
HERS SCHEME REVIEW GROUP

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor David Lyonette,
Regeneration and Planning Portfolio**

Responsible Director – Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

1. To report the Environment Scrutiny Committee's recommendations in relation to this Council's Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) and Darlington Partnership Conservation Schemes within Northgate.

Information and Analysis

2. At the meeting of Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd June, 2006, it was reported that the Cabinet Member with Regeneration and Planning portfolio had requested Environment Scrutiny Committee to undertake a review of the HERS Scheme to establish what effect the Scheme had had on Northgate Conservation Area, whether it represented value for money and if a notable difference had been made to the area and to make recommendations to Cabinet thereon
3. The detailed findings of the Group are outlined in the attached report (**Appendix 1**).
4. The Environment Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20th March, 2007, accepted and endorsed the recommendations of the Review Group and agreed to forward the report and action plan to Cabinet for consideration.

Director of Development and Environment's Comments

5. The **attached** report is welcomed and provides a useful summary of progress made along Northgate to improve the appearance of the important historic route within Darlington. The impact of the two Heritage Grant schemes has necessarily been limited by the resources available and by the willingness/ability of property owners to access the funds. Nevertheless, the various projects have not only resulted in physical improvements to a number of properties, both commercial and residential, but represent a clear commitment on behalf of the Council, English Heritage and local people to see this area of town improve generally.
6. Clearly, as the report concludes, there is still a lot of work to be done in this area, not only related to Conservation. There may be an opportunity in the future to bid for alternative

resources as they become available, and officers will endeavour to pursue such opportunities where appropriate. Similarly, the creation of a local authority-run scheme, building on the success of HERS and PCSA, highlighted in the Report Recommendation can be considered, although it would depend on Council budget priorities.

Outcome of Consultation

7. In undertaking this Review, the Group consulted various Darlington Borough Council staff and undertook Internet research of other Local Authorities and their comments and findings were taken into consideration when compiling the final report.

Legal Implications

8. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

9. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

10. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

Decision Deadline

11. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) The recommendations of the Environment Scrutiny Committee, be approved.
 - (b) The comments of Director of Development and Environment be endorsed.

Reasons

13. The recommendations are supported to enable the views of Cabinet to be sought and referred back to the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Services

Background Papers

There were no background papers used other than those referred to in the report.

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