
OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Environment Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
 - (a) **Darlington Local Development Framework Core Strategy Issues and Options – Preliminary Community and Stakeholder Consultation** – A special meeting of Environment Scrutiny Committee was held which sought Members’ views on the response to preliminary consultation with the community and key stakeholders as part of the preparation of preferred options for the core strategy of the new Local Development Framework.
 - (b) **Work Programme 2005/06** – We have given consideration to the Work Programme of this Committee for the Municipal Year 2005/06 and in doing so examined Cabinet’s Forward Plan for particular areas of interest and concern. We continually add to our Work Programme and monitor ongoing items.
 - (c) **Annual Tour of Countryside Wild Spaces** –During the month of July the Committee undertook a tour of Countryside Wild Spaces as part of this Committee’s remit. We found the visits informative and interesting with a wide range of varying aspects to each site. Firthmoor Grasslands is in the process of being converted into a state of the art wildlife reserve and fishing facility, however, the area has been subject to vandalism which has necessitated the need for CCTV and the appointment of a Ranger. Another site visited was Brinkburn Pond which was declared a Local Nature Reserve in 2003. The Environment Agency funded the provision of viewing platforms designed to provide the public with areas to fish the pond to encourage non-use of the eastern Bank which is to be reserved for breeding birds. Finally, we visited the large amenity green surrounding Cocker Beck which has been the cause of local resident for some years. Several issues are raised and the Countryside Service are currently looking at varying options to improve the facility.
 - (d) **Policy Review – Review of Progress on Policy Review Items** –
 - (i) **Gulley Cleaning Task and Finish Review Group** –The Group has now completed its investigations and the Final Report was presented to the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 1st September, 2005 when the recommendations of the Review Group were approved by the Scrutiny Committee. These recommendations will be forwarded to the relevant Director for their action.
 - (ii) **Neglected Land Review Group** – We continue to make progress on the Neglected Land Review Group and after contacting Members of the Council have a varied list of sites to investigate. We hope to scale down the list to a few

sites of varying sizes, which have different issues and concentrate our investigations on those sites.

**The Mayor, Councillor Stella Robson
Chair of Environment Scrutiny Committee**