
OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Environment Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
 - (a) **Street Scene** - We were given details on the review of Street Scene which is being undertaken as part of the 'Leading Edge' agenda, the next stage of this Council's organisational development. The main focus of the review is to identify and improve the process and processes within each service that contributes towards the management of the external environment. The four key outcomes which identify the scope of the Street Scene Review are a clean external environment; a well-maintained external environment; a well-designed external environment; and a safe external environment. We have requested that we be kept fully updated on the progress with Street Scene throughout the review and are keen to view the implementation plan.
 - (b) **Signage and Street Furniture** – Concerns were expressed at our last meeting that recommendations of our Task and Finish Group on Street Furniture and Signage had not been taken on board. In order to address our concerns we were advised of work that had been undertaken as a result of our Review through projects and programmes. We were also advised that the concept design for the Street Scene project was looking to expand the street care type of approach to deal efficiently with local cleansing and street maintenance issues throughout the Borough.
 - (c) **Work Programme 2005/06** – We have given consideration to the Work Programme of this Committee for the Municipal Year 2005/06 and in doing so examined Cabinet's Forward Plan for particular areas of interest and concern. We continually add to our Work Programme and monitor ongoing items.
 - (d) **Draft Events Strategy** – The Draft Events Strategy supports the Council's aims and objectives and has been developed with stakeholders from both private and public sector organisations. With that in mind we gave consideration to the proposed Events Strategy for Darlington the purpose of which is to determine the Council's role in delivering events for Darlington and assist with the decision-making process regarding priorities, programming and co-ordination.
 - (e) **Strategy for Outdoor Play Areas – Update** – Environment Scrutiny requested an update on the delivery of the Strategy for Outdoor Play Areas and were pleased to note that a great deal of work has been undertaken since its adoption in 2001. Several dangerous sites have been removed and the remaining ones have been updated. We were also notified that in order to keep up to date with current thinking and Planning Guidance, a new Play Strategy was being development which would dovetail into the

Open Space Strategy.

- (f) Environmental Services Service Plan** – We were pleased to receive the Environmental Services Service Plan for the period April to September 2005 together with details of performance information against all of Environmental Service’s targets. Overall the section is above target to meet its objectives and a full explanation of the areas below target was given.
- (g) Policy Review – Review of Progress on Policy Review Items –**
 - (i) Neglected Land Review Group** – We continue to make progress on the Neglected Land Review Group and have had two further meetings and a very useful presentation. We hope to scale down the list to a few sites of varying sizes, which have different issues and concentrate our investigations on those sites.

**The Mayor, Councillor Stella Robson
Chair of Environment Scrutiny Committee**