
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) **Waste Management**

- (i) **Environmental Options Assessment** – consultants have recently completed Environmental Options Assessment for Municipal Waste in Darlington. Cabinet has received this report. The report looks at a number of scenarios making a detailed assessment of each; whilst the Council may choose a scenario not in the assessment, the report will be one of the inputs that will assist the Council in reaching a decision about the future of Waste Disposal in Darlington.
 - (ii) **Urban Mines Study into Tees Valley Joint Working on Waste Services Delivery** – This Tees Valley wide study is examining how waste related services can be delivered on a regional or joint basis to improve efficiencies. The study is part funded by the North East Centre of Excellence.
 - (iii) **Waste Technologies** – Councillor visits were arranged to see alternative technologies in the region for dealing with waste. Members toured SITA's energy from waste incineration plant at Billingham, the digester plant at Thornley operated by Premier Waste Management Ltd. and some of the various operations undertaken by Wade's, Darlington. The visit was informative, giving a practical insight into some of the possible options.
 - (iv) **Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme** – The Council has recently secured sufficient landfill permits at a favourable price to ensure compliance with targets set under the Waste Emissions Trading Act 2003 until the end of 2007/08.
- (b) **Markets Study** – This study being carried out by external consultants and examining the long-term future of the covered and open markets is progressing. The Consultants have met with a range of interested parties and are continuing to gather information to enable them to produce a report on options for progress.
- (c) **Consumer Direct** – This initiative went operational for Darlington in March and the formal launch took place this month on the 23rd.
- (d) **Review of Premises Licences** – The Licensing Act Committee 2003 has agreed a procedure for the review of premises licences, and I can report that the Committee have successfully undertaken the first review.

- (e) **Launch of new “Recycle for Darlington” web pages** – On 28th April, I formally launched the Council’s new pages on our website. The new pages contain a range of information on recycling and waste collections. There is also a page that residents can use to check their collection day for domestic refuse.
 - (f) **Register Office** – In preparation for the move of the Register Office from Central House to the refurbished Dolphin Centre at the end of this year we have launched a competition for residents to have the opportunity to name the new Ceremony Hall. The prize for the best entry will be a ceremony and reception for the winner, or relative or friend donated by the Council, with Nattrass donating flower displays and Wedding Day fashion donating a £500 voucher.
2. I have attended the following meetings in respect of my Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio:
- (a) Smoke Free Darlington – 30th March and 25th May, 2006.
 - (b) PPCP scrutiny meeting – 4th April, 2006.
 - (c) Chaired the Public Protection Forum on 6th April, 2006.
 - (d) Procurement of Waste Services – Site Visits – 7th April, 2006.
 - (e) Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Meeting – 18th May, 2006.
 - (f) Briefing meetings with various Directors and Assistant Directors.

Councillor Steve Harker
Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio