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**OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last ordinary meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work the Resources Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
  - (a) **Sickness Absence** - We have continued to monitor the level of sickness absence within the Authority and it is pleasing to report that the figures for the period April 2007 to March 2008 show a significant improvement compared to the same period in 2007/08. Performance is slightly below the median across the whole of all English Authorities but in the context of North East Unitary and Metropolitan Council's, Darlington is the best performing Council within the region against the Best Value Performance Indicator. The actual outturn for 2007/08 was 9.77 days against a target of 9.69 days. Further work will be undertaken by the Human Resources Section to try to improve on the performance and to meet the target of 9.5 days which was been set for 2008/09.
  - (b) **The Borough Collection** – Further information has been provided to us in relation to a review of the management and conservation of the Borough Art Collection. As part of this review, a Steering Group has been established to agree the development of suitable policies and procedures relating to the collection and we have suggested that there should be representation on that Steering Group from Scrutiny. We have also referred this to the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee.
  - (c) **Capital Programme Out-turn 2007/08** – Over the last financial year, we have regularly monitored the Capital Medium-Term Financial Plan, and, at our meeting held on 3rd July, 2008, we received the out-turn report for the previous financial year. The Council has undertaken a wide variety of capital improvements throughout the Borough during 2007/08, with a total capital spend of £41.319 million.
  - (d) **Treasury Management Report and Actual Prudential Indicators** - We have received the Council's Treasury Management Annual Report and Actual Prudential Indicators for 2007/08. The Council's treasury management activities have been carried out in accordance with Council policy and financing costs have been reduced during the year with a saving of £0.065 million achieved from the revised budget, as approved by Council on 31st January, 2008, a result of increased cash-flow interest.
  - (e) **Service Planning 2008/12** – We have also given consideration to the seven Service Plans for 2008/12, for which we have the responsibility for monitoring. This Scrutiny will be receiving regular reports on performance targets against targets and trends in the Service Plans on a quarterly basis and if there are any areas, which we feel would

benefit from our input, we will undertake further work.

- (f) **Capital Process Review** – Following the work we have previously undertaken in relation to project management within the Authority and the input we have given to the Capital Process Review which has been undertaken by Officers, we have received information on the outcomes of the various work streams to ensure that, in future, there are consistent arrangements for project management within the Council. We will continue to monitor the introduction of the new procedures and the remaining work streams and we will continue to undertake work, through our task and finish review group, into some of the major capital projects being undertaken by the Council.
- (g) **Service Plan Performance Year-End 2007/08** – We have scrutinised the summary of performance against those service plans for which we are responsible for monitoring and it is pleasing to report that, overall, targets are being achieved and the performance trend is positive.
- (h) **Combined Financial and Service Performance Report 2007/08** - We have received a report combining financial and service performance for the Council for the period April 2007 to March 2008, and it is pleasing to report that, overall the Council is on target for service performance, the financial results support delivery of the Corporate Plan approved in February 2008 and efficiency gains are better than the mid-year projection.
- (i) **Procurement Forward Plan** – Following the revision to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in February 2008, to enhance the role of Members in procurement and to enhance efficiency, we have agreed to support the criteria, which has been developed by Officers, to determine whether individual contracts are deemed to be strategic or non-strategic. All Strategic contracts will be submitted to Cabinet for approval and decisions on other more routine contracts will be taken by Officers. Further monitoring of the Forward Plan will be undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee.

I, as Chair, have continued to have various meetings with Officers and have pursued a number of issues raised with me, by Members of the Scrutiny Committee, and reported the responses back to them accordingly.

**Councillor Ian Haszeldine**  
**Chair Resources Scrutiny Committee**