
OVERVIEW OF CONSUMER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under my Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio:

- (a) **Options for Local Authority Statutory Performance Standards on Recycling and Composting in 2007/08: Response to Consultation Paper** – We gave our response to the Government’s consultation paper on statutory performance standards on recycling and composting in 2007/08 and agreed to support the Government’s preferred option to equal the level of target set for 2005/06, except for those with a target of 18 per cent in 2005/06 which would be required to raise their standard to 20 per cent.

I can also report that Darlington has already set its own local target for 2007/08 – 22% which is in excess of the Government’s preferred option.

- (b) **Redevelopment of the household waste recycling site** – this is now complete and was reopened in early December 2005. The site is now much improved: being larger, able to accommodate more users and most importantly providing for the recycling of a wide range of materials including cardboard, household batteries and all plastic bottles. The refurbished site will play a significant part in enabling Darlington to achieve the 2007/08 recycling target.

In preparation for developing a new waste management contract, training was delivered to Members in January on the potential technologies available for the treatment of municipal waste.

- (c) **Bogus Callers** - The Council’s Trading Standards are targeting bogus doorstep sellers as latest figures show the area has the highest percentage of distraction burglaries in the county and the new Council campaign ‘Beware of the Bogeyman’ is aimed at carers of the elderly and provides training so they can pass on information and advice to the most vulnerable. We are one of the first authorities to employ this unique and innovative strategy to combat attacks on the older members of the community.

- (d) **Safer Food Better Business** – in partnership with the other four Tees Valley Authorities the Council has won a bid to the Food Standards Agency to design and deliver Safer Food Better Business, a coaching and educational initiative aimed at catering establishments to enable them to meet new food hygiene regulations. The funding will pay for the work of specialist trainers and consultants who will work throughout the Tees Valley area supporting selected caterers through the process of change. Letters have been sent to caterers explaining the scheme and inviting them to attend introduction workshops starting in February. Over 200 Darlington caterers could directly benefit.

2. I have attended the following meetings in respect of my Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio:
- (a) Darlington Smoke Free Partnership – 24th November, 2005 and 26th January, 2006.
 - (b) PPCP scrutiny meeting – 6th December, 2005.
 - (c) Darlington Environmental Forum – 12th December, 2005.
 - (d) Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority – 15th December, 2005.
 - (e) Citizenship Ceremony – 7th December, 2005.
 - (f) Community Partnerships Steering Group – 3rd January, 2006.
 - (g) Training on Waste Disposal – 11th January, 2006.
 - (h) North East Fire Authority Regional Management Board – 20th January, 2006.
 - (i) Briefing Meetings with various Directors and Assistant Directors.

Councillor Steve Harker
Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio