
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** – We gave approval to the procurement process for developing the Council’s waste management service. This aims to both achieve an affordable solution to increasing costs of waste treatment and disposal, and to improve our position within the national performance framework for waste management. It was agreed that a new contract (or contracts) will run from 2009 to 2020. It will focus on technologies other than landfill, and will be the next stage in the Council’s strategy to meet statutory recycling and landfill diversion targets. The process was given support at a joint meeting of Resources and Public Protection and Community Partnerships Scrutiny Committees prior to Cabinet considering the paper.
 - (b) **Climate Change Strategy** – We endorsed the Climate Change Strategy, which has been drafted by the Local Strategic Partnership. It sets out a ‘vision’ for Darlington and objectives designed to work towards that vision.
 - (c) **Consultations on Regulations to Underage Sale of Tobacco and Smoke Free Premises and Vehicles** – We considered responses to two national consultations issued by the Department of Health on smoking related issues and agreed to endorse the response agreed by the Joint Special Meeting of the Social Affairs and Health and Public Protection and Community Partnerships Scrutiny Committees as the formal response to the Department of Health.
 - (d) **Variation to Hackney Carriage Fares** – An application to revise the tariffs levied in respect of Hackney carriage fares was considered. Cabinet recommended an increased tariff as no increases have been made since July 2005 and since that date the cost of fuel, insurance and associated costs have arisen. It was felt that the increase to the fares is an appropriate balance between the interests of the public and the taxi trade. There will now be a period of formal statutory consultation. If no objections are received then the new tariff will be introduced from 9th October, 2006, otherwise Cabinet will need to consider the new objections.
 - (e) **Market Locations** – In addition to the Farmers market, and the new Craft market, the regular open markets are now trading from Bondgate as well as the Market Place to allow traders to take advantage of the newly completed sections of the Pedestrian Heart. The markets have been using the Council gazebo stalls. Early indications are that the location is beneficial to trade.
 - (f) **Fair Trade** – The Council’s application for Fair Trade Town status has been submitted to the Fairtrade Foundation and the outcome is awaited. This application is the

culmination of a great deal of work carried out to demonstrate that Darlington meets the goals of the Fairtrade Foundation. It should be recognised that this is the work of the Fairtrade steering group that has enabled the Council to make the application.

2. I have attended the following meetings in respect of my Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio:
 - (a) Darlington Transport Forum meeting 24th July, 2006.
 - (b) Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Meeting 25th July, 4th August, 23rd August, 15th September and 21st September.
 - (c) Public Protection and Community Partnerships Scrutiny Meeting 15th August, 2006.
 - (d) Joint Meeting of Social Affairs and Health and Public Protection and Community Partnerships Scrutiny Committees 22nd August, 2006.
 - (e) Joint Meeting of Resources and Public Protection and Community Partnerships Scrutiny meeting on 24th August, 2006.
 - (f) Community Partnerships Forum 14th September, 2006
 - (g) Citizenship Ceremony 18th September, 2006.
 - (h) Briefing meetings with various Directors and Assistant Directors.

Councillor Steve Harker
Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio