

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 27 February 2025

PRESENT – Councillors McGill (Chair), Coe, Mrs Culley, Keir, Mahmud, M Nicholson, Snedker and Dr. Riley

APOLOGIES – Councillors Cossins and Walters,

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors McCollom

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Anthony Hewitt (Assistant Director Highways and Capital Projects), Andrew Casey (Head of Highway Network Management), Joanne Roberts (Interim Transport Planning Manager) and Olivia Hugill (Democratic Officer)

CLS23 INTRODUCTIONS/ATTENDANCE AT MEETING

CLS24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CLS25 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2025

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 16 January 2025.

Resolved – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 16 January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

CLS26 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN - DELIVERY REPORT 2025

The Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated) which provided members an annual update on the delivery of the Darlington Transport Plan which outlined the delivery, performance, and public satisfaction in 2024/25 and will outline the 2025/26 programme, including the release of funding.

The submitted report stated that the Tees Valley Region had secured significant funding from the Government, which included £310m City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme and £6.851m Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The report stated that there has been good progress on the development and delivery of the Transport Capital Programme.

It was reported that in 2022/23 there was a new Transport Strategy for the borough; a Town Centre Transport Plan and Parking Strategy which were adopted by the Council where work continued. A progress report on the schemes delivered in 2024/25 and the proposed programme of schemes 2025/26 was detailed in the report. From the Autumn Budget 2024 additional highways funding was announced for 2025/26 with £4.873M allocated to the Tees

Valley, 25% had been held back due to unknown criteria that will follow.

The submitted report demonstrated the focus of the Department for Transport (DfT) on the switch to zero emission cars/vans, which would be the single biggest carbon saving measure in the UK's journey to Net Zero. The report explained that in December 2023, Government announced the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandate, which requires 80% of new cars and 70% of new vans sold in the UK to be zero emission by 2035. In addition to this the Government would provide Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding to support combined authorities and local authorities.

Reference was made to the Tees Valley region which had been allocated funding of £978m for the second round of CRSTS which would cover the period of 2027/28 to 2031/32, the report stated that good progress had been made on the development and delivery of the transport capital programme including the work in partnership with Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) to deliver elements of the strategic transport plan.

Discussion ensued around the TVCA and public transport, Members asked what relationship the Council had with TVCA. The Committee went on to discuss public transport within Darlington, Members questioned what would make public transportation easier for residents. Members suggested if QR codes or questionnaires could be utilised on bus journeys to receive feedback from users.

The Committee moved onto road maintenance, Members questioned if we share practices with other local authorities around road materials and maintenance of potholes. Further questions were raised with regards to when road maintenance has been completed, would this be regularly monitored and recorded.

Members scrutinised the accessibility and dropped curbs around John Street and Valley Street following on from Harrowgate Hill to get into town. The Committee also questioned when work would begin on the Cockerton Roundabout and what the first phase would entail.

Discussion ensued around 20mph limits in Darlington and if any further work is scheduled for this. Members scrutinised the difficulty of obtaining data from speed counters and how certain counters across the town seemed to be intermittent.

RESOLVED - That Members noted the report.

CLS27 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 Work Programme.