

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 13 June 2024

PRESENT – Councillors Coe, Mrs Culley, Garner, Haszeldine, Mahmud, McGill, M Nicholson, Snedker and Walters

APOLOGIES – Councillors Keir

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor McCollom

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Brian Graham (Head of Environmental Services), Stephen Wiper (Creative Darlington Manager) and Olivia Hugill (Democratic Officer)

CLS49 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024/25

RESOLVED – That Councillor McGill be appointed as Chair of this Committee for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

CLS50 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024/25

RESOLVED – That Councillor Coe be appointed Vice-Chair of this Committee for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

CLS51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CLS52 TO CONSIDER THE TIMES OF MEETINGS OF THIS COMMITTEE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024/25 ON THE DATES AGREED IN THE CALENDAR OF MEETINGS BY CABINET AT MINUTE C106/FEB/24

RESOLVED – That the meetings of this Scrutiny Committee in the 2024/25 Municipal Year be held at 10.00am on the dates, as agreed on the calendar of meetings by Cabinet at Minute C106/Feb/24.

CLS53 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY HELD ON 18 APRIL 2024

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 18 April 2024.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 9 February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

CLS54 DARLINGTON CULTURAL STRATEGY ACTION PLAN FOR 2024/2025

The Group Director of Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide an update to Members on the progress of delivering the priorities in the Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022-2026 and the 2023/24 Action Plan.

The submitted report informed Members that the Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022-2026 was approved back in 2022/23 and was informed by research, including previous Darlington focused Arts Enquiry Report, development work since that date and discussion with stakeholders including: Arts Council England, Tees Valley Combined Authority, and the Creative Darlington Board.

The report advised that the main drivers for the Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022-2026 was to focus on cultural vision and assist advocacy and fundraising wards cultural priorities within the timespan of the document. The strategy used a definition of culture set out by the department of Culture, Media and Sport which covered the following areas: Arts, Architecture, Crafts, Creative Industries, Design, Heritage, Historic Environment, Museums and Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Film, Broadcasting and Media.

The report notified Members of the five priorities which Darlington Cultural Strategy seeks to address between 2022 and 2026 which were; To creatively celebrate Darlington's contribution to the birth of the modern passenger railway, For Darlington to have accessible, diverse and vibrant culture, encouraging economic growth, For Darlington to champion engagement with culture, particularly amongst children and young people, For culture to thrive within Darlington Borough and attract visitors to the Town Centre, For Darlington to have a thriving theatre offer involving people of all ages.

The report reflected the considerable progress which was made in 2023/24 in addressing particular priorities. One of the priorities which has progressed was the reopening of the Darlington Library post restoration back in September 2023.

Members wanted clarification around the usage of the building known as The Bridge – Centre for Visual Arts and whether Darlington Borough Council arts equipment there may be utilised in future.

The report stated that Darlington promoted an extensive programme of events throughout 2023/24 which attracted visitors of all ages to Darlington Town Centre, in addition to the Eurovision and Coronation Programme, plus children and young people focused events. Members wanted to identify what percentage of children attended these events and how this information can be recorded in future.

Members entered into discussion around the Darlington Borough Council Website and how the Hopetown attraction has not been promoted through this. Members also discussed how to organise events in smaller villages outside of the Town Centre, officers advised works from Darlington Borough Art Collection might be exhibited within buildings owned by Darlington Borough Council subject to locations having display space and facilities.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CLS55 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 for the Municipal Year 2024/25 and to consider any additional areas to be included.

A discussion was held in respect of the current items on the work programme and members proposed a number of items to add the Work Programme 2024/25. Some of the proposed items from Members included the Complaints Logging System for Councillors in their wards, Parking Review Policy, Allotment Strategy, Policy Review on Rubbish/Fly Tipping, Town Centre Programme, and the Parking Review Policy.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme be updated to reflect the decisions of this Scrutiny Committee.