
OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under my Resources Portfolio:
 - (a) **Refurbishment of Parks** – To enable the Council to contribute towards the delivery of the Local Area Agreement funded projects, £50,000 has been released from the capital programme to undertake the refurbishment of parks. Members may recall that, in September 2006, funding of £1,360,000 of capital grant funds was released from the Local Area Agreement to progress schemes within Block 5 (3), Increasing Capacity Through Street Scene and the release of this funding will support those schemes.
 - (b) **Prudential Indicators Update and Treasury Management Half-yearly Review** – We have received an update of Prudential Indicators and a half-yearly review of the Council's Treasury Management borrowing and investment activities. The Council's return on investments has been reasonable, exceeding one of the targets set of matching external comparators for the first six months of the current financial year. Based on the first six months of 2007/08, the Council's borrowing and investments is forecast to achieve an improvement of £0.938 million on the 2007/08 approved budget.
 - (c) **Disability Discrimination Act and Fire Regulatory Reform Compliance** – Funding has been released from the Capital Medium-Term Financial Plan to enable works key to Council-occupied building to ensure compliance with Disability Discrimination Act and Regulatory Reform Compliance and to meet the Council's BVPI target.
 - (d) **Morton Palms Business Park** – To facilitate further development at Morton Palms, we have considered expressions of interest for the development of a hotel on the Council's retained land at Morton Palms Business Park and have agreed to its proposed disposal. The site will now be marketed accordingly.
 - (e) **Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)** – Cabinet agreed to a one-off contribution of funding to CAB to prevent the trustees from having to radically reduce the CAB's provision of services. This follows an exceptionally challenging year for the organisation which is currently seeking to develop a sustainable medium term business plan. Council Officers have been assisting with the creation of the business plan.
 - (f) **Darlington and Stockton Partnership** – Since approval by Council, considerable progress has been made in establishing the Partnership. The appointment process, which is being managed jointly between Stockton, Darlington and the Partnership Manager, commenced in December and should be finished in February. The go live date for the Partnership is expected to be early in the new financial year but the exact date(s) are not yet finalized. There has been considerable interest from other

organisations who wish to find out more about this innovative new partnership, including the Society of Metropolitan Treasures, the North East Centre of Excellence and the Tyne and Wear Chief Executive's Group.

2. I have attended the following meetings in respect of my Resource Management Portfolio:
 - (a) various briefings with Directors and Assistant Directors
 - (b) various Tender Panels and Tender Openings
 - (c) shortlisting meeting for two AD posts – 12th December
 - (d) meeting with LSP Themed Group Chairs and Enquiry Group Chairs –14th December
 - (e) Joint Consultative Committee – 15th January
 - (f) interview for AD Planning, Regeneration and Transport – 17th January
 - (g) interview for AD Highways and Engineering – 22nd January
 - (h) Resources Scrutiny – 24th January, 29th January
 - (i) Darlington Assembly – 31st January

Councillor Stephen Harker
Cabinet Member with Resources Portfolio