
OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
 - (a) **Work Programme 2010/11** – We have given consideration to the Work Programme for the next Municipal Year and will continue to update and add to our Work Programme throughout the Year. We also examined Cabinet’s Forward Plan, in order to identify areas of particular interest or concern to be included within our Work Programme and gave consideration to topics/subjects that we may wish to review/scrutinise during the Municipal Year 2010/2011.
 - (b) **Covenant of Mayors** – We were pleased to receive a progress report on the European Commission Covenant of Mayors commitment for local authorities to take the lead in tackling climate change and voluntarily commit to surpass the EU objectives for carbon reduction. Twelve Local Authorities in the North East have agreed to reduce emission by more than 20 per cent by 2020. In order to achieve this we have agreed to prepare a baseline emission inventory, submit a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) which will details the measure undertaken to enable a greater than twenty per cent CO2 reduction by 2020 and update and republish an approved SEAP every two years stating the key actions and interim results.
 - (c) **Service Plans Quarter 4 – 2009/10 Performance** – We were informed that the overall aggregated target for the four service plans – Highways, Environmental Services (Street Scene), Regeneration and Cultural Services was being achieved. Overall there are nineteen indicators which show below target performance and Scrutiny were given reasons for underperformance and impact on the service plan target performance status. Along with the service plans this Scrutiny Committee also has responsibility to scrutinise elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy – One Darlington Perfectly Placed and the Local Area Agreement, to note overall performance and reasons for underperformance and to undertake Task and Finish Reviews into areas of service which Committee feel it is necessary to examine more closely.
 - (d) **Scheduled Ancient Monuments** -- Scrutiny Committee undertook visits on 23rd July, 2010 to several of our Ancient Monuments, namely Skerne Bridge, Ketton Bridge and Piercebridge. Members made several conclusions arising from the visits and requested Officers undertake various follow-up actions. Information regarding the Ancient Monuments is readily available on the Council’s website and from the Tourist Information Centre.

- (e) **Spring Site Visits to Darlington's Green Spaces** - Following Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee's site visits to Darlington's Green Spaces on 29th April, 2010 we received a report on the main issues raised. The visits highlighted a range of initiatives that had been implemented in the last year, they key initiative being Playbuilders which was aimed at improving play provision in Darlington.
 - (f) **Progress on Darlington's Green Infrastructure Strategy** – The production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy represents an important stage in identifying and setting out the long term vision and approach to delivering a quality, integrated and multifunctional green infrastructure network in the long term in Darlington. The Strategy will inform various documents in the Local Development Framework and the delivery of Darlington's Open Spaces Strategy and related plans. Scrutiny were pleased to provide feedback on the approach taken and look forward to receiving future reports on its progress.
 - (g) **Greener Darlington Theme Group** – Scrutiny Committee welcomed the opportunity to be informed of the current work of the Greener Darlington Theme Group including a report on Local Food, an initiative of the Green Network.
 - (h) **Prosperous Theme Group** – Scrutiny Committee welcomed the opportunity to be informed of the current work of the Prosperous Theme Group.
 - (i) **Policy Review - Arts Task and Finish Review Group** – The Review Group are progressing with this Review and hope to be in a position to submit a final report to Cabinet in October.
2. Since the last meeting of Council, the Chair of the Committee has attended various briefings with Officers.

Councillor Dorothy Long
Chair of Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee