

---

**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) **Variation to Hackney Carriage Fares** – We considered, at the request of the Taxi Trade, an increase in the hackney carriage fare tariff and agreed a revised fare tariff. Cabinet agreed this fare increase as there has been no fare increase since November 2000 and since that date the cost of fuel, insurance and associated costs have risen. The impact on the increase to the public has been balanced with the need for the taxi trade to be able to make a living and to continue to both purchase new vehicle and maintain the current fleet.
  - (b) **Review of Increase in Fees Relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing** – Cabinet reviewed the increase in fees relating to hackney carriage and private hire licensing following the receipt of a number of objections from members of the taxi trade and following careful consideration resolved to increase the fees as outlined in the report to Cabinet on 3rd February, 2005.
  - (c) **Food Standards Agency Audit** – The Food Standards Agency (FSA) Enforcement Division carried out an audit in October, 2004 and Cabinet received a report on the results of their findings and agreed an improvement plan which will be monitored by the Public Protection and Community Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.
  - (d) **Litter Initiative** – I attended the launch of the 100-Day Clean Up and we are encouraging the public to report ‘Grot Spots’ and are targeting these areas for a swift response.
  - (e) **Cemeteries – Memorial Safety** – Inspection work to ensure the safety and stability of memorials continues. East Cemetery and Closed Churchyards complete and North Cemetery almost complete.
  - (f) **Council’s Responsible Drinking Code of Practice** – I attended the launch and presented awards to 30 businesses who have agreed to adopt the Code.
  - (g) **Capacity Building Programme** - The Council have obtained a £4k grant from ODPM/LGA Capacity Building Programme to fund practical placement training in environmental health.
  - (h) **Smoke Free Darlington** - I attended the second meeting of the Smoke Free Darlington, with Councillor Swift and have agreed to Chair the group to implement a Local Tobacco Control Strategy in Darlington as well as assisting the implementation of the Regional Strategy. On 27th June, 2005 all bars in Council premises became

smoke free and Clean Air Awards were presented to the Civic Theatre, the Arts Centre, Stressholme Golf Club and the Dolphin Centre.

- (i) **The Big Recycle Roadshow** – was in the Market Place on 27th June, promoting recycling and composting and selling composters at a bargain rate.
  - (j) **Crematoria** – following the installation of a list and re-design of the public toilets, the Crematorium is now fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.
2. I have attended the following meetings in respect of my Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio:
- (a) Darlington Environmental Forum – where the items discussed were Litter Initiative, Fairtrade Town Initiative, Recent Developments with Regard to Real Nappies and Recycling Developments.
  - (b) Briefing meetings with Directors and Assistant Directors.

**Councillor Steve Harker**  
**Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio**