
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 2010/11** – We have considered the draft work programme for the next Municipal Year and possible review topics. In considering our work programme and Review topics for next year, we have ensured that any work which we undertake takes into account the overall effect of the strategic plans of the Council such as the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement targets, the Council’s budget and Cabinet’s Forward Plan. One of the main areas of work which we will be continuing with during the next Municipal Year is in relation to Street Scene. Members will recall that this is a piece of work which we have been undertaking, however, it became clear that to enable a full and comprehensive review of the services to be undertaken, a longer period of time was required to conclude this review and focus on one specific area of Street Scene at one time.
 - (b) **Jontek** – Scrutiny Committee welcomed the opportunity to be informed of the details of the first year of using the Jontek Lifeline Services call handling equipment. It was pleasing to note that since the system went live in April 2009, 3446 residents of Darlington were benefitting from the service on various levels. Members were impressed with the improvements and the benefits of the new system, which included improved data collection and access, allowing call handling to be networked to allow officers at the sheltered sites to view and update their own user records and handle calls remote, resulting in improved communication, full audit trail of calls received and made so that management reports can be produced to review the support needed for a particular user, automated disaster recovery in an emergency situation should the need arise and maximising the benefits of the advance in the Telecare Assistive Technology. We were also advised of the future developments of the service and were pleased to note that there may be further opportunities to exploit and share data in clients’ records with appropriate partners.
 - (c) **Performance Report 3rd Quarter** - As part of our monitoring role we are responsible for scrutinising the five service plans which fall within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee those being, Building Services, Connecting with Communities, Housing, Housing Benefits and Safer Communities. Along with the service plans this Scrutiny also has the responsibility of scrutinising elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy : One Darlington : Perfectly Placed and the Local Area Agreement so we can note the overall performance, reasons for underperformance and undertake Task and Finish Reviews into areas of service where Committee feel it is necessary to examine more closely. We were delighted to note that the overall aggregated target for the five service plans was on target, although data was only available for 60 per cent of the

indicators. We were informed that there were a number of indicators showing below target, which we will continue to monitor.

- (d) **Victim Support** – Sherry Fothergill, Outreach Worker for Darlington, gave us an informative presentation on the roles and aims of the Victim Support Service. We were pleased with the number of users accessing the service in the last year and were particularly impressed with the hard work and dedication of all staff involved in the service.
- (e) **Darlington Borough Council Community Survey Street Scene Area Results** – As part of the work we have been undertaking in relation to Street Scene, we requested to receive the Community Survey Street Scene Area Results which gave a breakdown of residents' satisfaction with Street Scene based services on an area basis. We were pleased to note the marked improvements made in relation to residents' satisfaction with children's play areas, parks and open spaces, refuse collection and street cleaning, although the satisfaction had dropped overall in the last three years with the cleanliness of the Town Centre which we will continue to monitor in our regular Street Scene and Litter Initiative Action Plan update reports.
- (f) **Street Scene Litter Initiative Action Plan** – Following on from the recent piece of work that we have undertaken in relation to the Street Scene Litter Initiative Action Plan, we have continued to monitor the actions and targets contained within in the plan and were pleased with the progress made to date. We will continue to monitor the campaign and I will keep you updated on the progress.
- (g) **Safer Darlington Theme Group** – Scrutiny Committee welcomed the opportunity to be informed of the outcome of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Safer Theme Group meeting held on 25th February, 2010. Topics given consideration included the Small Retailers Capital Grant Fund, the paramedic post that has been implemented and is on a six week trial, priorities for funding, training needs questionnaire, NI115 and 'No Rogue Traders'.

Councillor Doris Jones
Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee