
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) **Darlington: Local Motion – Findings of the ‘Effects of Smarter Choice Programmes in the Sustainable Travel Towns’** – Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee held a special meeting to consider the findings of the report commissioned by the Department for Transport to independently quantify the results obtained by the three Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns : Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester. Dr. Lynn Sloman of Transport for Quality of Life gave a presentation on the findings
 - (b) **Draft Annual Report 2009/10** - We considered and approved the draft Annual Report of Economy and Environment Scrutiny highlighting the work undertaken for the Municipal Year 2009/10 and forwarded to Council.
 - (c) **Draft Work Programme 2010/11** – We have given consideration to the draft 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.
 - (d) **Cycling Through the Town Centre – Update Report** - As part of Scrutiny Monitoring we received an update report on Cycling Activities through the Darlington Town Centre for the period 1st January, 2009 to 28th February, 2010. The data was collected by various methods including accident data compiled by the Police, telephone calls, e-mails and letters logged with the Transport Policy Team. The data collected suggests that cycling continues to increase across Darlington and at high levels through the Town Centre. The report also detailed recorded incidents between cyclists and pedestrians on and within the inner ring road between the periods 1st January 2009 to 31st December 2009. Since January 2009 there have been no accidents involving a pedestrian and a cyclist. During the period 1st January, 2009 to 28th February 2010 there has been 6 reported incidents via e-mail, telephone and letter.
 - (e) **Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Strategy – Implementation Plan** – The Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Strategy for the five Tees Valley Authorities was adopted by Cabinet in September 2008 and Scrutiny Committee receive an annual update in order to be kept informed of progress on delivery of the Strategy. Each of the five Tees Valley Authorities have an implementation plan and Darlington’s has developed key policies as part of the production of the Strategy. We

look forward to receiving the next Annual report.

- (f) Following concerns from a Member of Scrutiny on chewing gum removal in the Town Centre we received the Street Scene Litter Initiative Action Plan. The Plan highlighted that an additional member of staff has been introduced into the Town Centre in order to deal with chewing gum removal and Members were advised of the continuing efforts of Street Scene to remove chewing gum from the Town Centre.
- (g) **Darlington Borough Council Tree and Woodland Strategy 2010-2015** – Members were pleased to learn that the Tree and Woodland Strategy, initially produced in 2000, was currently being updated. The key aim of the strategy is to proactively manage and enlarge the tree population of the Borough of Darlington in order to protect our historical heritage of trees and provide a valued environmental amenity for future generations. Scrutiny suggested some minor amendments which Officers took on board.
- (h) **Local Development Framework – Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options : Consultation Responses and Next Steps** – Members were advised of the responses received following the consultation carried out on the LDF Core Strategy. Over 66 organisations and individuals responded, generating over 400 comments, with further comments being received from people who attended the widely publicised consultation events and meetings. Following further work on technical evidence and having considered the comments received during consultation, the next version of the Core Strategy will be reported to Cabinet in July and submitted to Government for public examination next spring.
- (i) **Annual Tour of Sites 2009** - Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee, as part of its remit, undertakes Joint Site Visits with Planning Applications Committee to enable Members of the Committees to visit recently completed developments within the Borough that have been approved by the Planning Committee. It is an opportunity to assess the success or otherwise of schemes that have been reported to Planning Committee and an opportunity to learn from the experience of seeing developments in their built form.
- (j) **Greener Darlington Theme Group** – Scrutiny Committee welcomed the opportunity to be informed of the current work of the Greener Darlington Theme Group
- (k) **Prosperous Theme Group** – Scrutiny Committee welcomed the opportunity to be informed of the current work of the Prosperous Theme Group.
- (l) **Policy Review** -
 - (i) **Arts Task and Finish Review Group** – The Review Group has held three further meetings with Arts Organisations in the Borough, since the last report to Council, and work is ongoing with the Review.

- (ii) **Street Furniture Task and Finish Review Group** – Members undertook a walkabout around the Town Centre on 20th April and highlighted issues and areas of concern. We continue to monitor the situation.
2. Since the last meeting of Council, the Chair of the Committee has attended the following meetings :-
- (a) Various briefings with Officers

Councillor Dorothy Long
Chair of Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee