

**COUNCIL**  
**26 MARCH 2026**

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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.

**Community Safety Plan 2026-2029**

2. We gave consideration to the draft Community Safety Plan 2026-2029 prior to its consideration by Cabinet and Full Council. The current Community Safety Partnership (CSP) plan 2021-2026 is coming to the end of its life cycle and the new CSP Plan will be a three-year plan (2026-2029).
3. Members were provided with details of the consultation process undertaken by the CSP to understand the public's views and perceptions on crime and anti-social behaviour and priorities for the CSP.
4. Members raised concern regarding the low response rate to the consultation, discussed begging and enforcement in the town centre and highlighted that residents are hesitant to report anti-social behaviour due to perceived lack of action.
5. We have requested that Cabinet be advised that Members support the four priority areas in the draft Community Safety Plan 2026-2029 and that an overarching strategy within the Community Safety Plan 2026–2029 should be developed to strengthen public confidence in reporting crime and anti-social behaviour, improve public understanding of how and when incidents should be reported, and streamline reporting mechanisms to ensure residents can easily and consistently report crime and anti-social behaviour through accessible and well-understood channels.

**Annual Electric Vehicle Charging Policy Review**

6. Scrutiny received a report updating Members on electric vehicle (EV) charging following on from the adoption of the Darlington Electric Vehicle Charging Policy in February 2025.
7. The Council's approach to electric vehicle charging is to provide and encourage the use of shared public facilities, with provision available in Council owned car parks and the next phase is to create commercially operated charging hubs in community locations. We were provided with details of the trials being undertaken in the Tees Valley and the UK in the development of cross pavement charging solutions.
8. Members were provided with details of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding and we noted that the TVCA received an allocation of £6.596M. We were informed that in order to satisfy the scope and conditions of the LEVI fund, the TVCA propose to procure a single Concessionaire on behalf of the five local authorities, to deliver and operate on-street charge points across the Tees Valley.

9. Members discussed the funding arrangements further, raised concerns regarding demand for EV chargers and ongoing costs for the Council and discussed the limitations of cross paving channels and the use of cable mats.

### **Active Travel Neighbourhoods' Feasibility Report**

10. Members welcomed a report setting out the proposed requirements of Active Travel Neighbourhoods and detailing the proposed requirements of Active Travel Neighbourhoods Feasibility outlined in a draft policy.
11. Members were advised that as part of the development of the Active Travel Neighbourhood Feasibility, a review of the current Department for Transport guidance has been undertaken, along with considering Active Travel England toolkits and best practice to develop measures to encourage walking and cycling and that a comprehensive communications plan will be developed to ensure all stakeholder views are included. This will also include Member engagement.
12. Members made reference to the benefits of active travel neighbourhoods and concerns were raised regarding the existing cycle routes. Members noted that there is an overarching Tees Valley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in place to deliver improvements to the transport network.

### **Network Management Plan**

13. Scrutiny received a report setting out the requirements and timeline for implementing a Network Management Plan, a statutory requirement under the Traffic Management Act 2004. Which sets out how a local traffic authority should manage the highway network to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic with a primary aim of reducing congestion and disruption.
14. We noted that there are no statutory timescales to update the Network Management Plan and this is undertaken when required. We look forward to receiving a future draft version of the Network Management Plan prior to approval by Cabinet.

### **Work Programme**

15. We gave consideration to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme for the Municipal Year 2025/26 and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.
16. Members have requested that an update be provided on the 'Introduction of the Renters Rights Act 2025' at the next meeting of this Scrutiny Committee. Members proposed that an update on household food waste recycling be provided at a future meeting of this committee and noted that the item 'City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements Update' was covered as part of the Local Transport Plan update and could be considered for removal from the work programme in the next municipal year.

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