
OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under the Resources Portfolio:

- (a) **Risk Management Awards 2008** – The Council has won the Best Risk Communication of the Year Award at this year's Strategic RISK European Risk Management Awards. The Award was for the work undertaken by the Authority within the 'Lets Get Cracking' Scheme by the Communications and Highways Units, using Prudential Borrowing within an 'invest to save' initiative. The judges commented that the initiative was a 'first class example of engaging with local residents to manage risk and opportunity within this initiative'.

In addition, the Council was also Highly Commended within the Best Loss Prevention Strategy Award for its work in developing a corporate approach to managing property risk within the Authority and for the use of technology to reduce this risk. This initiative was co-ordinated by the Property Risk Management Group and the Council's Estates Division.

- (b) **Darlington and Stockton Partnership** – The Darlington and Stockton Shared Services Partnership went live on the 1st May, 2008, and all the Council's employees affected by the changes were transferred. The recruitment process has been successful. Other major milestones have been the implementation of a new financial management system, the centralisation of absence management and the centralisation of the creditors function, all of which have been implemented on schedule. The name for the Partnership is Xentrall Shared Services, which represents the fact that the Partnership will be the central point for shared services in Stockton and Darlington.
- (c) **Procurement** – We have agreed transitional arrangements for some procurement activities taking place prior to the implementation of the revised Contracts Procedure Rules which come into force on the 1st May, 2008. As part of the revised Rules, an annual Procurement Plan will, be developed, which will list details of all existing and new contracts that are above £75,000, and which require a tender process. This Plan will enable Members to decide based on pre-determined criteria the route contracts will take. Contracts will either be strategic, with a decision made by Cabinet, or delegated to Officers.

The first annual Procurement Plan will be presented to Cabinet at its meeting scheduled for 8th July, 2008. However, for those procurement activities which will take place prior to that date Cabinet have agreed the route those Contracts will follow. Two current contracts were deemed to be strategic – the Depot replacement, and the new North Road School.

- (d) **Beck House** – We have agreed to demolish Beck House as it is surplus to the Council’s requirements. The property is currently occupied by Adult Services for their Learning Disability Service but it is no longer considered appropriate for Learning Disabilities provider purposes and alternative bases for the service are now being utilised. The site will be disposed of by informal tender.
- (e) **Land at Whessoe Road** – Land at Whessoe Road has been acquired to facilitate part of the North Road/Whessoe Road junction improvement scheme.
- (f) **St Modwen’s, Faverdale** – An access agreement to St Modwen’s Developments Limited, granting them access over Council land at Faverdale is to be exchanged shortly, which, subject to planning permission, will facilitate them bringing forward their land for the development of circa 90,000m² of B1(c), B2 and B8 warehousing/distribution uses.
- (g) **Workers Memorial Day** – The Portfolio holder attended the planting of a tree in South Park on Monday 28th April. This was to mark national Workers’ Memorial Day. This is an annual commemorative day is held in honour of those who have died or been injured at work and is used to promote health and safety. Darlington Council marked the day in a number of ways including the Mayor planting a tree in South Park.

In addition, purple ‘forget-me-knot’ lapel ribbons were sold, with donations going to the Great North Air Ambulance; the Union Flag will fly at half-mast at the Town Hall. The day is sponsored by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and locally by the Trades’ Union Congress (TUC).

2. The following meetings have also been attended : -

- (a) Tender Panels & Openings – 3rd, 14th, 29th April,
- (b) Interviewed for CPA – 8th April
- (c) Various briefings with Directors and Assistant Directors
- (d) Chaired the Q&A session at the Alderman Leach Talking Together event – 30th April
- (e) Resources Scrutiny - 1st, 9th May
- (f) Interviewed by Audit Commission, as part of Council’s Data Quality Audit – 6th May
- (g) Darlington and Stockton Partnership Consultative Panel – 12th May

Cabinet Member with Resources Portfolio