
LEADER'S OVERVIEW

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that I have undertaken as Leader :-

(a) **Citizenship Ceremony** – I was very pleased and honoured to speak at the Council's first multiple Citizenship Ceremony at the Town Hall on 11th August, 2004 for the seven citizens taking British Citizenship. It was very encouraging to see the many dignitaries and Councillors in attendance to support our Citizens taking their oaths in the Council Chamber.

(b) **Town Centre Board** – I chaired the meeting of the Town Centre Board held on 16th September, 2004, at which the launch date of the Town Centre Business Plan for 2004/07 was discussed and the date of Friday, 15th October, 2004, was agreed. Consideration was given to the proposed solutions for managing the change in respect of town centre car parking in Darlington up to 2008, as a result of the proposed developments that were scheduled to take place and impact upon parking provision.

Further reports were considered in respect of the Darlington Town Centre Christmas magazine; the venue of the French Market to be held in Darlington during the month of October, 2004; and proposals for the dissemination of information to Town Centre Businesses.

(c) **Darlington Partnership Board** – I attended the Annual General Meeting and ordinary meeting of the Darlington Partnership Board held on 9th September, 2004, at which a presentation was given by a Policy Officer from the North East Assembly, on the recently published Integrated Regional Framework for sustainable development in the North East. Consideration was given to a number of issues including the Darlington Suicide Audit; the possibility of the Board developing and leading on a Climate Change Strategy; the launch of the Darlington Local Compact; the success of the ward based education initiatives; Community Partnerships; and issues arising from the Tees Valley Partnership. The Board also agreed to support the 'Year of the Volunteer 2005' and seek external funding to support the initiative.

(d) **Corporate Assessment** - Darlington Borough Council is undergoing another Comprehensive Performance Assessment and I have been involved with the discussions regarding the Assessment. The Corporate Assessment Team (CAT), from the Audit Commission, will be visiting the Council to carry out the on-site inspection, during the week commencing Monday 11th October 2004.

- (e) **Local Compact** – The first local compact, between this Council and the Primary Care Trust (PCT), was officially launched by Alan Milburn M.P. The document was signed by Sandra Pollard, Chairman of the PCT, Alan Coultas, Chairman of the Council for Voluntary Service and myself. Over 60 representatives from the local and voluntary sector attended the event. The purpose of the document is to provide an agreed, structured and measurable framework to guide how the two public sector organisations will work together for the benefit of the local community and to improve the delivery of services to everyone, building on the good working relationships that already exist.

- (f) **Harrowgate Hill Primary School** – I attended the official start on site of the new Harrowgate Hill Primary School. The school, which is part of the Education Village Private Finance Initiative, will provide first class facilities and continuity in education for children from the age of three to the age of eleven, with the nursery age children being taught in a purpose built area.

- (g) **Anti Social Behaviour Orders** – I have promoted the use of the Council’s powers in dealing with anti social behaviour and this is a process which I will continue to be involved with in the future.

Councillor John Williams, Leader