
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) **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. We also agreed that our major Review for 2007/08 would be on Climate Change.
 - (b) **Annual Tour of Darlington’s Countryside Sites** – We received a report highlighting the issues raised during the annual tour of Darlington’s Countryside Sites undertaken on 19th April, 2007. The tour gives Members an opportunity to discuss a wide range of the issues that confront the Council when dealing with the green infrastructure of the Borough as well as in some instances, matters affecting the wider countryside. A date in September will also be arranged to visit Barmpton Quarry in conjunction with school visits.
 - (c) **Final Draft of Darlington’s Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)** – The production of the Darlington ROWIP is a statutory requirement on all Highway Authorities and represents the first opportunity that Darlington has had to fully review the value of its Rights of Way network, how it serves the public, how people feel about it, how it is used and the opportunities that exist for both monitor any major changes to provide higher quality countryside access for the public. It also provides the evidence needed to enable the council to access additional funding required to improve the rights of Way network.
 - (d) **Use of Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA’s)** – Following a request by Members, we were advised of the varying levels of use and pricing policies of the Borough’s five Multi Use Games Areas as provided through funding from the Big Lottery Fund Physical Education and School Sport Project. Information was given on the programme of activities called ‘MUGA madness’ undertaken during the Easter holidays where lots of multi-sport activities were delivered with the aim of involving parents and young people in activities together.
 - (e) **Climate Change Workshop** – The Environment Scrutiny Committee is taking the lead on a cost-cutting review of Climate Change, and as part of this review all Members were invited to attend a one-day event on 5th July 2007. Members heard from representatives from the Environment Agency and the Energy Savings Trust, and from

the Regional Climate Change Co-ordinator. It is hoped that all Scrutiny Committees will undertake a review relevant to their remits and feedback their findings at a meeting in October, for inclusion in an Action Plan on Climate Change for the Darlington and Tees Valley Climate Change Strategies.

- (f) **Responses of the Executive to Reports of the Scrutiny Committee** - We were extremely pleased to note the comments of the Executive in relation to our recently completed Grass Verges Review Group and will monitor the Action Plan throughout the Municipal Year.

- (g) **Responses of the Executive to Reports of the Scrutiny Committee – HERS Scheme Review Group** - Again, another very good review undertaken by Environment Scrutiny Committee, which was well received by the Executive. We will monitor the Action Plan throughout the Municipal Year.

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