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**OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under my Efficiency and Resources Portfolio :-
  - (a) **Accommodation Review** – An extensive review of the office accommodation which Council staff and services currently occupy has been undertaken, with a view to reducing operating costs and its overall standard and suitability. In order to achieve longer-term savings from the work which has been undertaken, we have agreed to release funding of £0.800 million from the 2009/10 capital medium-term financial plan to enable physical works and moves to be undertaken.

The work which has been done is part of a longer-term plan to develop an Office Accommodation Strategy which will lead to more savings.
  - (b) **Updated Annual Procurement Plan** – In accordance with Contract Procedure Rules, Cabinet are required to approve the designation of contracts as strategic and non-strategic and the Annual Procurement Plan was agreed at the Cabinet meeting on the 28 April, 2009. Since that date, a number of additional contracts which were not included on the Annual Procurement Plan are to be tendered and, in light of that, we have considered an updated Plan and determined, again, in accordance with the criteria, which of those contracts shall be delegated to Officers and which are deemed to be strategic.
  - (c) **Capital Programme Monitoring April to August 2009** - We have considered the current position of the Capital Programme. The current projected outturn of the 2009/10 Capital Programme is £154.9 million against an approved programme of £154.8 million. The programme has delivered a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and more critically to Council services. Refurbishment of council homes, improved learning environments in schools, better traffic flows and opportunities for sustainable travel had all be delivered during 2009/10.
  - (d) **Revenue Budget Monitoring** – We have considered the current position of the revenue budget. The latest projections, as reported to Cabinet in November, 2008, show an overall improvement of £529,000 compared with the approved Medium-Term Financial Plan and in improvement of £563,000 since last reported to Cabinet in July 2009.

- (e) **Schedule of Transactions** - A number of transactions, provisionally made by the Director of Corporate Services, have been approved.
2. As Members will be aware, work is being undertaken to develop a revised Medium Term Financial Plan and I have attended a number of departmental briefing meetings with members of the Council's Corporate Management Team in relation to this.
  3. Treasury Management – I met with Officers responsible for managing the Council's borrowing, investment and cash-flow to discuss the Council's policies and performance in this critical function, which have been reviewed in light of the Audit Commissions national report following the collapse of the Icelandic banking system in 2008. The Council's treasury management policy and management actions have helped to avoid the risk of very substantial loss experienced by other organisations.
  4. Tour of Council Assets with the Borough - As Members are aware Property Management is an important part of my portfolio. On 23 October I had a tour of our strategic assets within the Borough. The tour focused on how the Council is using its assets to provide services to the people of Darlington and also to encourage economic development.
  5. Energy Meeting - Councillors Jenny Chapman, Nick Wallis and I met with officers on 6 November to discuss energy efficiency within the Council's buildings, including schools. Members were appraised of energy efficiency plans to support the Council's carbon reduction commitment, including the installation of voltage optimisation equipment at the Dolphin Centre which should save up to 15% of electricity consumption. A further such meeting is scheduled for January 2010 to monitor progress.
  6. I have also chaired a number of meetings of the Human Resource Panel (sitting as an Appeal Panel) and have attended a number of briefing meetings in accordance with my Portfolio.

**Councillor Chris McEwan**  
**Cabinet Member with Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**