

**COUNCIL**  
**30 JANUARY 2025**

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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.

**Medium Term Financial Plan**

2. The Committee received and members were given the opportunity to consider the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2025/26 to 2028/29 at a special meeting.
3. The report noted that the MTFP had been agreed by Cabinet on 3 December 2024 as the basis for consultation. The Committee was asked to discuss and consider the overall contents of the MTFP with particular emphasis on those services and finances within the Committee's remit.
4. We recognised that the MTFP was subject to change as the final settlement figures had not yet been released by the Central Government.
5. Members raised the pressures around Adult Social Care and increased package costs as well as questioning if expenditure in Children's services would increase going forward and how this would be monitored.
6. We recognised that the Council would receive payment for Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging. It was explained that this grant funding was not included in the draft MTFP as the allocations had not been confirmed at the time of publishing.
7. We scrutinised the additional pressures around the crematorium and whether this had been looked at to reflect in the MTFP and how frequently this is reviewed.

**Stronger Community Fund**

8. The Committee reviewed a report on the use of the Stronger Communities Fund in the first 6 months of the annual scheme and which invited consideration on the continuation of the scheme.
9. The report explained that Cabinet, at its meeting held on 6th February 2024, agreed to the continuation of the Stronger Communities Fund for the 2024/25 financial year. It also stated that there is no provision for the Stronger Community Fund in the current MTFP proposals and that we should consider this.
10. Spend against the £50,000 was set out, with information on what has been spent on an individual Councillor basis. It was noted that all of the funding must be given to the grant recipient by 31 March 2025.

11. We discussed the increased checks of the Stronger Community Fund and it was suggested that if an example of the paperwork could have been given it may encourage Members to use their funds.
12. We discussed that the Stronger Community Fund had helped Councillors support activities in their wards through the funding. Members expressed that they would like the fund to continue.

### **Performance Indicators Quarter 2 2024/25**

13. At the ordinary meeting of the Committee on the 16th January Members received a report on key performance indicators for Quarter 2 of 2024/25, which reported on 23 areas.
14. The Committee had a lengthy discussion around Fly Tipping indicators. Members wanted to better understand the reasons for the relatively low number of fly-tipping prosecutions and how money from the court fines was shared between the council and the courts. Members also wanted to understand what other strategies were used to reduce fly-tipping.
15. Theatre and Library figures were also discussed, officers were asked if they expected further increases for attendance at the Hippodrome as a way to increase income. The Committee also raised concerns over the temporary closure of Crown Street Library which was caused by a leaking roof, officers reported that the issue had been identified and . We also touched on the Hopetown Figures and asked officers if they had performed well against the original business plan.
16. The committee touched on the road safety figures and asked how involved the Council is on any injuries/fatality cases. Officers explained that the Traffic Management team work alongside the police and complete any improvements which are found to be necessary.
17. We requested Crematorium figures to be included in the Performance Indicators.

### **Public Sector Executives Group**

18. The Committee received a report on the work of the Public Sector Executive Group.
19. The Report stated that the group had considered the Long-Term Plan for Town initiative, the emerging Police and Crime Plan, the exploration of a data sharing tool to improve collaboration of safeguarding as well as the implications of the Autumn Budget Statement.
20. Members of the Committee agreed that the report lacked a level of detail sufficient enough to allow for proper scrutiny of the working of the Public Sector Executive Group. As Chair, I will work with the portfolio holder and relevant officers to ensure that an improved report returns to the Committee.

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