

COUNCIL
26 MARCH 2020 (This meeting is cancelled)

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.

Community Safety - Update

2. We received a presentation from the Head of Community Safety updating Scrutiny on the development of Community Safety, key achievements in respect of the priority actions for 2019 and performance updates.
3. The presentation covered the service priorities for 2020-21 which will support the development of the town centre economy by putting appropriate measure in place and demonstrating it is a safe place to visit.
4. We received a breakdown of crime and incident figures for Darlington and the Town Centre, noting the increase in all crime in Darlington and the Town Centre and overall decrease in antisocial behaviour when compared to the previous year. Particular concern was raised in respect on antisocial behaviour relating to motorcycles and quad bikes, which had seen an increase over the Christmas period. We were assured that more targeted activity would be undertaken to address this issue.
5. Members were assured of the measures in place to address the increase in crime rates in the town centre, noting that five additional mobile CCTV units would be placed in key areas in a bid to tackle crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour and that police resources have been put in place to address violence. Work was also being undertaken with licensing and pub watch to tackle alcohol related incidents and a multi-agency problem solving group was in place to address anti-social behaviour.
6. We were informed of the success of Whatsapp groups which have been trialled as a mechanism to share intelligence. Crime solved rates were discussed and it was confirmed that Durham Constabulary were 98 per cent compliant with reporting procedures.
7. Particular reference was made to the neighbourhood boundaries used by Durham Constabulary to report crime and antisocial performance data. As these do not correlate with the ward boundaries in Darlington we have requested that discussions be held with Durham Constabulary to review and update their crime reporting system.
8. We have agreed to undertake a visit to CCTV and welcomed regular updates from CCTV in the form of newsletters and performance reports.

Local Transport Plan

9. Scrutiny Committee received a report seeking Members' views on the outline Local Implementation Plan for Transport in Darlington, prior to its consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 3 March 2020.
10. The statutory responsibility for the Local Transport Plan now sits with the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) and a Strategic Transport Plan was approved by TVCA Cabinet at its meeting on 31 January 2020. The Local Implementation Plan will be developed to meet the requirements at a local authority level.
11. We considered the four ambitions of the Local Implementation Plan as set out in the draft policy framework and noted the recommended approach of Darlington's third Local Transport Plan which was to maintain, manage and improve the transport system.
12. Members were in agreement that Cabinet be advised of Scrutiny's view that the draft ambitions for the Local Implementation Plan be endorsed and of the recommendation for a section of the new plan relating to town centre and how the transport policy links to delivering the Town Centre Strategy.
13. Scrutiny Members also agreed that Cabinet be advised of our intention to input individually to the consultation plans.
14. In light of concerns raised in respect of bus services, in particular, routes available, service reliability, passenger facilities and fares, Members felt that this should be an area of focus for this Scrutiny as the plan develops and that consideration be given to a specific piece of work within the work programme.

Work Programme 2019/20

15. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/20 and possible review topics. Members have agreed that additional reports be submitted to future meetings in relation to the Bank Top Masterplan and Grass Verge Management.

Councillor Brian Jones
Chair of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee