
OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
 - (a) **Work Programme 2007/08** – We have given consideration to the Work Programme of this Committee for the Municipal Year 2007/08 and in doing so examined Cabinet’s Forward Plan for particular areas of interest and concern. We will continually add to our Work Programme and monitor ongoing items.
 - (b) **Climate Change** – On 17th August, 2007 Scrutiny held a special meeting to determine progress being made in Climate Change awareness throughout the Borough and investigated how we as a Council could make a difference. We were also advised of how other Local Authorities were proposing to tackle some of the issues of climate change.
 - (c) **Transport and Climate Change** – We received a report which advised of the impact of transport on carbon emissions and on policy measures that were available to reduce the impact of transport on human induced climate change. A package of measures will be necessary to affect significant long term reductions in transport related carbon emissions, though short term reductions achieved through better use of existing technology and large scale behaviour change programmes would significantly improve the long terms impacts of human induced climate change.
 - (d) **Leading Edge Energy Efficiency Project** – We received an update on the Leading Edge Efficiency Project and were advised that North East Energy Savings Trust are to undertake a baselining exercise free of charge to establish the current position across all Council departments with a view to determine maturity of plans to tackle climate change which will result in a series of recommendations for action to be incorporated within the Climate Change Action Plan.
 - (e) **Financial Incentives to Business Review Group** – The former Environment Scrutiny Committee, on 22nd November, 2006, agreed to receive progress reports on the Action Plan of the Financial Incentives to Business Review Group. I am pleased to report that the Action Plan is progressing very well and the work of the Business Support Team is continuing to encourage Regeneration within the Borough.

- (f) **Grass Verges Review Group** - The former Environment Scrutiny Committee, on 1st February, 2007, agreed to receive progress reports on the Action Plan of the Grass Verges Review Group. I am pleased to report that 13 schemes of verge hardening have been completed as part of the 'Lets Get Cracking Campaign' at a cost of approximately £400,000. Further schemes will be given consideration when finance becomes available through the existing highway maintenance budgets. I am also pleased to report that a Training Session on the legalities of Grass Verges has been arranged for 3rd October, 2007.

Councillor Stella Robson
Chair of Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee