

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 April 2018

PRESENT – Councillors Carson (in the Chair), Cossins, Donoghue, Lyonette, Marshall and Tostevin. (6)

APOLOGIES – Councillor Wright; John Anderson, Assistant Director, Economic Initiative; Dave Winstanley, Assistant Director, Highways, Design and Projects; and Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services. (4)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE –

ABSENT – Councillors L Hughes, K Kelly and M Nicholson. (3)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Bill Westland, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services; Mike Crawshaw, Head of Culture; Dawn Taylor, Principal Officer (Trading Standards and Animal Health) and Lead Officer; Barbara Copson, Performance Manager; Paul Branch, CCTV and Parking Manager and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

P40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interests reported at the meeting.

P41. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 1 February 2018.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as correct records.

P42. MATTERS ARISING – In relation to Minute P36/Feb/18 the Chair confirmed that the ‘Company’ referred to for Private Sector Enforcement would not be known until a procurement exercise had been undertaken and the invitation to Scrutiny Committee would be delayed until that procurement exercise had been completed.

P43. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 3 2017/18 – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) Scrutiny Committee received an update on performance against key performance indicators (KPI’s) within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee.

It was reported that the KPI’s are aligned with key priorities and the majority are used to monitor the Corporate Plan 2017/21.

As the majority of indicators for Place Scrutiny Committee were reported annually data was not currently available, however, 15 indicators were reported quarterly and one indicator six monthly at Quarters two and four.

Members were pleased to note that fourteen of the indicators reported at Quarter 3 had end of year targets and where comparison data was available six had achieved

performance higher this year than at Quarter 3 last year and one achieved performance the same as last year. Ten were on track to achieve and three were unlikely to achieve year-end targets.

Particular reference was made to CUL 300 Total number of visits to the Dolphin Centre where it was confirmed that the large scale events and the schools programme which took place in Quarter 3 last year took place in Quarter 4 this and therefore this indicator was expected to reach year-end target. Pressures and challenges were Town wide and new and innovative ideas were sought to encourage people into the Dolphin Centre. There were currently 1m visits per year, however, this did not take into account people using the Bistro, Reception queries or accessing the toilets.

In relation to CUL 065 Number of physical visits to the Library, it was reported that Crown Street Library has self-service technology so whilst book loans were captured, people browsing the library were not necessarily counted. Members also noted that Crown Street Library uses a nationwide methodology of undertaking a weekly head count twice a year.

CUL 066 Number of book loans was a falling trend nationally although there was a large scale demand for IT services. Officers confirmed that these figures could be captured and that this indicator could be included for 2018/19 if the Committee identified this indicator for Scrutiny as part of the review process.

CUL 071 Number of visits to the Head of Steam was showing a steady growth and it was stated that family events scheduled for Saturdays and Sundays, supported by the A1 Trust, North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group (NELPG) and Darlington Railway Preservation Society, had helped to improve visitor figures which were captured as people pass through Reception. Reference was made to a recent Lego exhibition which had attracted over 2k visitors showing that demand for such events was high. It was confirmed that catering was provided by Head of Steam for programmed events and that concessions were on site for outside events such as the Vintage Vehicle Rally. Officers confirmed that work had started on the 2025 Celebrations and all options were being considered with the Tees Valley Combined Authority and other partners, including Durham and Stockton Councils. An Open Day to celebrate the 193rd birthday of the Stockton and Darlington Railway was to be held Sunday 30 September 2018.

CUL 077 Town Centre footfall trend showed a slight increase on the previous year with data being collected from several wall mounted electronic counters located around the Town. Members requested further information on what the figures were comparative with.

In relation to ENV 001 Members queried the figures related to the Councillors who had undertaken the pilot as it was felt that the figure was not a true reflection of Councillor involvement.

ENV 009 Percentage of household waste that is collected that is either reused, recycled or composted was currently on target although Members were advised that the national target had now been set at 65 per cent. It was stated that there was no national standardised recycling practice and that the current provider's contract was

due to end in 2025 in line with all other Tees Valley Contracts which could provide an opportunity for a Tees Valley co-ordinated approach.

ENV 021 and ENV 022 Percentage of fly tips removed within target time did not provide the size of the problem. Members were asked to undertake some research on fly tips within their Wards for the next meeting of Scrutiny where this indicator would be discussed in greater detail. A request was also made to include an indicator on the amount of prosecutions undertaken for fly tipping.

Officers attended the meeting to provide Members with performance updates and background information on indicators within their remits.

In relation to TCP 602 Number of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents and TCP 603 Number of children slightly injured in road traffic accidents Members requested a breakdown of incident locations.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the number of people using IT Services in Crown Street Library be included as an Indicator for 2018/19.

(c) That a written response be provided to Members on how CUL077 Town Centre footfall was calculated.

(d) That in relation to ENV 001 clarification be sought from the Darlington Cares Project Officer on the number of Ward Members involved.

P44. TOWN CENTRE PARKING – The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services gave a PowerPoint Presentation relating to Town Centre Parking with particular emphasis on Feethams Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP).

Members were advised that the MSCP was constructed on the footprint of the previous Beaumont Street Car Park in 2016 based on evidence on the demand for parking in the Feethams area and provided a 24/7 modern secure gated car park with controlled pedestrian access only with a ticket.

Members was advised that the gates are now open between the hours of 9am and 8pm to avoid confusion of the car park being closed. There is an intelligent back office system, an abundance of CCTV cameras and payment is made on foot with both card and cash payments being accepted.

Members were pleased to note that the MSCP has a Park Mark which is awarded to car parks that achieve the challenging standards of the Safer Parking Scheme, a national standard, audited annually, for UK car parks that have low crime and measures in place to ensure the safety of people and their vehicles.

Since opening in March 2016 the MCSP has seen a steady rise in usage and whilst £100k per annum was initially provided for running costs this has now reduced to £87k in light of experience.

Members noted that there were more cars entering than were buying tickets as parking charges only applied between 8am and 6pm.

Members noted that the Shopmobility unit was still vacant and that there were ongoing issues with litter resulting in a high standard of cleanliness proving to be challenging.

It was also reported that there were currently a lot of and false alarms and that a control panel was to be installed in the CCTV suite to aid prompt cessation of those false alarms.

Members noted that as the public do not always react to alarms it is also proposed to install an automated Public Address Voice Alarm to give instruction to leave the building and not return to vehicles. The CCTV control room will also be able to reset the fire alarm off site which will reduce complaints from local residents and businesses due to lengthy alarm periods and avoid unnecessary delay in returning to vehicles.

It was also stated that during an alarm the vehicle barriers would remain closed to prevent entry into the car park whilst the exits would remain in the open position.

Discussion ensued on the recent Three for Two Offer, and usage of all Town Centre Car Parks and On Street Car Parks.

Several Members referred to the first hour free parking offered at Northallerton but it was felt that to introduce this in Darlington could affect the economy and discourage people from having coffee or a meal.

On street bays with a 30 minute parking limit were very popular with a high turnover although Blue Badge holders could still park for free in these areas.

Particular reference was made to Blue Badge Parking Charges which placed holders of Blue Badges on a par with other car park users from the second week in January. Officers advised that there had been a warm up period of six weeks with no penalties being issued and that Blue Badge Holders had been spoken to and issued with advisories prior to January.

Members were encouraged to read the Annual Car Parking report which was available on the Council's website.

RESOLVED – That the Assistant Director, Regulatory Services be thanked for his interesting and informative presentation.

P45. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18 – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2017/18.

The work programme has been reviewed to link it to the outcomes and conditions in the Sustainable Community Strategy and each topic has been linked to performance indicators from the Performance Management Framework to provide accurate data for Members to use when considering topics and the work they wish to undertake.

Members also gave consideration, in line with the agreed procedure, to a number of Quad of Aims which had been received in respect of Arriva and Car Parking.

The Lead Officer provided Members with an updated position in relation to individual items within the schedule.

Discussion ensued on the need for Scrutiny to focus on the Local Plan in the coming month resulting in other Work Programme topics being considered following the recess.

In relation to the Quad of Aims for Arriva it was stated that the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) was currently preparing a transport strategy for the whole of the Tees Valley and it would be prudent to invite TVCA to a future meeting of Scrutiny once that strategy was drafted.

In relation to the Quad of Aims for car parking Members agreed to defer as the reasons given for wanting the item on the Work Programme needed to be more defined as they were considered to be too open ended and the Car Parking Strategy was only in the fourth year of its 12 year life.

RESOLVED – (a) That the current status of the Work Programme be noted.

(b) That the Work Programme be updated to reflect the decisions of this Scrutiny Committee.

P46. CREATIVE DARLINGTON BOARD – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Creative Darlington Board held 23 February which provided updates on various topics including The Hullabaloo and Theatre Hullabaloo Forward Plans, Town Centre Events Programme 2018/19, Darlington Arts Festival 2018 and Small Arts Grants, Women’s Suffrage Centenary, Creative FUSE Tees Valley Update and Cultural Commissioning Proposal.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Minutes be received.

(b) That the Creative Darlington Manager be invited to the next ordinary meeting of Scrutiny scheduled for 28 June 2018