

---

**OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

---

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

**School Bus Contracts**

2. At the request of one of the Members of the Committee, we have looked at the current position in relation to the contract for the provision of school buses operating within the Borough.
3. The original request was made following continual complaints from residents that school bus drivers were using residential estate roads and it was believed that they should be adhering to fixed routes as identified within the contract documentation. We were advised that the current contract for the provision of this service was being reviewed and that fixed routes would be included as part of the revised contract documentation.
4. We were reminded of the Home to School Transport Policy which placed a duty on the Authority to make the necessary travel arrangements for 'eligible children' under Section 508B of the Education Act 1996, those schools in Darlington which currently have pupils travelling using the Home to School Transport service; the total cost of the service; and the proposed changes to the revised contract to ensure that it was fit for purpose and gave value for money.
5. It is expected that the new contract will be in place by the end of 2015 and we have asked to look again at this once it has been in operation for six months.

**Performance Management Information**

6. The Quarter 4 year end performance management information has now been collated and reported to all Scrutiny Committees. In relation to Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee, we received a presentation giving a summary of performance against a number of indicators across all areas of the Council, with particular performance in some areas within Adults Social Care, Children's Services and Economic Growth being particularly highlighted.
7. We discussed the indicators around economic growth in relation to employment and the decline in Town Centre footfall which was reflective across the Country; the change in shift in Town Centres from a shopping environment to a leisure environment; the need to understand the changing needs of consumers; future investment in the Markets to assist in increasing Town Centre footfall and the work previously undertaken by the Place Scrutiny Committee in relation to that; and the

need to maintain vital Town Centre assets.

8. Individual Scrutiny Committees will continue to receive relevant performance management information on a six-monthly basis and we will continue to monitor the overall picture.

### **Members' Toolkit**

9. As Members may be aware, a Members' Toolkit is currently being developed to assist Members in their community roles. The next stage in its development is to consult with Members to ascertain their views and a working party is being established, comprising a mix of Scrutiny, Cabinet, new, existing and rural Members. We have appointed Councillor K Nicholson, as a newly-elected Member, to represent our Scrutiny Committee.

### **Work Programme**

10. We have considered our work programme for the next Municipal Year. In addition, to our regular monitoring of the Medium-Term Financial Plan, the management of change programme and the performance management information, we will be looking at sickness absence returns within the Authority, health and safety and the advice and support services provided from within the Customer Services section to residents. As Members are aware, the work programme is rolling and items will be added as, and when, necessary.

**Councillor Ian Haszeldine**  
**Chair Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee**