
LEADER'S OVERVIEW

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that I have undertaken as Leader :-
 - (a) **Consultation Methods Task and Finish Review Group** – Cabinet received a report from the Review Group established to investigate both the internal and external communications of the Council. It was pleasing to note that the Review Group found that they were satisfied with the external consultation undertaken by the Council. In respect of internal communication, the Review Group made a number of recommendations which were supported and approved by Cabinet.
 - (b) **Representation on Other Bodies 2004/05** – The annual appointments to Outside Bodies were made by Cabinet at its meeting held on 8th June, 2004. The appointments to the Outside Bodies reflected the nominations received from the political groups.
 - (c) **Town Centre Board** – The Board met in Mid May and July 2004. At both of these meetings the main agenda item and discussion concerned the Darlington Town Centre Business Plan for 2004 – 2007 and the adjoining annual Action Plan. At its May meeting, the Board received the final report of the Darlington Retail Study 2004 and considered the main conclusion and recommendations of the study. The Board also considered proposals for the small physical improvement scheme at Bondgate, received an update on ways of engaging with the private sector and discussed the format and priorities for the Town Centre Forum meeting. At its July meeting, the Town Centre Board were given feedback on the consultation findings for the Business Plan and approved the final format and priorities for the Plan. The Board also considered proposals for the Winter Programme of Events for 2004 and had an in-depth discussion on the French speciality market, making suggestions for the format, location and publicity campaign for the next two markets. An update on the Pedestrian Heart Scheme was also given at the July Board meeting and members examined the materials and visuals that were to be used within the Public Consultation Exhibition.
 - (d) **Town Centre Forum** – A revised group of the Town Centre Forum held a successful inaugural meeting in its new format in May, and successfully attracted over 35 representatives from the private sector. The Forum accepted an explanation of the roles of the Town Centre Forum and Town Centre Board. The Forum also received a presentation on the Town Centre Business Plan, its format, priorities and vision, and reference was made to the Darlington Retail Study 2004 for information purposes.

Consultation workshop style discussions took place, based on the presentation information, and the feedback was taken to the July meeting of the Town Centre Board for consideration and action in relation to the Town Centre Business Plan.

Councillor John Williams, Leader