

**COUNCIL**  
**28 NOVEMBER 2024**

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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.

**Towns Centre Events Programme**

2. We received a report which provided an overview to Members of the Town Centre Events Programme. The report included a review of 2024 events which demonstrated the variety and quantity of animation delivered this year and the impacts events have on Darlington's businesses and visitors.
3. The report explained that the programme aims to offer diverse, cultural, and family friendly events. The Diwali event was programmed for the first time in November 2023 and had a fantastic response which thousands of visitors came and took part. It also included feedback from town centre businesses, the team developed town centre animation events which encouraged visitors to move around the Town Centre such as Dinosaur Day, Vintage Car Rally, Etc.
4. The report included how hard the team worked to attract sponsorship for the event programme 2023/24 which totalled too £40,160 so far, sponsors had included Cummins, HC One, Hays Travel, Darlington College, Etc. The budget was £196,000 which included the events direct costs, infrastructure and staffing.
5. The report also set out the proposed events in Darlington for 2025, as next year celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first journey on the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR200) there would be a 9-month international festival taking places across County Durham and Tees Valley. The S&DR200 Festival would present a series of free large scale outdoor events and exhibitions.
6. We wanted to establish whether it would be possible to host a niche event for villages surrounding Darlington, officers advised with the upcoming events for S&DR200 Festival it could incorporate smaller villages.
7. We were pleased with the report details and will be looking forward to the events to come. Discussion ensued around advertisement, whether events had been promoted through different digital platforms such as adverts during Spotify etc.
8. Discussion ensued around sponsorship of events, had it got harder to receive funding from sponsors and whether there are enough funding behind the events for 2025.

## **Environment Act 2021 – Household Waste Management Arrangements**

9. We received a report which outlined the requirements of the Environment Act 2021 and provided details on the development of the new statutory weekly food waste collection service.
10. The report included the main requirements of the act which are Food Waste Collection, Simpler Recycling, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Scheme. The report outlined the current household waste management arrangements and what actions the council would need to consider when introducing the weekly food waste collections.
11. The report explained that from the end of March 2026, local authorities must collect food waste weekly from all residential properties unless transitional arrangements had been agreed.
12. The report stated that new 'Simpler Recycling' collections would be introduced, with the aim to produce standardisation with the same materials: plastic, metal, glass, paper, card, food waste and garden waste (charge to be applied for garden waste) collected from homes, workplaces and schools.
13. Under EPR it explained that this element of the Act placed responsibility onto packaging producers to cover the full net cost of the packaging they placed on the market, it was explained that Local Authorities would receive payments from 2025/26 however nothing had been confirmed.
14. The report described the Deposit Return Scheme and how it would be operational from October 2027, Individuals would be able to return polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, steel and aluminium cans from 150ml to 3l and receive a refund on deposit paid.
15. The report outlined the current waste management services, data on the 2022/23 collection arrangements and The Waste and Resources Action Programme Charity's (WRAP) involvement with the Council.
16. The report enclosed the options which the Council proposed to Members to review and feedback to Cabinet but to consider the uncertainty of the financial forecast.
17. We discussed the success rates of residents adhering to the new waste management arrangements, whether any communication/education would be given out for the public to follow.
18. We discussed the options further, and how Option2 had concerns to waste management staff due to the manual handling style that would be required.
19. Discussion ensued around finance implications regarding the new waste management arrangements, the uncertainty of the amount of funds that would be obtained from the government.

20. We discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the transition from a 240l to a 180l bin, Members wanted to know if Darlington used a medical waste collection service and the possibility for plans of recycling batteries.

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of The Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Committee**

21. We received the Draft Minutes of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Committee, which was held on 28 May 2024.
22. We discussed the punctuality of the Arriva Buses in and around Darlington, and how there is now a QR Code available for which the public can report any issues during journeys.

**Councillor James McGill**  
**Chair of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee**