
OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last ordinary meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work the Resources Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
 - (a) **Work Programme 2008/09** – We have agreed our draft work programme for the next Municipal Year and we have included a number of issues, which we would like to scrutinise and continue to monitor. The work programme for the next Municipal Year is varied and we have already established a task and finish review group to look into the sustainable new school build at North Road Primary School. Further reviews and task and finish reviews will be established as, and when, required.
 - (b) **Third-Sector Strategy – Update** – Officers have provided us with updated information in relation to the implementation of the Third-Sector Strategy which had been launched on 20th November, 2007. The Strategy, which has been agreed jointly between the Council and the CVS aims to strengthen relationships and improve communication and understanding. Some of the actions which have been implemented are the restructure of the CVS and the launch of its new branding eVOLution, the appointment of a Voluntary and Community Sector Liaison Manager, and increased engagement on initiatives such as the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement. Further monitoring of the Action Plan will be undertaken by Scrutiny.
 - (c) **Access to Services** – Following previous work we undertook as part of the Best Value Review of Access to Services, we have received a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations arising from that Review. Since the review, the Council has established a centralised Customer Service Centre/Contact Centre, implemented a Customer Relationship Management System to improve workflow and tracking, installed a new telephony system which allows improved call distribution, call querying and call monitoring and has invested in delivering enhanced electronic communication. The Scrutiny Committee has agreed to undertake a ‘shopping basket’ review of some of the services performed by the Customer Services Section.
 - (d) **Corporate Health and Safety - Health and Safety** - As part of our monitoring role, we have received information on the work of the Council’s Health and Safety Unit and progress within the Authority against related performance indicators. It is pleasing to report that there has been a continued downward trend of reportable accidents with the Authority, with a 23 per cent reduction over the last financial year and a 67 per cent reduction in accidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive since 2003/04. The Safety Unit will continue to take a pro-active approach to the management of health

and safety within the Authority and we will continue to monitor performance in this area on a six-monthly basis.

- (e) **Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor** – Following the receipt of the consultants report on the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor, we established a Task and Finish Review Group, comprising all Members of this Scrutiny Committee, to consider the report and its findings in detail. A meeting of the Group was held on the 9th May, 2008 and, following detailed questioning of the Officers in relation to a number of issues surrounding the project, the Task and Finish Review Group agreed a number of recommendations which were subsequently approved by our Scrutiny Committee. These recommendations will now be forwarded to Cabinet and will be considered at its meeting scheduled for 3rd June, 2008.
- (f) **Darlington and Stockton Partnership** – A very interesting and informative presentation on the current position in relation to the Darlington and Stockton Partnership was given to us at a special meeting held on 12th May, 2008. We will continue to monitor this jointly with Stockton Borough Council and a briefing session for all Members of the Council will be held in June 2008.
- (g) **Admin Review** – Again at our special meeting held on the 12th May, 2008, we continued our monitoring of the review of administration which is taking place within the Authority.
- (h) **Data Quality Strategy** – We have also had the opportunity to review the Authority's draft Data Quality Strategy prior to its consideration by Cabinet.
- (i) **Consultants** – We have received information in relation to the use of Consultants by the Council. We have requested more detailed information in relation to this and this is an item which will be included on our work programme for the next Municipal Year.
- (j) **Community Strategy Themes – Analysis of Expenditure** – Following a request by a Member, Officers have provided us with an analysis of the Council's capital and revenue expenditure by the themes of the 2005-08 Community Strategy.
- (k) **Efficiency and Value for Money** - Updated information in relation to the national framework for efficiency and value-for-money, and the achievement and application of efficiency gains within the Council has also been provided to us.

Various meetings have also been held with Officers and a number of issues raised by Members have been pursued.

Chair Resources Scrutiny Committee