were provided with details of the proposals for the new configuration for Darlington Station which include the provision for a new south bound platform on the East Coast Main Line and new Tees Valley platforms, and noted the key features for Station East, Darlington Station and the Transport Interchange.
5. Members did raise concern in respect of the target date of December 2024 for the new operational track and station but were assured that robust processes are in place to ensure that the project is completed by the target date, and in time for the 2025 celebrations.
6. We were also pleased to note that measures were being considered as part of the planning process to address nearby residents and businesses concerns that may arise from the project. We were also assured that planning processes are in place to safeguard the historical integrity of the Grade II\* listed Station.

**Darlington Railway Heritage Quarter**

7. Scrutiny Committee received a further presentation from the Assistant Director, Community Services, updating Members on the Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter project.
8. Scrutiny were provided with details of the indicative site layout plan and the proposed options for the different elements of the site. We were also provided with details of the work strands for the 2025 celebrations and look forward to seeing how these progress.
9. The project is being funded with £20m from the Tees Valley Combined Authority; £5m allocation from the Towns Fund bid and £100k from Historic England project for conservation work on the Goods Shed. In addition £500k had been set aside

from Futures Fund to facilitate work up to 2025. We also noted that work is due to commence on site in Summer 2021 with a target completion date of early 2024.

10. A discussion took place in respect of attracting visitors to the Rail Heritage Quarter and we were assured that a significantly improved event programme would be in place, providing a different offer to other railway museums. In addition, the play area would be a significant attraction to the local community, whilst a changeable exhibition space would attract revisits. We noted the visitor number target of 250,000.
11. We also discussed the Heritage Action Zone projects, in particular the History and Heritage Festival 2020. Members raised concern in respect of the lack of advertising for this event, and requested improved advertising and comms to Members and the public, particularly in the lead up to 2025.

### **Work Programme 2020/21**

12. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2020/21 and possible review topics, the work programme is a rolling work programme and items can be added as necessary.

**Councillor Mike Renton**  
**Chair of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee**