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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 2004/05** – We have given consideration to the Work Programme of this Committee for the Municipal Year 2004/05 and in doing so examined Cabinet’s Forward Plan for particular areas of interest and concern. We are also constantly examining areas for undertaking Task and Finish Review Groups and it has been agreed that this Committee’s next major Review will be Tourism in Darlington. However the Conservation Review Group is not scheduled to report its findings to Cabinet until September so our work on Tourism will commence following completion of that Review.
  - (b) **Service Planning Monitoring – Performance Plus** – We received a presentation on Performance Plus, a new software package which was being implemented within the Authority which would enable better performance management to include reporting and the progress made in developing a user friendly system to analyse performance and linkages between objectives at all levels and performance indicators; Service Plans relevant to this Scrutiny Committee; and how in turn, this performance would be reflected in the Best Value Performance Plan and the achievement of the vision contained within the Community Strategy.
  - (c) **South Park Update** – On 17th June we had a site visit to the South Park where we met the new South Park Manager, Tansee Cartwright. We were advised of the many plans for the park and shown what had already been achieved. We found the visit very useful, the staff enthusiastic and friendly and look forward to further progress reports on the South Park renovation works.
  - (d) **Marketing Strategy** – We were given an overview of the business marketing activity of the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Service within 2003/04 together with plans for 2004/05 in which we were advised that the Council is working closely with Tees Valley Regeneration in order to promote Darlington as a business location with particular emphasis on the Haughton Road site which is a flagship project for the Company. Darlington Development Showcase, sponsored by the Council, Darlington Partnership and Tees Valley Regeneration aimed to promote and communicate the message that Darlington was well placed to attract new business and wider investment to both the Tees Valley and the North East.

- (e) **Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy** – We received an update on the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, which highlighted issues in relation to the Environment raised through the Community Appraisal consultation and covered transport, leisure and economic topics. The aim of the strategy is to ensure local people and organisations work together to narrow the gap between the 11 most deprived Wards in Darlington and the rest of England.
- (f) **Review of Progress on Policy Review Items**
- (i) **Conservation Review Group** – The Review Group continues to gather pace and recently undertook visits to the neighbouring authorities of Richmond and Saltburn in order to compare and contrast the way that conservation is dealt with in two neighbouring authorities and also to consider what specific issues are faced by those authorities and how those issues are dealt with. A meeting has been arranged to enable us to commence pulling together our findings and formulate an Action Plan for the Final Report for consideration by Cabinet.
- (ii) **Street Lighting** – We were advised of the number of White Light Conversions that had been undertaken within the Borough together with the associated annual saving per annum per lamp and the anticipated timescale for completion of White Light Conversion Street Lighting for the whole of the Borough.
- (iii) **Street Furniture Inspection – Denes Area** – A street furniture inspection of the Denes area was undertaken on 17th May where several areas of concern were highlighted. These matters, mainly of a maintenance or upkeep matter have since been resolved.

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