

City of Durham

At a Meeting of **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Town Hall, Durham, on Tuesday, 29th August, 2006, at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Pape (in the Chair)
and Councillors Cummings, Freeman, Howarth, Moderate, Robinson, Simmons, Walton and Wolstenholme.

Also Present: Councillors Gibbon, Kellett, Marsden, Rochford, Smith, Stoddart, Syer and Young

212. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Crathorne, Hoggood and Simpson

213. MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of 10th July, 2006, were confirmed as a correct record.

214. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman informed Members that the Economic Scrutiny Panel meeting scheduled for 27th September was having difficulty obtaining witnesses as there a tourism conference taking place on the same day. The Chairman asked if the Committee would agree to the rescheduling of the meeting to Monday, 18th September, 2006.

It was agreed that the Economic Scrutiny Panel be rescheduled to take place Monday, 18th September, 2006.

The Chairman informed Members that he together with Councillor Caroline Seymour, the IDEA Councillor Mentor and the Senior Democratic Support Officer had visited South Ribble Borough Council on Friday, 18th August, 2006. South Ribble is of a similar size to City of Durham therefore it was interesting to see how they organised their scrutiny process and to bench mark against their Best Practice. A summary of the findings would be brought to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman informed Members that the Scrutiny Handbook had been disseminated to Members of the Committee and that other Members handbooks would be handed out at individual Scrutiny Panel meetings. Alternatively the handbooks could be collected from 4 Saddler Street.

215. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan, which was effective from 1st September, 2006. Councillor Howarth brought to the attention of Members the issue of The Supporting People/ Value Improvement Programme and suggested that as no formal decision had yet been made, the issue be monitored.

216. DECISIONS TAKEN BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS SINCE LAST MEETING

A copy of the schedule indicating the decisions taken by Portfolio Holders since the last Meeting is attached at Appendix A.

Members queried three decisions from the Portfolio Holder Decision list and were advised that clarification would be sought and Members would be advised accordingly.

217. CABINET DECISIONS 21st July, 2006 and 2nd August, 2006

The Cabinet reports had been noted. The Chairman informed Members that the Policy Scrutiny Panel's report on Telephone Communications was referred back to Scrutiny Committee with no reasons given for the non acceptance. The Chairman advised Members that they could send the report back to the panel or request the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs and Procurement to attend the next meeting of Scrutiny Committee to state the reasons why the report had been referred back.

It was agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs and Procurement be requested to attend the next meeting of Scrutiny Committee to give the reasons for Cabinet's referral of the report.

218. SCRUTINY PANEL REPORTS

- (a) The Environment Scrutiny Panel were tasked with the scrutiny of Litter Pickers. A copy of the report had been circulated.

It was agreed that the report be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

- (b) The Community Services Panel were tasked with the scrutiny of Council Garages. A report had previously been sent to Cabinet where it was agreed that a subsequent report should be submitted once a Policy had been written and a new Garage Tenancy Agreement had been drawn up.

It was agreed that the report be referred to Cabinet for consideration

219. VERBAL UPDATE ON PROGRESS FROM SCRUTINY PANELS

The Chairmen of the various Scrutiny Panels gave verbal reports on the progress of their respective Scrutiny topics for the information of Members.

220. ALLOCATION TOPICS FOR SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the following topics for allocation.

- Riverbanks
- Trees

After some discussion it was agreed that the subject of Trees should, initially, be incorporated into the scrutiny of the Riverbanks and that both should be allocated to the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

221. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members had no further business to discuss.

Meeting terminated at 6.00 p.m.

Chairman