

ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 26 February 2025

PRESENT – Councillors Baker (Chair), Dillon, Durham, Henderson, Marshall, McGill, Ray and Mrs Scott

ABSENT – Councillors Coe and Haszeldine

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors McEwan

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Ian Williams (Chief Executive), Elizabeth Davison (Executive Director Resources and Governance), Mark Ladyman (Assistant Director Economic Growth) and Olivia Hugill (Democratic Officer)

ER142 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

ER143 DARLINGTON INDOOR MARKET - CALL IN OF CABINET'S DECISION

A report (previously circulated) was submitted following the receipt of a 'call-in' from Cabinet held on 4 February 2024 (Minute C113) in relation to its decision in respect of the Darlington Indoor Markets. The 'call-in' was taken in accordance with the Council's constitution and had been submitted by three Members of this Scrutiny Committee.

In opening the meeting, the chair advised Members as to the background to the call in and how she intended to manage the meeting in terms of time allocation, Members, exclusion of the Public and Press and formulating a view, if needed, to Cabinet.

The Chair opened the meeting up to questions which could be asked and responded to in the non-confidential part of this meeting and Members discussed the first question of Part 1 and how the Darlington Indoor Markets item was not included on the Work Programme for Members to scrutinise.

Discussion ensued onto question 4 of the part 1 report, Members expressed their concerns that the response did not answer their question. Conversation ensued around that the Terms of Reference that was yet to be agreed and the potential for this to attend scrutiny in the future.

Question 8 of part 1 was in relation to whether an audit had been undertaken from the request of Cabinet, Members discussed whether this was usual practice for the Council to request another business to complete an audit. Members scrutinised that if the Council is to loan such a significant amount of money that the business accounts should be looked at closer.

Conversation then ensued to Question 10, Members scrutinised that there was no detail of how the work could be brought back in house, officers explained the implications of bringing the Darlington Indoor Market back in house and what MAM offer to the Indoor Market.

NOTE – Members were satisfied with the responses given by Officers to the questions raised in the non-confidential part of this meeting. As there were a number of other questions within the call in which fell with the definition of confidential information in accordance with Access to Information Procedure Rules, the press and public were excluded from the meeting whilst further questioning took place. Following this discussion a decision on all of the issues raised within the call in was taken

ER144 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - That, pursuant to Sections 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the ensuing item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in exclusion Paragraph 13 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act.

ER145 DARLINGTON INDOOR MARKET - CALL IN OF CABINET'S DECISION (EXCLUSION NO. 13)

RESOLVED - That, in relation to all the of the areas specified in the Call in, having considered and heard all the information presented to, and at this meeting, this Scrutiny Committee is satisfied with the decision of Cabinet at Minute C113, and that no further action in relation to the call-in is required.