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**OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Environment Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
  - (a) **Work Programme 2006/07** – We have given consideration to the Work Programme of this Committee for the Municipal Year 2006/07 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.
  - (b) **Darlington Planning Forum** - To enable Environment Scrutiny Committee to fulfil its monitoring role of the Development Control Best Value Review we received the Minutes of the meeting of the Darlington Planning Forum held on 2nd November. As Chair of Environment Scrutiny I also attended the meeting and was encouraged by the comments received from the Forum Members.
  - (c) **Street Scene** - We received an overview of Street Scene since its introduction in July, 2006 which highlighted the design objectives of street scene which was primarily to develop an innovative, responsive and joined up approach to Street Scene Services by ultimately improving the quality of life in Darlington for residents, and empowering local communities to also take responsibility for the quality of their environment. Although some ‘teething problems’ had been experienced we were encouraged by the presentation and the commitment shown by employees to make Street Scene work.
  - (d) **South Park** – We received an encouraging report on activities within the South Park since completion of its refurbishment in mid 2006 which had proved to be a success and an extremely popular park for residents and tourists. The programme of events during summer months is to be enhanced and developed for future years, staffing levels will be up to full complement this month and, although unsuccessful this year, entry into next years Green Flag competition is likely.
  - (e) **Climate Change** - We gave consideration to a report on the current status of the Darlington Climate Change Strategy and the response to climate change with emphasis on the wider action being taken within the Tees Valley to develop a Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy to which this Council and the Darlington Partnership are giving their full support.

- (f) **Darlington Town Centre – Review of Pedestrian Guardrailing on the Ring Road –**  
We were provided with details of the work undertaken to date on this project, which included the risk assessment report, outcome of further research into guardrail removal and a proposed action plan. Scrutiny have put forward some recommendations for Cabinet and look forward to receiving their comments.
  
- (g) **Policy Review – Swimming Safety and Early Years Classes –** Following a request from a Member we undertook a Task and Finish to investigate the Swimming Safety and Early Years Classes undertaken at the Dolphin Centre. We observed swimming lesson provision and met with the Pool Manager who answered our queries and questions in relation to the arrangement for swimming provision. Our review concluded that swimming provision was adequate for young children and no further action is to be taken.
  
- (h) **Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document –** A joint meeting was held with Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee at which we considered the consultations carried out on the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Document, which is being prepared to give more detail to and to expand on Policies H9 and H10 on affordable housing that are set out in the adopted Borough Local Plan.

**Councillor Stella Robson**  
**Chair of Environment Scrutiny Committee**