
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) **Street Scene** – This is a new initiative for delivering environmental services such as refuse and recycling, street cleaning and ground maintenance, which was launched on 3 July 2006. These services will now be delivered on an area-based approach with a dedicated team who are multi-skilled working across the range of services. The Team Leader will be the focal point for the team, the community and Members to ensure that services are delivered to the required standard.
 - (b) **Food Safety Week**
The Council’s Environmental Health service supported Food Safety Week in June by promoting barbecue safety. A stall was used at the Farmers Market on 16 June with assistance from the Darlington College of Technology. Hot food samples were offered together with advice and literature on the food safety aspects of barbecue cooking.
 - (c) **Doorstep Crime Action Pack**
This action pack was launched in June in the Cornmill Centre. The pack is being distributed by Trading Standards, Neighbourhood Watch, Age Concern, Darlington Library, Contact Centre and CAB. The pack provides advice on simple precautions that residents can make to prevent doorstep crime.
 - (d) **National Poop Scoop Week**
The Council’s Dog Warden service contributed to this annual national event by providing advice, leaflets and poop scoop bags to dog walkers in the week commencing 19 June, with particular focus on South Park.
 - (e) **Markets**
The Markets study has progressed well and included in July’s Town Crier a questionnaire aimed at members of the public. A draft final report including recommendations is expected imminently.

I can also report that the newly completed section of the Pedestrian Heart in Bondgate has been used for the Farmers Market. In addition the Council used the opportunity to use the newly purchased stalls. The reaction from stallholders and shoppers alike has been very positive – both in terms of its location and the stalls.

Further, a trial Craft Market is being undertaken. The intention is to bring in stalls with goods not currently sold in the outside or indoor markets; it has been timetabled to take place on a day other than the existing outdoor market and Farmers market. Its

success will be determined by the level of interest from shoppers, and the number of stallholders taking part.

(f) **Recycling**

The Council took part in a National Campaign called the 'Big Recycle'. Promoted at the time of the World Cup – major sporting events are known to result in an increase in household rubbish created. In Darlington the campaign was promoted in the Market Square on 5th June. Information was available about recycling, and related issues such as home composting, Real Nappy Campaign.

I can also report that the Household Waste Recycling Centre continues to be successful. Part of the rationale for its refurbishment was to increase the proportion of waste that is recycled. The percentage recycled continues to show improvement on previous years. In particular the figure for last month was 67%.

2. I have attended the following meetings in respect of my Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio:

- (a) Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Meeting – 15th June, 29th June
- (b) Chaired the Darlington Environmental Forum - 19th June
- (c) Citizenship Ceremony – 21st June, 6th July
- (d) Audit Committee – 12th July
- (e) Chaired the Public Protection Forum – 13th July
- (f) Visit to see progress on new Register Office – 19th July
- (g) Briefing meetings with various Directors and Assistant Directors.

Councillor Steve Harker
Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio