

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 24 October 2024

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

APOLOGIES – Councillors Mrs Culley,

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors McCollom and Dr. Riley

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Ian Thompson (Assistant Director Community Services), Brian Graham (Head of Environmental Services), Mike Crawshaw (Head of Heritage and Culture), Alex Nicholson (Town Centre Partnership & Events Manager), Mike Gardner (WRAP Representative) and Olivia Hugill (Democratic Officer)

CLS1 INTRODUCTIONS/ATTENDANCE AT MEETING

CLS2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Garner declared that he was a Member of the Public Affairs Committee of the CPI (Confederation of Paper Industries) and also a Member of the Steering Committee of the above, but he had no direct conflict of interest in the Waste Management Item.

CLS3 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY HELD ON 29 AUGUST 2024

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 29 August 2024.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 29 August 2024 be approved as a correct record.

CLS4 TOWN CENTRE EVENTS PROGRAMME

The Assistant Director Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated) 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 had on Darlington's businesses and visitors.

The report explained that the programme aimed 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.

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 have included Cummins, HC One, Hays Travel, Darlington College, Etc. The budget was £196,000 which included the events direct costs, infrastructure and staffing.

The report also set out the proposed events in Darlington for 2025, as next year celebrates the 200th anniversary of the first journey on the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR200) there will be a 9-month international festival taking place across County Durham and Tees Valley. The S&DR200 Festival will present a series of free large scale outdoor events and exhibitions.

Members 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.

Members were pleased with the report details and will be looking forward to the events to come. Discussion ensued around advertisement, whether events have been promoted through different digital platforms such as adverts during Spotify etc.

Discussion ensued around sponsorship of events, had it got harder to receive funding from sponsors and whether there is enough funding behind the events for 2025.

RESOLVED – Members noted the contents of the report.

CLS5 ENVIRONMENT ACT 2021 - HOUSEHOLD WASTE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Assistant Director Environment, Highways and Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated) which outlined the requirements of the Environment Act 2021 and provided details on the development of the new statutory weekly food waste collection service.

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.

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.

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.

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.

The report described the Deposit Return Scheme and how it would be operational from October 2027, Individuals will be able to return polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, steel and aluminium cans from 150ml to 3l and receive a refund on deposit paid.

The report outlined the current waste management services, data from the 2022/23 collection arrangements and The Waste and Resources Action Programme Charity's (WRAP) involvement with the Council.

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.

Members 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.

Members discussed the options further, and how Option2 had concerns to waste management staff due to the manual handling style that would be required.

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.

Members 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.

RESOLVED - That members note the report and that the majority view of this Scrutiny Committee support Option 3 with the recommendation of a 1 year limit supply of bin liners and that the option for three weekly refuse collections be explored.

CLS6 TO RECEIVE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 28 MAY 2024

Submitted – The Draft Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Committee held on 28 May 2024.

Members 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.

RESOLVED – That the minutes be noted.

CLS7 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.

RESOLVED - That Members note the current Work Programme.