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**OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the main areas of work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee included :-
  - (a) Work Programme 2003/04 – We have, again, given detailed consideration to the work programme of Environment Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2003/04. We are continually updating the Work Programme of this Scrutiny Committee and examining Cabinet’s Forward Plan for particular areas of interest and concern. We are also constantly examining areas for undertaking Task and Finish Review Groups together with this Committee’s next major Review. However, the Conservation Review Group is not scheduled to report its final findings until September 2004.
  - (b) Darlington Environmental Forum – As a member of the Darlington Environmental Forum I attended a meeting on 15th March and felt that the Members of Environment Scrutiny would be interested to meet Paula Jamieson, newly appointed Sustainable Development Manager. Paula was invited to Environment Scrutiny to give us an outline as to the progress made so far in achieving sustainable development in Darlington.
  - (c) Darlington Economic Regeneration Strategy – Environment Scrutiny Committee were advised of the process undertaken to develop an Economic Regeneration Strategy for Darlington to cover the period 2004/05 to 2008/09 upon which comments were requested. We were advised that the current Strategy, developed in 1999, had guided economic activity in Darlington and enabled a considerable amount of external funding to be levied into the Borough. The Strategy for 2004/05 to 2008/09 had been developed in line with other key sub-regional and regional strategies and included the Regional Economic Strategy and the Tees Valley Vision that would reflect the contribution made to them by the Darlington Economy.
  - (d) Development Control Statistics for July to September 2003 – As part of Environment Scrutiny’s role to consider cross-functional issues relating to planning we gave consideration to the planning applications and decisions statistics for the period July to September 2003 which outlined the growing number of planning applications received by this authority – 25 per cent more than in

2002 and 43 per cent more than in 2001.

- (e) Conservation Review Group – The Review Group has been quite active since I reported to you – A meeting was held on 5th March, 2004 at which the Group consolidated the work that had been undertaken so far in order to identify the issues to mark the final outcome. Also, on 15th April, we were treated to a wonderful presentation by Mr. George Flynn, local historian, in which he gave his views on conservation covering the area from the traffic lights at Albert Road through to the Town Centre.
- (f) Town Centre Car Parking Proposals - We held a special joint meeting with Resources Scrutiny Committee on 13th May to discuss the proposals for Town Centre Car Parking. The meeting was well attended and our views are to be forwarded to Cabinet.

Councillor Stella Robson  
Chair of Environment Scrutiny Committee