
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 2009/10 Municipal Year and we 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.

You may recall that in my last update to Council this Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a Task and Finish Review Group to examine NI187 ‘tackling fuel poverty’. We have met with Alan Glew to establish further information on why Darlington does not appear to be performing well compared to other Tees Valley Authorities and to seek information on what advice and assistance is offered to residents in relation to fuel poverty. I am pleased to report that we were happy with the information we received from Alan and we agreed to do a mystery shopping exercise to establish how accessible the service is for residents.

- (b) **Home Improvement Agency Enhanced Handypersons Services** – We received a report informing us of the launch of a new enhanced Handyperson Service. We were pleased to note that the Council had received additional grant funding from Communities and Local Government (CLG) amounting to £50k for the period 2009/10 and £70k for the period 2010/11 for Handyperson services in respect of minor adaptations.

The additional funding has provided an invaluable opportunity to reflect on the scope of the service, review performance targets ensuring they remain challenging, and increase the capacity of the existing service to meet anticipated growth demand.

We agreed that the Committee would set up a Task and Finish Review Group to examine the Handypersons Services.

- (c) **Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) Delivery Framework** – Following the presentation on Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 we received at our last Scrutiny Committee Meeting we requested a report on the current Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) Delivery Framework. The report outlined the role of each group in the delivery framework for the CDRP and the linkages to other Boards and Forums including the Youth Offending Service Management Board, Drug and Alcohol Action Team Board and the Children’s Trust.

It was also highlighted that the Probation Service is to become a statutory member of the partnership in April 2010.

- (d) **Street Lighting** – Following the concerns of a Ward Member we agreed to undertake a Joint Task and Finish with Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee. The remit of the Review is to look at the policy and criteria for the provision of additional street lighting within the Borough. I will update you on the progress of this Task and Finish Review Group in my next update to Council.
- (e) **Greener Theme Group** - We welcomed the opportunity to be informed of the current work of the Greener Darlington Theme Group.
- (f) **Safer Theme Group** – We welcomed the opportunity to be informed of the current work of the Safer Darlington Theme Group.
- (g) **Street Scene Review** – We received an update on the progress to date on this Scrutiny Committee’s major review into Street Scene. Since the last update to Council the Group have re-evaluated the terms of reference and have agreed to focus on supporting and promoting the Street Scene ‘Litter Initiative Campaign’. We have also met with Ian Thompson, Assistant Director of Environmental Services within the Community Services Department and the Lead Officers of the Litter Initiative Campaign who gave us a presentation on the Campaign Action Plan and updated us on the initiatives and the work currently being undertaken.

An email has also been circulated to all Members of the Council requesting them to identify ‘hot spot’ litter areas within their individual Wards to inform the Officers of those hotspot areas and where to target.

Councillor Dixon and myself have had a photo shoot for this months edition of the Town Crier to promote and raise awareness of the campaign.

We have agreed to hold monthly meetings up to December, 2009 with Ian Thompson and the Lead Officers of the campaign to enable the Group to monitor the progress of the actions included within the action plan and I will update you on the progress in my next report to Council.

Councillor Doris Jones
Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee