
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) **Work Programme** – We have considered and updated our work programme. One of the main pieces of work we will be doing over the next year is in relation to budget monitoring and efficiencies. This work will be done through both the Resources Scrutiny Committee and the Budget Monitoring and Efficiency Review Group and we have set up regular meetings to undertake this.
 - (b) **Annual Procurement Plan** – In accordance with Contract Procedure Rules, we have received information from Cabinet on those contracts which are deemed to be Strategic and those which can be delegated to Officers during the forthcoming year. An updated Plan will be submitted later in the year which will include contracts not yet known about.
 - (c) **Darlington Civic Theatre Audience Analysis – 2008/09** – Following a request by a Member, we have received information on audience figures for the Civic Theatre for the year 2008/09. The Theatre has had a particularly successful year in terms of audience figures with the number of tickets sold rising from 159,240 in 2007/08 to 174,658 in 2008/09. Gross box office sales for the Theatre have also exceeded £3million for the first time ever. We have asked for further information to be presented to our Scrutiny Committee on final accounts for the Theatre for 2008/09.
 - (d) **Third Sector Strategy – Update** – Again, in accordance with our Work Programme, we have continued to monitor the implementation of the Third Sector Strategy Action Plan. It is pleasing to report that the Strategy is 85 per cent delivered, however, there will be a review of the Strategy and a list of priority issues will be developed with both sectors within the next few months.
 - (e) **Sickness Absence 2008/09** – It is pleasing to report that for the financial year 2008/09, the number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per full time equivalent was 9.46 days. This was 0.04 days below target and an improvement of 0.31 days compared with the year end position in 2007/08. 37 per cent of employees had zero absence during the 2008/09 financial year.
 - (f) **Admin Review Update** – We have been given an update on the current position with the Admin Review being undertaken within the Authority. Our main discussion was around the new contract which is place for the postal service and the anticipated savings

and we will continue to monitor and receive information on the savings against service performance.

- (g) **Service Planning 2009/13** – We received information in relation to the 8 service plans for which our Scrutiny is responsible for challenging, together with a report on the 4th Quarter 2008/09 performance. It is pleasing to report that overall performance is on or above target for the eight service plans although there is not data reported for 19 per cent of the indicators.
- (h) **Capital Programme and Revenue Budget Monitoring – 2009-10 – Quarter 1** – We have considered the current position of the Capital Programme and Revenue Budget 2009/10. In line with improvements to capital programme management, this first monitoring report was brought to both Cabinet and our Scrutiny earlier than in previous years. However, as previously mentioned we will, as a Scrutiny Committee, be undertaking further monitoring of the Medium Term Financial Plan during the year.
- (k) **Treasury Management Annual Report and Outturn Prudential Indicators 2008/09** – In accordance with the Council’ reporting procedures, we have received information regarding the regulation and management of the Council’s borrowing, investment and cash-flow. The financial year 2008/09, presented exceptional circumstances with regard to treasury management and treasury management activity during 2008/09 has been carried out in accordance with Council policy and within legal limits. Financing costs have been reduced during the year and a saving of £220,000 achieved from the revised Medium-Term Financial Plan as a result of a number of actions taken throughout the year to manage the financing costs in the changing economic climate. Policies had been reviewed during 2008-009 and a number of revisions to had been made. Critically, the Council’s Treasury policies, procedures and management had safeguarded investments and, unlike over 100 other authorities, the Council had not incurred any losses in the collapse of the Icelandic banks.

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 Resources Scrutiny Committee