
OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last ordinary meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken by the Resources Scrutiny Committee:
 - (a) **Annual Audit and Inspection Letter** – Janet Eilbeck and Simon Clegg from PricewaterhouseCoopers and Phillipa Corner from the Audit Commission attended our meeting held on the 30th April ,2009 to present the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter to us. The Letter provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission’s assessment of the Council and is extremely positive. The overall judgement is that the Council is improving strongly and has been classified at the maximum four star in its current level of performance. In terms of the Council’s Scrutiny process, it is pleasing to report that Scrutiny in Darlington has been highlighted as being effective.
 - (b) **Annual Review of Significant Partnerships** – We have considered the outcome of the second annual review of significant partnerships, which was led by the Chief Executive of the Darlington Partnership and which was based on the partnership toolkit questionnaires completed by the Council’s partnership lead officers.
 - (c) **Work Programme** – We have considered the draft work programme for the next Municipal Year and possible review topics. One of our main areas for review over the next year will be to monitor the 2009/10 budget and to assist in developing efficiency projects to try to identify further savings in 2009/10 and in future years.
 - (d) **Third Sector Strategy Update** – In accordance with our monitoring role, we have received a report on the progress with the implementation of the Third Sector Strategy that was launched on 20th November, 2007. This item will be considered more fully at our next meeting.
 - (e) **Xentrall Shared Services Annual Report** - Following the establishment of Xentrall, we have received the annual report showing the achievements delivered in year one of the Partnership. The key aims of the Partnership were to improve efficiency, service performance and service resilience by bringing together the services of Darlington and Stockton and the business case and it is pleasing to report that the Partnership is on line to deliver its targets and already additional benefits beyond those envisaged in the business case are being delivered. The Partnership is one of the first of its kind in the country and therefore much of what has been achieved is innovative and challenging to deliver. It is a credit to the Partnership Team that so much has been achieved in this first year.
 - (f) **Connections Study – Cross Town Route** – Following a request by Members, we have also received a report outlining the work being undertaken by specialist consultants to

assess the requirement to reserve land for the outstanding sections of the Cross Town Route. We have requested that the findings of the study be submitted to a future meeting of our Scrutiny Committee

- (g) **Darlington Civic Theatre Audience Analysis 2008/09** – Following a request by a Member, we have received information in relation to audience figures at the Civic Theatre during 2008/09. We have requested further information in relation to this and this will be submitted to the next meeting.
- (h) **Performance Report – 3rd Quarter 2008/09** – Following a review, Officers have refreshed the way in which service performance is reported to Scrutiny. In line with this revised approach, we have received a report detailing the service performance position of the seven service plans for which we have responsibility for monitoring and for those elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement for which we also have responsibility for monitoring. In view of the importance of this work, we have agreed to hold a special meeting to enable us to give detailed consideration to this and to decide if there are any further areas we would like to undertake work into.
- (i) **Revenue Payments to Quangos** – Again, at the request of Members, we have looked at the payments made by the Council to ‘Quangos’ during 2008/09. Information has been supplied on the amount of payment made, the nature of the payment and the Council’s relationship with the organisation.
- (j) **Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring - April to February 2009** – We have considered the current position of the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme
- (k) **Project Management Task and Finish Review** – Our work in relation to project management within the Authority is continuing and we have looked at the current status of all construction projects being undertaken by the Council.

I, as Chair, have continued to have various meetings with Officers and have pursued a number of issues raised with me, by Members of the Scrutiny Committee, and reported the responses back to them accordingly.

Councillor Ian Haszeldine
Chair of Resources Scrutiny Committee