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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) **Annual Audit Letter 2010/11** – Council has received the Annual Audit Letter for 2010/11. The Letter is very positive and, in terms of adequacy of the Council’s arrangements for ensuring economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, PricewaterhouseCoopers has issued an unqualified value for money conclusion.
- (b) **Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring - Quarter 2 2011/12** – Cabinet received information on the current position of the Council’s capital commitments and resources together with all the live construction projects currently being managed by the Council.

The Council has a substantial annual construction programme of work, with the current project position statement showing that there are 72 live projects currently being managed by the Council with an overall project outturn value of £76.6 million, with the majority of the projects running to time, cost and quality expectations with no foreseeable issues.

- (c) **Electoral Registration** - Under the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001, Electoral Registration Officers are required to undertake a refresh of all absent voters, whose signatures are more than five years old.

The legislation requires that the first annual refresh of signatures must be carried out by 31 January, 2012, and this process is currently underway, with letters and new application forms being sent to just over 6,500 people with absent votes. There are currently just under 16,000 people who receive absent votes and this first refresh represents approximately 40 per cent of the total number of absent voters currently registered. This process will ensure that an accurate record as possible is held by the Council which will limit the number of postal votes that are rejected due to mismatched signatures at elections.

- (d) **Transformation Programme** - I have continued to attend regular meetings with the Leader, Chief Executive and Director of Resources to monitor overall progress against the Darlington 2015 Transformation Programme. A productive open day was held with potential suppliers of Place based services as part of the soft market testing exercise which will inform the review of options for service delivery. Work is also progressing well in terms of exploring the option to for collaboration for delivery of People services. Following agreement from Darlington BC and Hartlepool BC

Cabinets work formally commenced to develop the business case and a joint Cabinet meeting was held between the two authorities. Redcar and Cleveland subsequently expressed an interest in joining to form a tripartite collaboration and obtained approval from its Cabinet to progress. Work is now progressing to develop a business case for a tripartite collaboration.

There has also been further LEAN rapid improvement events delivered; to look at improvements in aged debt recovery (Sales Ledger); and to identify potential improvements in the delivery of building and facilities management functions across our corporate estate (Corporate Landlord). Both identified significant process improvements which will be piloted then fully implemented in the coming months.

I attended the report out of the Corporate Landlord Rapid Improvement Event, and the team and I will continue to monitor the benefits at 30, 60 and 90 days post event report outs.

2. In addition to meetings of Cabinet, I have attended various meetings since the last meeting of Council :-
  - (a) Transformation Programme update – 25 November, 2011 and 20 January, 2012;
  - (b) Rapid Improvement Feedback – 16 December, 2011;
  - (c) Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee – 15 December, 2011 and 17 and 26 January, 2012;
  - (d) Citizenship Ceremony – 16 January, 2012;
  - (e) Xentrall Partnership Consultative Panel – 13 January, 2012;
  - (f) Briefings with various Senior Officers; and
  - (g) Budget Consultation Events.

**Councillor Stephen Harker**  
**Cabinet Member with Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**