

---

**OVERVIEW OF PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

---

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Place Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

**Darlington Borough Local Plan 2016 - 2036**

2. At a Special meeting of Scrutiny Committee Members gave consideration to the Consultation Draft of the Local Plan 2016 to 2036 prior to its consideration by Cabinet and approval to move to the next stage of the Local Plan process.
3. We were informed that the consultation period would be from 21 June to 2 August and that any responses received would be considered during September and October. The Plan would then be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in January 2019 with public examination taking place during Summer 2019. Following potential modifications the Local Plan would be adopted in Autumn 2019.
4. Members raised several queries and concerns within the document and were satisfied with Officers' responses. We sought clarification on some parts of the document and made some suggestions for inclusion within various sections.
5. We look forward to receiving a further report in approximately eight weeks' time following the consultation period.

**Fly-tipping and Waste in the Borough's Back Lanes**

6. Scrutiny received a report providing an updated position on the level of fly-tipping across the Borough, actions taken, comparisons with Tees Valley and the Council's future strategies. Members were informed that fly-tipping was a national problem and all Council's had to report fly-tipping data through FlyCapture, a National database.
7. Scrutiny recognised that resources had significantly reduced within Street Scene from both staff collecting and clearing fly-tips to enforcement staff. Due to the reductions back lanes were cleansed fortnightly and not weekly and response time to fly-tips has been reduced.
8. We received a breakdown of performance over the last three years and noted that the number of fly-tips recorded through FlyCapture was more in 2017/18 than in previous years; the land most deposited on was back alleyways; and the majority of waste came from households and included black bags and furniture.

9. We noted that large fly-tips would normally be dumped from trucks and that these had increased significantly during 2017/18 and small fly-tips of black bags contained general household waste deposited by residents. Members welcomed the increase in prosecutions even though there had been a reduction in resources.
10. Members noted the comparisons with neighbouring Tees Valley Authorities which showed that Redcar and Cleveland had the highest number of fly-tips; Darlington had prosecuted considerably more than the other four authorities; and Hartlepool and Redcar and Cleveland had issued more Fixed Penalty Notices
11. Scrutiny was pleased that additional resources of £300,000 had been allocated to Street Scene as part of the MTFP 2018/19 and that this would be split between street cleaning and grounds maintenance.
12. Members supported the establishment of a new Community Safety Unit operating between the hours of 8am to 9/10pm which was to include a new function of Civic Enforcement covering nuisance parking, civil parking enforcement, environmental crime, focussing on fly tipping, waste out in back lanes, abandoned vehicles and addressing incidents of anti-social behaviour.
13. In relation to litter and dog fouling enforcement Members were informed that a tendering exercise would be undertaken with the successful contractor being expected to commence in late September 2018.

#### **Performance Indicators Quarter 4 2017/18 and Proposed Committee Indicators for 2018/19**

14. Members gave consideration to the outturn performance data against key performance indicators for 2017/18 and the proposed basket of performance indicators schedule of performance reporting for 2018/19.
15. Members noted that of the 31 indicators reported to this Scrutiny Committee 15 were reported annually, 15 reported quarterly and one reported six-monthly at Quarters 2 and 4.
16. As one quarter is reported quarterly in arrears we scrutinised the 30 indicators for which outturn data was available of which 18 had year-end targets with nine achieving or exceeding target and nine not achieving year end targets. Of the twelve indicators with no year-end targets seven had exceeded out-turn performance and five showed performance worse than out-turn performance last year.
17. Members sought clarification on the calculation of CUL 065 Number of visits to the Library and expressed concerns that developers could land bank after receiving planning permissions.
18. Several Members also raised concerns that ENV 001 Number of Ward Members leading or involved in litter or grounds maintenance based projects was inaccurate and were assured by the Assistant Director Community Services that alternative

monitoring methods were being investigated.

19. In relation to TCP 900 Overall public satisfaction with Public Transport Theme we welcomed the attendance of a Tees Valley Combined Authority representative to a future meeting of Scrutiny to consider the Tees Valley Combined Strategic Transport Plan.
20. Members also requested that a further indicator be added to include pot hole repairs as part of TCP 200.

### **Creative Darlington Capacity**

21. We welcomed the report of the Managing Director on the current Creative Darlington Board resources including current spend and future opportunities.
22. The Creative Darlington Board, established in 2011/12, comprises Darlington Borough Council Officers and Members, and other parties from the private, public and voluntary sectors.
23. Members noted that Creative Darlington had reviewed its strategic priorities and a draft Culture Strategy and action plan has been prepared and will be presented to Cabinet with a request to agree and promote the strategy in 2018/19. We welcomed the emerging opportunities which included extending the development of Darlington's reputation as a Theatre Town, creatively exploring Darlington's railway heritage leading up to 2025 and opportunities for Darlington to contribute to the Tees Valley UK City of Culture 2025 programme.
24. Scrutiny noted that although The Bridge was operated by an independent Charity, Creative Darlington had responsibility for the Council's Borough Art Collection; management of the exhibitions programme at both Crown Street Library and the Town Hall Exhibition space; management of the delivery of programmes in receipt of external funding including the Heritage on Track programme; and assessment of applications to Darlington for Culture's small arts grant programme.
25. We noted that funding of £10,000 received from Creative Darlington and a Council Grant of £65,000 from Arts Council for England had supported a variety of theatre activity within the Town leading up to the opening of Darlington Hippodrome and Theatre Hullabaloo and that the Council has confirmed a Culture and Heritage budget for 2018/19 to 2020/21 to support arts development and progress Creative Darlington work.
26. Members learnt that the future requirements and opportunities included considerable progress against the Theatre Town priority building on the 'pioneering' work of Theatre Hullabaloo and supporting the developing profile of The Hullabaloo as a national centre of excellence; the creative exploration of railway heritage and the approaching bi-centenary of the first modern railway passenger journey, which is expected to be a cultural event of national and international significance; the Heritage on Track programme, which is one part of the Tees Valley Combined Authority led Greater Tees programme; commissioning original work marking the countdown to the bi-centenary event in 2025 which enhances the public realm and

strengthens Darlington's profile as a railway Town, particularly around key rail heritage sites and stations within Darlington; and development of the UK City of Culture 2025 alongside other Tees Valley local authorities.

27. We queried the inclusion of school children and college and university students and were pleased to note there is dedicated capacity to work with children and that the Council's Head of Education and Inclusion now sat on the Creative Darlington Board alongside Culture Bridge North East, an organisation that connected cultural organisations and the education sector so that children and young people can have access to great arts and excellent cultural opportunities.

**Councillor Bob Carson**  
**Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee**