

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 29 August 2024

PRESENT – Councillors McGill (Chair), Coe, Mrs Culley, Garner, Keir, M Nicholson, Snedker and Walters

APOLOGIES – Councillors Cossins and Mahmud,

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors McCollom and Dr. Riley

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Olivia Hugill (Democratic Officer), Ian Thompson (Assistant Director Community Services), Andrew Casey (Head of Highway Network Management) and Steve Pryke (Head of Highway Operations and Building Construction)

CLS58 INTRODUCTIONS/ATTENDANCE AT MEETING

CLS59 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CLS60 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY HELD ON 13 JUNE 2024

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 13 June 2024.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 13 June 2024 be approved as a correct record.

CLS61 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - QUARTER 4 2023/24

The Assistant Director Community Services, Assistant Director Highways and Capital Projects and Acting Head of Community Safety submitted a report (previously circulated) providing Members with an update on performance against key performance indicators at Quarter 4 2023/24.

It was reported that of the 35 indicators reported to this Scrutiny Committee, 25 were reported six monthly. 31 of the 25 indicators reported have Quarter 4 (year-end) data which can be compared with the same period for 2022/23.

The submitted report gave the performance position in relation to the 31 indicators, of which 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.

Members ensued into conversation around Fly-Tipping, how reports of large fly tipping have decreased but reports of small fly tipping has increased. Members wanted to understand what provision has been put in place for back alleys and rural areas. Members asked in cameras could be an appropriate action to stop the offences of Fly-Tipping. Members wanted

the Committee to send a letter of recommendation to Magistrates supporting the idea to raise the fixed penalty fine.

Members 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. Members wanted clarification on what this process is and asked questions around roads within their wards.

Members discussed the punctuality of buses in Darlington and wanted to understand the main reasons behind this. Members have requested that an invitation for Arriva to attend this Scrutiny Committee would be a sustainable way to understand the issues further.

Conversation then ensued around the incidents and accidents in road traffic accidents, Members have urged for data to be received around speed monitoring in Darlington. Members were reassured that the date is forthcoming.

RESOLVED – That the contents of this report be noted.

CLS62 STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND

The Assistant Director Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated) providing Members with information on the spend and use of the Stronger Communities Fund during the 2023/2024 financial year.

The submitted report stated that Cabinet agreed the establishment of the Stronger Communities Fund in April 2021, allocating each Councillor £1,000 to deliver the objectives of the fund; and reference was made to the final spend against the £50,000 for the 2023/2024 financial year, together with information on what had been delivered in wards on an individual Councillor basis.

The report included the remaining unspent fund which totalled to £3700.30 being reclaimed by the Council.

It was reported that this Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 11 January 2023, supported the continuation of the pilot scheme in the 2024/25 financial year; reference was made to the agreement which members were required to enter into regarding the use of the funds; and that the agreement for 2024/25 specifically required 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. Regarding the Scheme for this financial year it has been agreed that all applications will be approved by the Monitoring Officer.

Discussion ensued around the encouragement of all Councillors to use the full amount of the Stronger Community Fund for this year.

RESOLVED – Members noted the final spend for the 2023/24 financial year.

CLS63 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 and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest be included in the work programme.

It was mentioned that another item is to be added to the Work Programme once discussed further.

RESOLVED - That Members note the current Work Programme.

CLS64 SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (IF ANY) WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR OF THIS COMMITTEE ARE OF AN URGENT NATURE AND CAN BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING.

CLS65 QUESTIONS