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**OVERVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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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 is now complete and the recommendations of the Group were approved by our Scrutiny Members at their meeting held on 17th December, 2007. These recommendations were forwarded to Cabinet for their approval and considered by Cabinet on 15th January, 2008.

Cabinet agreed that six of the nine recommendations be approved and actioned by the relevant departments, these being recommendations in relation to the Call Centre; servicing of the gully flusher out of hours; raising public awareness; joint working group meetings with Northumbrian Water Limited; including Northumbrian Water Limited as a statutory consultee under Planning Policy Statement 25 in relation to Development and Flood Risk; and this Scrutiny receive an update report in six months time to monitor progress of the recommendations.

With regard to the two recommendations which involved additional resources, it was agreed by Cabinet that resource levels would be kept under review and make temporary adjustments to resource level as necessary. With regard to the final recommendation regarding the option of CamScan being transferred to the gully flushing team, it was agreed that the Director of Community Services with report back to this Scrutiny Committee following further investigations.
  - (c) **CCTV in Bus Shelters** – I am pleased to note that, at our request, Resources Scrutiny Committee, at their meeting scheduled for 21st February, 2008, are going to continue their investigations into the financial implications of the delays and technical problems involved with the installation of CCTV in bus shelters.

- (d) **The Gambling Act 2005** – We received a report on the impact of the Gambling Act 2005 and the responsibility under the Act on this authority and the licences that have been granted in accordance with the Act to date.
- (e) **Best Value Performance Indicator 164 – Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice in Rented Housing** – We gave consideration to the number of Racial Incidents that have been reported to the Housing Division and whether these incidents have been upheld in accordance with Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 164).
- (f) **Street Scene** – We received a report, at our request, to enable our Members to review Street Scene since its implementation and changes to working practices in July, 2006.

Members of this Scrutiny gave consideration to the area based approach, team delivery and generic working; the financial efficiencies gained following the changes in service delivery; the difficulties that have been encountered by the Street Scene teams during the transition period; and future challenges that face Street Scene.

One of the main concerns of our Members was that the savings that had been initially made and the projected savings to be made had and will impact on service delivery but were assured by the Assistant Director of Environmental Services that this had not and will not be the case.

In conclusion, we do congratulate Street Scene on the effort that has been made in making it a success, but feel that there is still a lot of work to be done in facing the future challenges and we will continue to monitor Street Scene and the performance indicators.

**Councillor Doris Jones**  
**Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee**