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**OVERVIEW OF LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that have been undertaken under the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee:-
  - (a) **Children's Services Performance** – The Committee considered performance across Children's Services and, in particular, the results of an Annual Performance Assessment, which was required to be submitted to the Department for Education and Skills. The Committee was pleased to note the steps which are being taken to address areas requiring improvement as highlighted by this Assessment. These proposals are contained in a Consultation Document entitled "Proposal for Single Conversation in Secondary Schools and Proposals for an Education Improvement Partnership in Darlington". The Committee has been invited to actively participate in the development and monitoring of improvements plans for schools in the Borough.
  - (b) **Extended Schools** – The Committee enjoyed a facilitated discussion with the Schools Development Co-ordinator, Kate Hinchcliffe, and also considered a report on work which has been undertaken to develop the extended schools agenda in Darlington-- a national initiative by Government to promote schools working together as a network with other providers to provide wider pupil, family and community services and facilities on their premises, to raise standards of pupil motivation, aspiration achievement and behaviour and to contribute to a wider range of other government targets, including childcare, children's services, community cohesion, neighbourhood renewal, adult learning, health inequalities and crime reduction. The Government has made some money available to Darlington to support schools to develop a sustainable model of extended schools and overcome barriers they may face that may prevent them from developing extended services. It was suggested that a Task and Finish Group of Members of the Committee could be established to add value to work in developing the extended schools initiative.
  - (c) **Education Village** – An interesting and informative presentation was enjoyed by the Committee which was given by the Chief Executive of the Education Village, Dame Della Smith, on the rationale behind its development; how it would work; the opportunities and benefits it would offer for the education of pupils, including those with special educational needs; and the challenges for the management of the Village. In addition on the 8th July, 2005 Members of the Committee enjoyed a tour of the Village.
  - (d) **New Secondary School To Be Built in Darlington** – At a Special Meeting of the Committee held on 20th June, 2005, the Director of Children's

Services, Margaret Asquith, gave a presentation on proposals for the building of a new secondary school in Darlington. Although this Authority had not received an allocation of funding under the Capital Investment Programme 'Building Schools for the Future', a sum of £20m had been allocated to build one new secondary school by 2011 and the capital received had to link a new building to raising standards. It is, therefore, proposed to amalgamate Hurworth and Eastbourne Comprehensive Schools and build a new school on a new site, which would have new resources, improved facilities, a wider curriculum and a larger school to accommodate 1200 pupils. These proposals are in their infancy, but once the date for availability of funding is known formal consultation will commence and the Committee has been invited to become involved in that consultation.

- (e) **Councillor Roderick Burt** – I was deeply saddened when I heard of the death of Councillor Roderick Burt, an active, vibrant member of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee. Rod served on Lifelong Learning from 1999 until his death. He was Chair of the Committee from May 2000 until May 2003. Rod had an abiding interest in and passion for education and improving the life chances of pupils in Darlington. He was a strong member of the Review Group examining Primary Education, established by our Committee during the last Municipal Year. His wit, integrity and intelligence will be missed by all.

**Councillor Cyndi Hughes**  
**Chair of Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee**