

Public Questions and Responses

The following public questions and responses have been submitted in relation to the Cabinet meeting on Friday, 26 January 2024.

Question 1.

Mayor Houchen states in his report that the investigation being conducted by the Teesworks Review team (headed by Angie Ridgwell) is looking into alleged corruption and illegal activities

Please can Mayor Houchen confirm if Cleveland police have been involved in the investigation as would be expected and required to enable an effective criminal investigation able to utilise police powers relating to search and seizure of evidence?

Response

South Tees Development Corporation (STDC) is the subject of an investigation the question refers to and is therefore not in control of that process. Any such questions should be directed to the panel.

Question 2.

It is noted that Emma Simpson is still carrying out an "Acting" position as chief Legal Officer. Why has Peter Judge not been substantively replaced despite having left his role (suddenly) with TVCA well over a year ago?

Response

Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) is unable to comment on individual employment matters or details in relation to individuals, but can confirm that the statutory role of Monitoring Officer is being discharged in full.

Question 3.

I have a question to be asked at Friday's cabinet meeting, please.

Darlington Borough Council told the planning inspector looking at the Local Plan that they had taken the Darlington Northern Link Road out of the Plan and all traffic modelling on up to 1,800 homes up to 2036 at Skerningham Garden Village is based on it not being in place. The planning inspector's report reflected this and he asked for modifications to be made to reflect the fact that a "northern link road" is not a proposal in the Plan.

When you review the optimum route alignment, can you therefore confirm that you will NOT use this traffic generated from the Garden Village in your assessment?

Anything is possible



Response

Any further work on this project is subject to Cabinet approval. In accordance with Department for Transport guidance ([Transport analysis guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)), the traffic generated by the up to 1,800 homes will be included in the baseline do-minimum scenario as these houses are defined as committed with the Local Plan period. The do-minimum scenario is what the proposed intervention is assessed against when determining the benefits.

Question 4.

My question is in relation to the Darlington Northern Link Road.

For the record, will emissions calculated at planning stage be based on the full increase across the network and not just where the road is built?

Response

Any further work on this project is subject to Cabinet approval. Department for Transport guidance ([Transport analysis guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)) requires a carbon management plan to be completed as part of the project development. This requires emissions to be considered over a wider area than just the proposed intervention itself and TVCA will adhere to this guidance when undertaking any future work.

Question 5.

The TVCA has previously completed an Outline Business Case, which identified a preferred route alignment. Marked on the proposed route map as Option A, this was done at considerable cost and resource, why therefore are you now considering another option - Marked as Route B.

Route B would involve major upheaval to the cherished environmental Skerningham Woods and several listed buildings on Low Skerningham Lane.

Why is further money and time being wasted re-evaluating alternative routes, when no major changes to the topography or dwellings have taken place since the previous Business Case?

Response

Any further work on this project is subject to Cabinet approval. The Outline Business Case identified Route A as the preferred option. Given several years have elapsed since this work and Darlington Borough Council's Local Plan has subsequently been adopted, Department for Transport guidance ([Transport analysis guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)) would require us to review previous assumptions, including the Route A alignment.

Anything is possible



Question 6.

Darlington's Local Plan says that the Skerningham development must deliver a local distributor road between the A167 and A1150.

Could this road be upgraded to become the Darlington Northern Link Road?

Response

Any further work on this project is subject to Cabinet approval. Given several years have elapsed since this work and Darlington Borough Council's Local Plan has subsequently been adopted, Department for Transport guidance ([Transport analysis guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442222/Transport_analysis_guidance_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf)) requires us to review previous assumptions, including the proposed route alignment.

Question 7.

This month Byers Gill Solar is submitting a DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate, according to their website.

As I understand it, following the submission of the DCO application, should the Darlington Northern Link Road continue to use Route A that interacts with Byers Gill Solar then compensation would be payable.

Under the description for this road scheme it says:

"The cost estimate is based on the current route alignment."

Is this cost estimate recent enough to have taken into account the compensation that may be payable?

Response

The updated cost estimate presented in the Cabinet report is based on the current route alignment and includes an allowance for land acquisition costs.

Anything is possible