

COUNCIL
2 OCTOBER 2025

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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.

Deployable Camera Policy

2. Members received a detailed report from The Assistant Director, Environmental Services and Community Safety, which provided Members with an overview of the policy and guidelines on issues involved in the planning for, and actual deployment of the Council's re-deployable (mobile) CCTV cameras (RCCTV).
3. The CCTV & Security Control Centre Manager provided a short synopsis of the Council's current deployment of deployable cameras deployed by request on the boundaries of the Borough.
4. The CCTV & Security Control Centre Manager informed the Committee that the use of surveillance is not a cure to civic enforcement issues, but is more so utilised as a preventative and aiding tool.
5. The CCTV & Security Control Centre Manager went into further detail on the policy by which deployable cameras are utilised, and demonstrated the Council's compliance with such regulations.
6. Members thanked The CCTV & Security Control Centre Manager for speaking to this report and questioned whether all deployable cameras at the Council's disposal are being actively utilised to ensure that the Council is maximising its available resources. The CCTV & Security Control Centre Manager answered stating that not all deployable cameras are currently active, and Members asked what the barriers are preventing this.
7. Members questioned about who can apply for a deployable camera, and the process of doing so. We were informed that the usual procedure is that a Councillor will make a request to the anti-social or park management team who will consider the request and determine whether a camera will be deployed.

Public Safety Overview Report

8. Following a request from the Vice-Chair at the annual briefing of this Scrutiny Committee, Members received a detailed report from the Assistant Director, Environmental Services and Community Safety which provided members with an overview of the ways in which the Council and its partners support public safety across the Borough.

9. Particular emphasis was placed the areas of Public Safety that members wished to receive more information on, particularly from a community safety perspective; namely the nighttime economy, events and partnership working.
10. The Head of Community Safety spoke to this report and began by discussing the risk management protocols undertaken by the Council and the Partnerships it works alongside to effectively manage those risks.
11. The Head of Community Safety also made reference to the Local Resilience Forum, the Darlington Community Safety Partnership, the Public Event Safety Advisory Group, Civic Enforcement, CCTV, and Licencing – demonstrating how all of such services contribute to Community Safety in the Borough.
12. Focus was then diverted to the Nighttime Economy, specifically on the actions undertaken by Number Forty and the future of this establishment. The Head of Community Safety discussed the origins of Number Forty and the expiry date for funding from the Home Office. The Head of Community Safety noted that volunteers are sparse currently, and that efforts are being made to drive engagement and garner volunteers.
13. Members then asked questions regarding the nature of incidents reported to Number Forty, and whether incident reporting had decreased as a result of less activity in the Nighttime Economy. The Head of Community Safety responded, stating that both less footfall and improved safety control have contributed to a decline in incident reporting.
14. We drew a close to this area of discussion by questioning the current priorities outlined on page 29 of the submitted report, issues regarding inflatables, and whether the Civic Enforcement Team is taking a proactive approach to Community Safety.

Performance Indicators Year End – Quarter 4 – 2024/2025

15. Members received a detailed report from The Head of Culture, the Assistant Director for Environmental Services and Public Safety, the Assistant Director for Highways and Capital Projects, and the Standards and Animal Health Manager who collaborated to produce a report regarding the Performance Indicators Year End – Quarter 4 – 2024/25 for their service area.
16. This report provided Members with performance data against key performance indicators for 2024/25 up to year end March 2025 (Quarter 4).
17. The Assistant Director for Highways and Capital Projects spoke to this report, and outlined the performance for Cultural institutions such as the Hippodrome, Hopetown, and the library. The Performance of Community Services, Community Safety, Trading Standards and Animal Health, and Highways and Capital Projects were also discussed.
18. The Assistant Director for Highways and Capital Projects summarised the report and the overall performance of the service area, detailing how: a) 17 of the 34 indicators figures increased. b) 16 of the 34 indicators figures decreased. c) 1 of the 34 indicators remained the same. d) 1 indicator had no comparative information.

19. Members then posed questions to the Assistant Director for Highways and Capital Projects, specifically on the performance of Hopetown against the targeted figures prior to launch. Additionally, Members questioned the figures regarding road safety, notably the increasing numbers of serious incidents per week.

Work Programme 2025/2026

20. We discussed the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the 2025/26 Municipal Year. The Democratic Officer spoke to this report and invited Members to consider the attached draft work programme (Appendix 1).
21. Members requested an update on the Councillor Case Monitoring System Task and Finish Group, to which the Democratic Officer responded stating that the relevant Officer will be in contact to arrange a meeting with those Members interested in this Task and Finish Group.
22. Members also requested that the Harm Reduction on Highways Approach be moved from the October meeting of this Committee to the January meeting, which was agreed.

Councillor James McGill
Chair of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee