
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) **Waste Management** – As Waste Management now falls within the remit of Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee we received an overview giving us the background to Waste Management and the work that was being undertaken with potential contractors as the current Waste Management Contract was due to expire on 5th April, 2009.
 - (b) **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.
 - (c) **Service Planning 2007/08** – We gave consideration to the Service Plans for 2007/08 under the responsibility of the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee, which included consultancy and development and regeneration. Committee is to receive quarterly reports on performance against the targets in the service plans which would identify any areas where targets were not being achieved in order for Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise performance if desired.
 - (d) **Service Plan Performance 2nd Quarter** – Following on from the above item we were provided with a summary of performance at the end of the second quarter of 2007/08 (1st April – 30th September 2007) which highlighted Performance Indicators (PI's) where targets were not being achieved and suggested services that Scrutiny may wish to scrutinise. We plan to tackle planning performance targets in the New Year.
 - (e) **Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor** – Mr. John Johnson, Projects Manager, attended Scrutiny Committee and gave a presentation to Committee on the progress to date of the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor works. We were advised that the project was in week 41 of the 69 week programme of works and it was still on schedule for completion for Summer 2008, with the next phase of major works due to commence at Haughton Road junction. The Committee looks forward to the expected report on the outcome of the work of the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor.
 - (f) **South Park Changing Facility/Adults Learning Disability Centre** – We were pleased to learn that this facility, located on the site of the old potting shed, within South Park would provide a changing facility for sports taking place on the showfield

as well as local history, cookery and daily living skills provision for 20 adults. The Committee acclaimed the project as a remarkable example of multi-use of a facility.

- (g) **Climate Change Action Plan** – Economy and Environment Scrutiny has identified, following meetings held on Waste, Planning and Transport, various actions for inclusion in the Darlington Climate Change Action Plan. We look forward to the Special Meeting to be held on 6th December, 2007, at which all Scrutiny Committees Chairs and Vice-Chairs have been invited, to put forward all action plan points. I am also pleased to advise that the Chairs of the Enquiry Groups of Darlington Partnership have also been invited to the meeting.
- (h) **Section 106 Agreements** – Following a Member request, we gave consideration to the role of Section 106 Agreements and were pleased to learn of the recent introduction of procedures for their systematic generation, recording and monitoring. We learnt that there are clear government guidelines as to what could be legitimately required and should be related to the proposed new development.
- (i) **Cocker Beck Improvements Update** – Scrutiny were extremely pleased to learn of the progress made to improve the Cocker Beck area by turning it into a site high in biodiversity, good for informal recreation and suitable as a safe route to school and sustainable travel. We were advised that a feasibility study had been commissioned to look at improvement of the water course by adding an increased supply of water from Baydale Beck to Cocker Beck, increasing the amount of wildflower meadow of the parkland, identification and maintenance of amenity, informal play and wildlife areas, creation of a suitable route to Branksome School and provision of informal recreation and cycling areas, all of which had been well received by the Community.

2. Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended the following meetings:-

- Various briefings with Officers.
- The Darlington Assembly Workshops on Sustainable Community Strategy Issues, which was very well organised stimulating some participation by 200 people.
- Darlington Environment Forum.
- Darlington Transport Forum.

Councillor Stella Robson
Chair of Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee