

COUNCIL
26 SEPTEMBER 2019

OVERVIEW OF PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Place Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Work Programme 2019/20

2. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/20 and possible review topics, the work programme is a rolling work programme and items can be added as necessary.

Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Strategy

3. The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Transport, Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) on the Strategic Transport Plan (STP).
4. TVCA is the local transport authority for Tees Valley and this is the first Strategic Transport Plan for the region covering the period up to 2029. It has been developed in collaboration with the five constituent Local Authorities, Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees.
5. The vision is "To provide a high-quality, clean, quick, affordable, reliable and safe transport network for people and freight to move within, to and from Tees Valley."
6. The plan outlines a potential investment of £256.7million into transport projects in the period 2019-2029 and the Plan will help to direct this investment. The plan sets out the vision, detailing exactly what is planned, why and how it will be progressed.
7. Members were informed that STP has been developed to deliver three broad objectives; social opportunity, economic growth and environmental protection and enhancement. The plan covers all the main components of a transport system including road, rail, air, bus, cycling and walking and freight.
8. Formal consultation on the TVCA STP has begun, with the documentation and a questionnaire available on the TVCA website. A number of consultation events are programmed across the Tees Valley and Members and the public are invited to comment to inform the final plan.

Indoor/Outdoor Markets Update

9. Scrutiny received a further PowerPoint Presentation from the Director of Market Asset Management, updating Members on the progress made to date on the Indoor and Outdoor Market.
10. Scrutiny were provided with details of the future development of the indoor and outdoor market including the proposals for a temperate garden and market vaults,

scheduled to be open by March 2021; an enterprise haven; and farmgate and production facilities.

11. We were pleased to note the growing demand for events in the Outdoor Market Place and held an in-depth discussion in relation to the relocation of the Outdoor Market.
12. We did note the challenges in attracting new traders to the Indoor Market and acknowledged that the enterprise haven for start-ups will help to address this by encouraging new businesses. There is a good core offer of existing traders, however reinvestment is required to modernise stalls which will in turn encourage more traders to set up business in Darlington.

Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter

13. Members also received a PowerPoint Presentation from the Assistant Director, Community Services on the Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter which outlined the proposals to develop the Darlington rail heritage offer for 2025 and beyond.
14. Members were provided with details of the proposed site master plan which included development of Head of Steam to include an Immersive Experience; restoration of the Goods Shed for use as café and for corporate functions; development of the Carriage Works; proposal to build a new three line shed with a viewing gallery; and a bespoke play area; all of which will enable Darlington to deliver a unique and in-demand visitor experience.
15. We also noted the proposed Phased Delivery of the master plan, estimated costs and timescales and look forward to seeing how this progresses.

Darlington Crematorium Refurbishment

16. Scrutiny Committee received a report outlining the current position with regard to the Crematorium, the work undertaken to date and outlined the proposed options for this Scrutiny to consider and provide feedback, prior to its consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 October 2019.
17. Members of this Scrutiny Committee undertook a site visit on 20 August 2019 and noted the current facilities at Darlington Crematorium; the challenges associated with the location such as access and parking; building limitations; and that the cremators are at the end of their lifespan and require replacement with emission compliant equipment.
18. We considered the three options; Option 1 – New build/new site; Option 2 – To replace the existing cremators alongside limited improvements to the chapel; and Option 3 – Replace the existing cremators as well as redeveloping the existing chapel into a bereavement service office and new chapel within West Cemetery on part of the land identified for future burials; and noted the advantages, disadvantages and financial implications associated with each option.
19. Members were in agreement, taking into consideration all information provided, that Option 3 is the most suitable option and will feed this back to Cabinet for consideration.

Councillor Brian Jones
Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee