
OVERVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
 - (a) **Work Programme** – We continue to update and add to our Work Programme continuing to focus on the changes to the remit and discussed review topics for the Municipal Year 2007/08. We also examined Cabinet’s Forward Plan for particular areas of interest and concern to be included within our Work Programme and also further areas for undertaking Task and Finish Review Group.
 - (b) **Review /Task and Finish Groups** – The Task and Finish Review Group on Flooding continues and Members of the Group have visited the Northumbrian Water Limited’s Call Centre at Pity Me, Durham and continue to interview officers from Northumbrian Water Limited. It is the intention of the Group to meet also with our Planning Officers and to bring their final report to the next meeting of Scrutiny.
 - (c) **Climate Change** – At our recent Scrutiny Meeting we gave consideration to Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency as part of this Scrutiny’s work on Climate Change with a view to feeding in our findings to the Action Plan on Climate Change for Darlington and Tees Valley Climate Change Strategies. Alan Glew, the Housing Strategy and Renewal Manager gave a presentation to our Members on reducing gas emissions to in turn reduce the effects of global warming and ways to improve energy efficiency, by giving support and financial assistance for the installation of energy efficiency measures and more extensive use of “cleaner” and more sustainable forms of energy generation to the 40 per cent vulnerable low income families. All initiatives aimed at reducing the levels of CO2 emissions by 2008-12.

A report from this Scrutiny Committee, with our recommendations will be submitted to the special meeting of the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Meeting scheduled for 6th December, 2007.
 - (d) **Housing Presentation** – At the request of Members of this Scrutiny, Pauline Mitchell, Assistant Director of Housing gave a presentation on Housing to give us an overview of the services provided by Housing Services, following recent changes to our Scrutiny remit which now includes Housing. The presentation outlined the numerous service areas and discussion ensued on various aspects of Housing, with Members giving consideration to areas that we may wish to include within their work programme for future examination.

It was a very full and interesting presentation giving us a good insight into Housing Services and all Members are very keen to take this area on board.

- (e) **Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Performance** – We considered progress being made on the implementation of Darlington’s Crime, Disorder and Substance Misuse Strategy 2006/07 and performance targets national priorities for vehicle crime, violent crime, theft, criminal damage and burglary and, local priorities in relation to anti-social behaviour, tackling domestic abuse and to increase the number of people in drug treatment. An area where targets were not being met was with domestic abuse and we were advised that the Domestic Abuse Strategy was to be reviewed and we will be consulted on that review in the near future.
- (f) **Youth Justice Plan 2007/08** – We considered the Youth Offending Service Youth Justice Plan for 2007/08 and the Youth Offending Service Action Plan compiled therefrom.
- (g) **CCTV in Bus Shelters** – Members may recall that following completion of our Task and Finish Review into CCTV in Bus Shelters in 27th March, 2007, when we made our recommendations, we included a recommendation that the Resources Scrutiny Committee examine further the financial implications caused by the delays to this scheme. I can advise that Resources Scrutiny have examined this further but concluded that the financial aspects in relation to the grant and financial implications of installing CCTV cameras in bus shelters had been met and managed. However, our Members are still not satisfied with this and ask that this be looked at again to provide more detailed figures in relation to the delays and the ongoing technical problems.

Councillor Doris Jones
Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee