

**COUNCIL**  
**25 NOVEMBER 2021**

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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.

**Waste Management**

2. Scrutiny welcomed a PowerPoint presentation from the Assistant Director Community Services updating Members on Waste Management, and in doing so, informed Members that responsible waste management was everyone's business.
3. Reference was made to the Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Strategy 2020-2035 which aims to deliver a high quality, accessible and affordable waste management service and Members were informed of the strategy objectives in relation to waste generation, reuse and recycling and waste recovery and landfill diversion.
4. Scrutiny were provided with details of the services delivered in Darlington and the trends for waste management. We noted in particular the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting, percentage of household waste sent for energy recovery and percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill.
5. We were advised that the Council was in the procurement process for the Tees Valley Energy Recovery Facility (TVERF). The TVERF is designed to take 450K tonnes and have 40-year lifespan. This will provide a secure, sustainable, reliable and affordable solution for residual waste and will help Darlington and other Local Authorities to work towards achieving zero-waste to landfill. In relation to food waste, it is anticipated that separate food waste collections will be introduced weekly from 2024/25.
6. Particular discussion ensued on the transfer of waste to the TVERF, we were assured that the capacity of the existing transfer station was more than adequate to manage the waste collected by this Council and the waste would be transported to Teesside by road.
7. We also noted the work being undertaken by Officers to review best practices in other local authority areas to assist with the introduction of food waste collection in Darlington in 2024/25.

**Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter**

8. Scrutiny also received a presentation from the Assistant Director Community Services updating Members on the Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter (DRHQ).

9. We were provided with details of the social values of the DRHQ and we were informed of the timeline for the works to the DRHQ, with work anticipated to start on site in Quarter 1 2022 and a completion date of Quarter 2/3 in 2024.
10. The presentation provided Members with a number of graphics, including the Goods Shed, plaza and outside spaces, virtual reality experiences and rides, the carriage works and an archive and study centre. We were also informed of the intention for a Darlington/ Stockton themed play area.
11. Members look forward to receiving further updates at a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

### **Management of Grass Verges**

12. Scrutiny Committee received a report updating Members on the progress of the Management of Grass Verges Task and Finish Group which was established to assist the development of a new operational policy in relation to the management of grass verges. Members also gave consideration to the most appropriate way to progress the work required to develop the operational policy.
13. The Task and Finish Group was established following receipt of a report at the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 25 February 2021 which set out the current position adopted by the Council in relation to the management of grass verges.
14. An initial meeting of the Task and Finish Group was held on 9 April 2021 where Members agreed to undertake a table top exercise to trial the draft verge damage assessment form, however this planned work did not proceed.
15. As this Scrutiny Committee had agreed to continue with the Task and Finish Group we gave consideration to two options available to Members progress the work required to develop a new operational policy in relation to the management of grass verges.
16. Members agreed that, in order to progress the work required to develop a new operational policy in relation to the management of grass verges, this Scrutiny Committee proceeds with Option 1 – Member led approach, with Officer involvement.
17. A further meeting of the Management of Grass Verges Task and Finish Group was held on 12 November 2021 to progress this work.

### **Work Programme 2021/22**

18. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22 and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.
19. We have agreed that following the All Members Briefing in respect of the Back Lanes Project, that the item on Back Lanes be removed from the work programme for this Scrutiny Committee.

20. In addition, the item on Indoor/Outdoor Market has also been removed from the work programme of this Scrutiny Committee as this falls within the remit of the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

**Councillor Steven Tait**  
**Chair of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee**