

COUNCIL
26 SEPTEMBER 2024

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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.

Performance Indicators – Quarter 4 – 2023/24

2. Scrutiny received an update on Quarter 4 performance against key performance indicators for 2023/24.
3. We considered the performance position in relation to the 31 indicators, noting that 24 had increased when compared to the same period last year or from when last reported, whilst 7 had decreased when compared to the same period last year or from when last reported.
4. We discussed Fly-Tipping, how reports of large fly tipping have decreased but reports of small fly tipping has increased. We wanted to understand what provision has been put in place for back alleys and rural areas. We asked if cameras could be an appropriate action to stop the offences of Fly-Tipping. We wanted the Committee to send a letter of recommendation to Magistrates supporting the idea to raise the fixed penalty fine.
5. We discussed the percentage of principal roads where maintenance should be considered and how on the narrative that a Scanner Vehicle had previously been used, which now a Visual Annual Engineering Inspection now takes place instead. We wanted clarification on what this process is and asked questions around roads within their wards.
6. We discussed the punctuality of buses in Darlington and wanted to understand the main reasons behind this. We have requested that an invitation for Arriva to attend this Scrutiny Committee would be a sustainable way to understand the issues further.
7. Conversation then ensued around the incidents and accidents in road traffic accidents, we have urged for data to be received around speed monitoring in Darlington. We were reassured that the date is forthcoming.

Stronger Communities Fund Update

8. Scrutiny received a report providing Members with an update on the spend and use of the Stronger Communities Fund for the 2023/24 financial year. We noted that there had been good use of the fund, with £3,700.30 of the £50,000 remaining unspent.
9. We noted that the agreement for 2024/25 has been updated to specifically require Members to consider whether the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Members applies and to declare any potential declarations of interest within the signed agreement.

10. We noted the update of the scheme for this financial year, that all applications will be approved via the Monitoring Officer.
11. We discussed that all Councillors should be encouraged to use the full amount of the Stronger Community Fund.

Councillor James McGill
Chair of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee