
OVERVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
 - (a) **Work Programme** – The Committee considered the Work Programme for the 2008/09 Municipal Year and will continue to update and add to our Work Programme throughout the year. We also examined Cabinet’s Forward Plan for particular areas of interest and concern to be included within our Work Programme and also further areas for undertaking Task and Finish Review Groups.
 - (b) **Street Scene Review Group** – Members have commenced work on their major Review for this Municipal Year. The terms of reference have been set for the Group and two meetings have been held. The Assistant Director of Environmental Services and the Head of Street Scene have been interviewed and a Site visit has taken place to the Call Centre and the Depot to see the Performance Management information from LAGAN and the vehicle tracking system.
 - (c) **Update on Gully Cleaning** – We received an update on the progress made against each of the recommendations made by Members of this Scrutiny on the Flooding Task and Finish Review Group in December, 2007. Cabinet agreed that the majority of our recommendations be implemented and we are very pleased to see that work has been ongoing in delivering on a number of our recommendations and moving forward on others. Members were particular encouraged by the progress that has been made on identifying additional resources to double-shift the gully flusher for a period of six months from September, 2008 and that the gully flusher will now be serviced and maintained outside normal hours.
 - (d) **Stray Dogs** – We received a report on the Council’s new role with regard to stray dogs following the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act transferring the responsibility for strays from the Police to local authorities as from 6th April, 2008. This authority now provides a 24-hour service, seven days a week and kennelling facilities for up to four dogs at Vicarage Road depot. Dogs are then transported, as in the past, to the Council’s contracted kennel supplier, Deerness Kennels.

The new service has been publicised in July’s Town Crier and on the Council’s website and posters placed in the Police Station to inform residents and the contact number is Street Scene 388777.
 - (e) **Community Safety Plan 2008-11 – Quarter 1 Performance 2008/09** – As part of our continuing monitoring role, we received a report on the delivery of the Borough’s Community Safety Plan 2008-2011 and targets within Darlington’s Local Area Agreement. We are pleased to note crime statistics are down by 10 per cent on the

previous quarter (January to March). Domestic Abuse and Anti-Social Behaviour remain the key challenges for the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Members of this Scrutiny will receive a presentation on the structure of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership at their next meeting scheduled for 4th November, 2008.

Councillor Doris Jones
Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee