

City of Durham

At a Meeting of **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Mayor's Chamber, Town Hall, on Monday, 16th June, 2008, at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Hopgood (in the Chair)
and Councillors Carr, Colledge, Howarth, Kelly, Mitchell, Turnbull, Walton, Wilkes and Wilkinson

Also Present: Councillors Cowper, Kellett, Marsden, Stoddart and Young

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Freeman, McDonnell, Rae and Robinson

54. MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of 22nd April, 2008, were confirmed as a correct record.

55. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chair advised Members that the Leader had answered the Committee's query regarding letters to parish councils and had stated that letters had been sent to those parish councils which had approached the City Council. Councillor Mitchell asked for clarification on which Parish Councils had received the letters. The Chair advised that this information would be sought.

The Chair informed Members that the last meeting where business could be conducted and which would be effective would be 8th December, 2008. The Chair asked the committee if they would agree to the cancelling of all Scrutiny meetings in February, 2009 and March, 2009. The last date for Scrutiny Committee would be 20th January, 2009, and the last date for Cabinet would be 18th February, 2009.

Councillor Mitchell asked if there would be Portfolio Holder Decisions taken after this date and if so how would those decisions be Scrutinised.

Councillor Kellett asked what would happen to reports between Cabinet on 18th February, 2009, and vesting day.

Members asked if there would be additional Cabinet dates and were informed that the Chair had already checked on this with the Leader of the Council and had been advised that this would not be the case.

Councillor Turnbull asked that a presentation be given on the likely effects of LGR on the City Council's workforce as no feedback had yet been given to Scrutiny Committee. Members also asked for clarification on the numbers of staff that had already left.

The Chair advised that free training was available to all Scrutiny Members, on Community Engagement. The training would take place on Wednesday, 25th June, 2008, at 2:00 pm at County Hall.

The Chair informed Members that an update on the Swimming Pool would go to July Cabinet.

The Chair advised Members that she would be meeting with the Unitary Council's Chair of Overview and Scrutiny to discuss the establishment of a mechanism to feed City of Durham Scrutiny Recommendations through to the new Unitary Council. The Chair would report back to this Committee.

56. SCRUTINY PANEL REPORTS

Economic Scrutiny Panel – Review of Leisure Services

Copies of the report were circulated with the Agenda papers for Members consideration.

Resolved: That the report be sent to Cabinet for consideration.

Policy Scrutiny Panel – Scrutiny of Equalities Policies

Copies of the report were circulated with the Agenda papers for Members consideration.

Resolved: That the report be sent to Cabinet for consideration.

Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Review of Decent Homes Standard

Copies of the report were circulated with the Agenda papers for Members consideration.

Resolved: That the report be sent to Cabinet for consideration.

57. CABINET DECISIONS

- **4 June, 2008**

The Cabinet reports had been noted.

58. VERBAL REPORTS OF PANEL CHAIRS

An update was given by each Panel Chair on the progress of their Panel business.

Councillor Turnbull asked that a vote of thanks be sent to Councillor Wolstenholme for his work over the last five years as Chairman of the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

59. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan No. 72, which had been circulated at the meeting and was effective from 2nd June, 2008, and had no comments to make.

60. DECISIONS TAKEN BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS SINCE LAST MEETING

The Committee considered the Portfolio Holders Decisions and had no comments to make.

61. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Meeting terminated at 6.10 pm

POLICY SCRUTINY PANEL

REPORT

**TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM
UPDATE APRIL 2008**

BACKGROUND

1. The Policy Scrutiny Panel has carried out regular reviews of the Council's Telephone Communications System following initial concerns raised by Members. The Panel submitted a Report to Cabinet in 2007 and the aim of this Review was to consider progress against the implementation of the Recommendations contained in the Report and agreed by Cabinet.

ACTIONS

2. The Director of Corporate Services attended the Policy Scrutiny Panel Meeting on the 1st April, 2008, to brief Members on progress.

OUTCOMES

3. Implementation of Previous Recommendations

3.1 Members noted that the modifications to the current system needed to facilitate the short term improvement measures previously requested by the Panel had been activated within the current system capabilities.

3.2 A review of staffing resources also requested by the Policy Scrutiny Panel had taken place and some minor changes have been made involving staff relocation.

3.1 Members were advised that the Revenues and Benefits Section had installed an automated response line which has taken much of the call burden from front line staff.

3.2 Members reconsidered the Panel's previous request to Cabinet to prioritise the review and replacement of the current Telephone Communications software and identify associated future staffing requirements. It was considered that due to LGR, this would no longer be appropriate.

3.3 It was noted that the Panel's previous request to OMT to instruct Heads of Service to require all staff to respond to Voicemail messages within 24 hours and to keep up to date Voicemail greetings had been carried out. All staff have been issued with the instruction.

It was noted by Members however that there were still repeated instances of their Voicemail messages not being responded to and individual Voicemail greetings not being kept up to date.

3.4 It was also noted that the proposed new Telephone Communications Project Plan would be now unlikely to be progressed due to LGR. The Panel were informed that an LGR Workstream is currently looking at the general subject of communications.

3.5 It is acknowledged that the system still has limitations, mainly in relation to Cityinfo call traffic and "Hot Spots" of particularly heavy call traffic relating to specific issues. The Panel was informed that the present system had been the most cost effective available at the time of purchase however since that time the demands on the software has increased considerably due to the expansion of the Council's Cityinfo facilities. Clearly, replacing the existing system would require a major new financial commitment and any proposals to do so would have to be submitted to the new Unitary Authority.

Recommendations

- 1) That in view of LGR no further action be taken to replace the current Telephone Communications System.
- 2) That Members continue to note when their repeated telephone calls to a range of extensions in a particular service area are not answered by Staff with further individual problems to be reported to the appropriate Director/Head of Service.
- 3) That Members continue to note lack of responses by Staff to their Voicemail messages with further individual problems to be reported to the appropriate Director/Head of Service.
- 4) That Directors/Heads of Service again instruct all Staff to respond to Voicemail messages within 24 hours and to keep their Voicemail greetings up to date.

POLICY SCRUTINY PANEL

REPORT

REVIEW OF SICKNESS ABSENCE 2008

BACKGROUND

1. The Policy Scrutiny Panel has reviewed the Council's Sickness Absence levels on an ongoing basis. The Panel submitted a Report to Cabinet in 2007 and the aim of this Review was to consider progress against the implementation of the Recommendations contained in the Report and agreed by Cabinet.

ACTIONS

2. The Director of Corporate Services attended the Policy Scrutiny Panel Meeting on the 1st April, 2008, to brief Members on progress.

OUTCOMES

3. General Progress

3.1 Current figures for Sickness Absence levels were encouraging and showed that the general trend was down. The Council was now on track to achieve its target figure for the year of 10 Working Days per employee. This contrasted with a figure three years ago of 13.98 days and showed a decrease from last year of 2.3 days.

3.2 Whilst acknowledging that the general trend was down it was also noted that the national average was 8.2 days per employee.

3.3 The introduction of the services of Diagnostic Health Solutions and the consistent application across the Authority of the corporate Sickness Absence Procedures had assisted in the reduction of the Sickness Absence level. The regular examination of Sickness Absence figures, the raising of the profile of Sickness Absence and the further training of Managers had also contributed to the reduction.

3.4 The Panel noted that a reduction in Sickness Absence levels had been seen across all Council Services.

3.5 It was acknowledged that the LGR transitional process may also affect levels of Sickness Absence in the forthcoming year with issues such as lowered morale, possible loss of staff and the impact on those left behind all being possibly significant.

4. Implementation of previous Recommendations

4.1 The Employee Viewpoint Panel has been formed and has met. Further meetings have been scheduled to discuss specific issues such as LGR.

4.2 The Staff Attitude Survey questionnaire has been reviewed by the Viewpoint Panel and further input from the facilitators, Northumbria University, was still awaited. In view of LGR Members must consider the value of conducting a Staff Attitude Survey for 2008.

Recommendations

- 1) That the efforts of all Staff and Managers in reducing the rates of Sickness Absence be acknowledged.
- 2) That in view of LGR, the proposed Staff Attitude Survey for 2008 be not undertaken.
- 3) That the Policy Scrutiny Panel review the Council's Sickness Absence levels at its meeting in September, 2008.

INTRODUCTION

Chair of Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Amanda Hopgood



Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Barbara Howarth

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

It was my privilege to take over as Chair of Scrutiny in May 2007, and once again Scrutiny has enjoyed a full and varied work programme over the past year.

During the municipal year 2007/08 training has played an important role for new and existing members following last years local elections. We have also very importantly introduced a reporting procedure, ensuring that feedback is provided by Cabinet on all reports submitted in a clear and concise manner. This has enabled all our Scrutiny panels to have a clear understanding of what happens to their recommendations after Cabinet approval/refusal. This system was introduced with the full backing and support of both Senior Officers and the Cabinet.

As in previous years we have continued to work in partnership by attending the County Durham Joint Scrutiny Members Network. Both myself and the Vice Chair, Cllr Howarth have participated in Joint Scrutiny working on Public Transport and NEETS (Children not in employment, education or training).

The year ahead will be unique to us all as it sees the end of District Councils and the creation of a new Unitary Council for County Durham. As we move into this new era we must ensure that our work within Scrutiny is carried forward and continued within the new Authority.

Amanda Hopgood

Chair of City of Durham Scrutiny Committee

TRAINING

In June 2007 a series of Scrutiny Training events was arranged at the Blackwell Grange Hotel, Darlington. The Scrutiny Training was delivered by Inlogov in partnership with North East Councils and was aimed particularly at new Scrutiny Members, following the May, 2007 local elections; however existing Members also took advantage of individual sessions.

A special Training Day was also organised for Scrutiny Members in relation to the Scrutiny of Budgets and Finance. This training was held at Collingwood College, Durham and was delivered by the Institute of Public Finance in conjunction with the City Council's Financial Services Department. An invitation to attend was issued to all Councillors.

SCRUTINY CONFERENCE

In September 2007, City of Durham Scrutiny was represented at the first Regional Scrutiny Conference at the Stadium of Light, Sunderland. The Conference was very wide ranging in nature and included speakers from both Regional and National Scrutiny forums.

SCRUTINY PANEL REPORTS

Attached are brief summaries of the work carried out by the Scrutiny Panels for the year 2007/2008.

Full Scrutiny Panel Reports and Minutes are available on the Members Online system and on the City Council's Website at www.durhamcity.gov.uk

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Topics covered:-

Graveyards

The Panel considered, during their Meetings in June, July, September and October, the topic of Closed Graveyards. In particular Members were tasked with obtaining an overview of the Council's responsibilities for closed churchyards and graveyards.

Outcomes: 5 recommendations made; reported to Cabinet November, 2007; 5 recommendations accepted; 0 recommendations rejected.

Unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller Encampments

Following on from a recommendation made during the scrutiny of Gypsy and Traveller Sites, the Panel considered the topic of Unauthorised Encampments. Members looked at this in their Meetings in November, December, January, February and March.

Outcomes: 8 recommendations made; reported to Cabinet June 2008; 7 recommendations accepted; 0 recommendations rejected.

Council Garages

The topic of Council Garages had previously been scrutinised, when the Panel recommended that a policy on the letting of garages be written and amendments be made to the Tenancy Agreement. The Panel reviewed this scrutiny at their Meetings in July and March.

Outcomes: 2 recommendations made; reported to Cabinet September, 2007; 2 recommendations accepted; 0 recommendations rejected.

2 recommendations made; reported to Cabinet June, 2008; 2 recommendations accepted; 0 recommendations rejected.

Playing Pitch Strategy

The Playing Pitch Strategy had initially been scrutinised in May 2006. In carrying out a review, Members revisited the playing fields which they had inspected the previous year, and considered the topic at their July meetings.

Outcomes: 18 recommendations made; reported to Cabinet November, 2007; 18 recommendations accepted; 0 recommendations rejected.

Homelessness

The topic of Homelessness had been previously scrutinised by the Panel in January, 2007. At their Meetings in October, December, January and March, the Panel reviewed this topic, and invited the Council's Strategy and Development Manager and representatives from Durham County Council Durham Primary Care Trust to their Meetings.

Outcomes: 4 recommendations made; reported to Cabinet April, 2008; 4 recommendations accepted; 0 recommendations rejected.

Council House Repairs

The Panel originally scrutinised Council House Repairs in July 2003 and have kept the topic under regular review since then. The most recent review was carried out in November, 2007, when the Head of Property Services, Operations Manager, Maintenance Manager and Customer Services Manager attended the Panel's Meeting.

Outcomes: 4 recommendations made; reported to Cabinet March, 2008; 4 recommendations accepted; 0 recommendations rejected.

Allocations Policy

The new Allocations Policy had been introduced in August, 2007, and worked on a band-based system as opposed to the previous arrangement which was based on the amount of time an applicant had spent on the waiting list.

The Panel are currently reviewing the effectiveness of the new Policy and the impact it has had on waiting lists.

Outcomes: A report will be forwarded to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration in due course.

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

Topics covered

Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005

The Panel were informed by the Council's Head of Legal and Strategic Services as regards implications for the City of Durham within the Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005, of which the full range of powers came into effect in late 2006.

Outcomes: The Panel noted the range of powers now available to the Council, and Cabinet were informed separately by the Head of Legal and Strategic Services in December 2006.

Review of Riverbanks & Six Month follow up

The Panel originally scrutinised Riverbanks in the period January – April 2007 and had many witnesses in attendance, including representatives from the City Council and from partners; the Durham County Council (Rights of Way Section and Necklace Park), the University of Durham and Durham Cathedral. A follow up report was produced in February 2008, to coincide with the departure of the Necklace Park Manager, for Panel Members' information.

Outcomes: 8 recommendations made; reported to Cabinet September, 2007; 8 recommendations accepted; 0 recommendations rejected.

Review of Biodiversity (Wildlife Meadows)

The Panel originally scrutinised "Biodiversity" in 2005, with their original Report and it's recommendations having being approved by Cabinet in October 2005. Periodic updates have been given to the Panel, with the most recent being March 2008.

Outcomes: 2 recommendations made; reported to Cabinet June, 2008; 2 recommendations accepted; 0 recommendations rejected.

Review of Fly-tipping, Recycling and Litter Pickers

The Panel originally scrutinised the three related topics of Fly-tipping, Recycling and Litter Pickers in 2005, with reports going to Cabinet June, August and September, 2006 respectively. Subsequent reviews have combined the three topics, with the last update report having been submitted to Cabinet January, 2008.

Outcomes: 6 recommendations made; reported to Cabinet January, 2008; 6 recommendations accepted; 0 recommendations rejected.

Climate Change

The Panel scrutinised the topic of Climate Change, from the perspective of a Local Authority's impact upon it, in 2007. The Scrutiny looked at the policies the Council had, including a specific report and policy developed by the Sustainable Development Manager on Climate Change, as well as looking at reports produced outside of the Council, e.g. by the Association of North East Councils (ANEC). The Panel's report was considered by Cabinet in April 2008.

Outcomes: 5 recommendations made; reported to Cabinet April, 2008; 5 recommendations accepted; 0 recommendations rejected.

ECONOMIC SCRUTINY PANEL

Topics covered

Disabled Parking

The Panel scrutinised the disabled parking provision within the district; whether such provision was adequate for future needs and how the authority could work with other organisations to provide an improved service. The Panel invited Officers from the County Council's Highways Department to give evidence relating to the parking procedures at the Park and Ride. The Managing Director of Durham Markets Company and the Manager of the Prince Bishop's Shopping Centre were also invited in their capacity as members of the Durham City Forum to give information to the Panel. Members were also grateful for the assistance of Mrs. Diane Prested who gave the Panel a disabled person's point of view. This topic was considered over several meetings during June to October 2007.

Outcomes: 7 Recommendations made; Reported to Cabinet November, 2007.
7 Recommendations accepted; 0 Recommendations rejected.

CCTV

The Panel considered this topic between November, 2007 and February, 2008. The Police also took part in this Scrutiny and shared relevant information with the Panel. Members were also given the opportunity to tour the Control Room, which is manned 24 hours per day seven days per week.

Outcomes: 6 Recommendations made; Reported to Cabinet April, 2008.
6 Recommendations accepted; 0 Recommendations rejected.

Review of Leisure Services

The Panel carried out a review of Leisure Services in accordance with recommendations made at a previous review. The Panel invited the City Council's Senior Leisure Development Officer to the meeting who advised Members on the current status of Leisure Services and the New Swimming Pool which is due to open July, 2008.

Outcomes: 3 Recommendations made; Reported to Cabinet June, 2008.

Review of Tourism

The Panel is currently reviewing its scrutiny of tourism. The Head of Cultural Services, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Culture, the Tourism & Conference Officer, the Events Manager and Regeneration Manager have all attended Panel meetings and have advised Members of the current position in relation to tourism initiatives and partnership working.

Outcomes: A report will be forwarded to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration in due course.

POLICY SCRUTINY PANEL

Topics covered

Sickness Absence/Employee Attitude Survey

The Panel considered, as a recurring topic, the Council's level of Sickness Absence. The topic was considered at Panel meetings, in June, September and October, 2007, and was scheduled for review again in April, 2008. The Panel will continue to monitor Sickness Absence during the remainder of the City Council's administration.

Alongside Sickness Absence Figures, Members also considered responses from the Employee Attitude Survey carried out in 2007.

Outcomes: 4 Recommendations made; Reported to Cabinet in November, 2007;
4 Recommendations accepted; 0 Recommendations rejected.

Telephone Communications

The Panel also continued to monitor the Council's Telephone Communication System as Members had expressed concern over problems which had become apparent. The Panel considered this topic at its meetings in July and October, 2007.

A further update for the Panel was scheduled for April, 2008.

Outcomes: 6 Recommendations made; Reported to Cabinet in November, 2007;
6 Recommendations accepted; 0 Recommendations rejected.

Members Online

The Members Online System was introduced in January 2007, following a prior trial period. The Policy Panel considered how Members were engaging with the system, what the perceived problems were and what further support was needed by them. Members considered this topic between July and November, 2007.

Outcomes: 4 Recommendations made; Reported to Cabinet in January, 2008;
2 Recommendations accepted; 1 Recommendation accepted following amendment;
1 Recommendation rejected.

Equalities Policies

Following the release of the publication "Equal to the Task", a document produced by the Equalities Commission the Policy Scrutiny Panel was requested to look at the Council's own Equalities Policies to ensure that they were fit for purpose. The Panel considered this topic between December, 2007 and March, 2008.

Outcomes: A Report will be prepared and submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in due course.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Durham City Scrutiny, through the participation of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, has been actively involved in Joint Scrutiny Working with the other Authorities across County Durham as part of the County Durham Joint Scrutiny Members Network.

COUNTY DURHAM JOINT SCRUTINY MEMBERS NETWORK

The Chair and Vice Chair of Scrutiny, together with your Officers, have continued to be involved in the work of the County Durham Joint Scrutiny Members Network, in relation to the following Scrutiny projects:

NEETS

The Chair of Scrutiny has been involved in the Network Group reviewing the provision of services for NEETS (Children not in permanent Employment, Education or Training). The Scrutiny Study has now ended and a Report containing findings and Recommendations will be drawn up and circulated for information.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Vice Chair of Scrutiny has been involved in a major countywide study of Public Transport issues, with the emphasis on Bus Services. Again this study has now been completed and a Report prepared. The Report will in due course be circulated for information.

FUTURE OF THE NETWORK

It is anticipated that for 2008/2009 existing District Members of the County Durham Joint Scrutiny Members Network will continue to meet and work alongside Overview and Scrutiny Members of the new Unitary Council.

JOSC

The Chair of Scrutiny also represented City of Durham Scrutiny on the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the first transitional phase of the Unitary Authority, prior to the May, 2008, Unitary Elections.

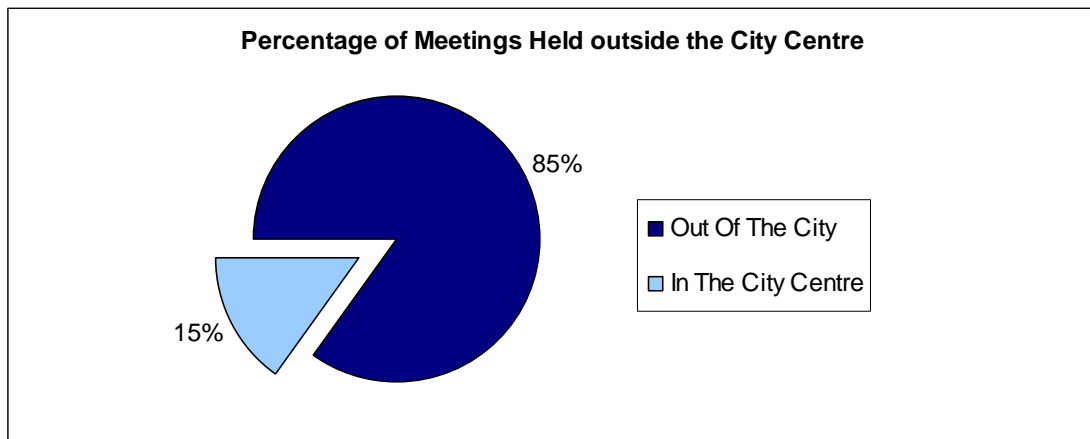
THE FUTURE (UNITARY COUNCIL)

The 1st April, 2009, will be the Vesting Day for the new County Durham Unitary Council. The City of Durham Council will cease to exist.

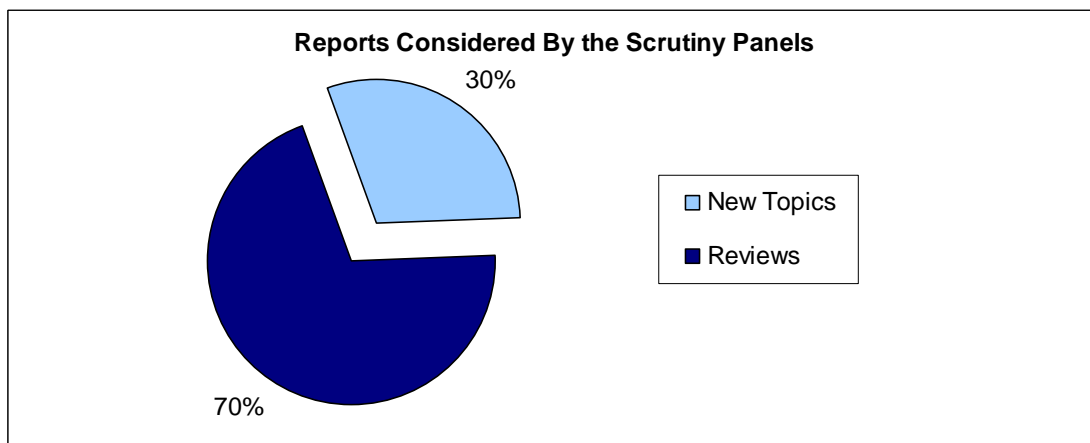
It is felt important that the time remaining to Durham City Scrutiny be best utilised by Reviewing previous Scrutiny Reports to ensure that we are best placed to “hand over” meaningful Recommendations to the Unitary Authority. It is also felt important that the high standards and good working practices which have been identified by the various Scrutiny Panels across the wide range of work carried out by the City of Durham be recognised and progressed by the Unitary Authority.

To this end it will be the intention over 2008/2009 for Recommendations made by City of Durham Scrutiny Panels to be forwarded not only to City of Durham’s Cabinet but also to the Unitary Authority to inform future Service Development.

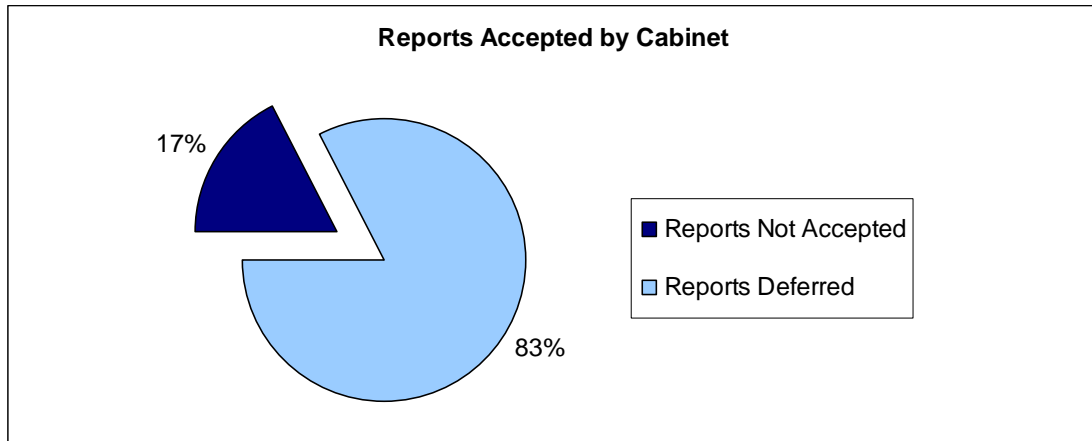
FACTS AND FIGURES



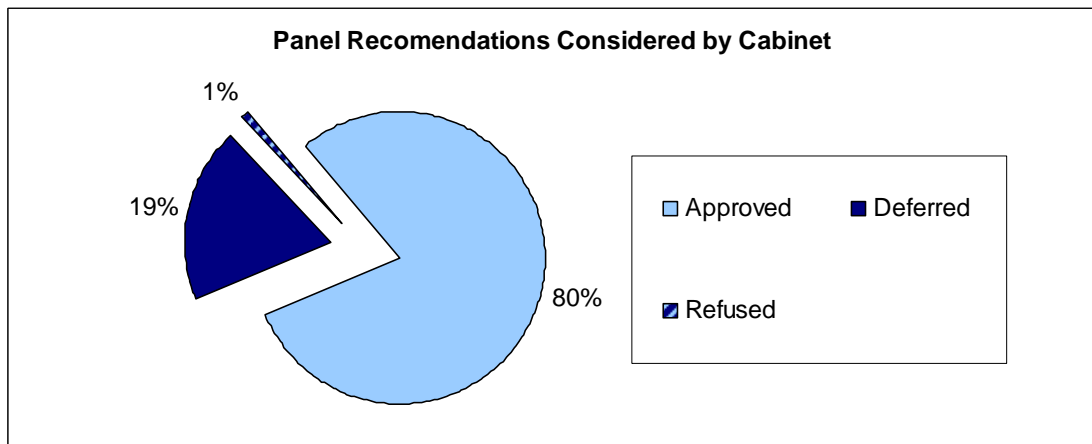
There was an increase of 70% in relation to the number of meetings held out of the City Centre, in comparison to the period 2006-2007.



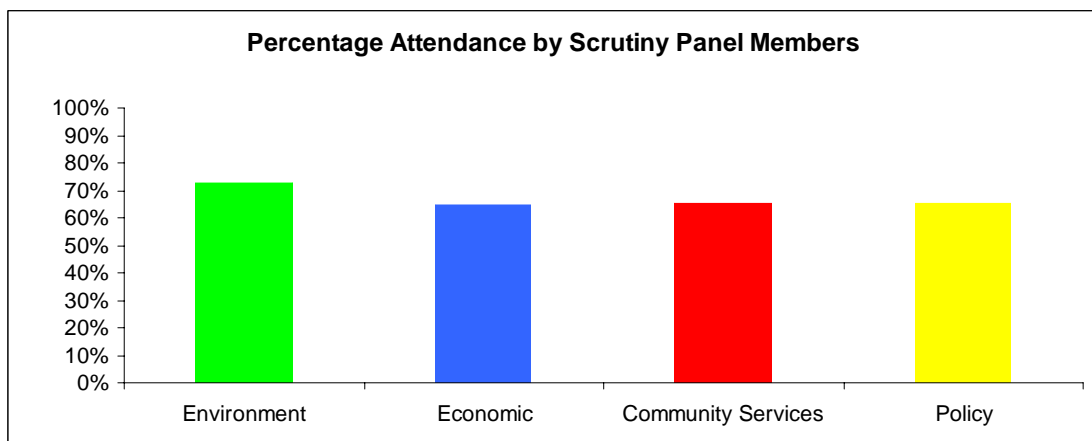
The number of new topics being considered reduced by 50% in comparison to the 2006-2007 period. Three factors that could have influenced this were; Local Government Reorganisation; an increase in the number of reviews of previous topics being required as per previous report recommendations; and the increased length of some of the new topics considered, i.e. these new topics were considered over many more meetings due to the breadth and complexity of those new topics.



Whilst effectively there was no change in the percentage of accepted reports in comparison to the 2006-2007 period, no reports were refused outright. The deferred reports were accepted (except a single recommendation from one report) at a later date.



Again, as with the figures relating to reports considered by Cabinet, the figures for recommendations considered by Cabinet were comparable to the equivalent period in 2006-2007. However, the number of deferred reports had increased by 16%, though these deferred recommendations were subsequently approved upon being submitted to Cabinet at a later date.



The Panel attendance figures showed a slight decrease, but were broadly comparable to those for the 2006-2007 period.

PANEL MEMBERSHIP 2007/2008

ECONOMIC SCRUTINY PANEL

Cllr. Amanda Hopgood (Chair)
Cllr. Brian Colledge (Vice Chair)

Councillors: Bartle, Guy, Kelly, Lightley, Marsden, Plews, Simmons, Simpson, Stoddart and Wilkes.

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Cllr. Barbara Howarth (Chair)
Cllr. Stuart Walton (Vice Chair)

Councillors: Crooks, Laverick, Lightley, Mavin, Moderate, Norman, Robinson, D. Smith, Taylor and Young.

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

Cllr. Philip Wolstenholme (Chair)
Cllr. Arnold Simpson (Vice Chair)

Councillors: Carr, Colledge, Crooks, Kelly, Martin, Mavin, Mitchell, Moderate, Turnbull and Wilkinson

POLICY SCRUTINY PANEL

Cllr. Mark Wilkes (Chair)
Cllr. David Freeman (Vice Chair)

Councillors: Cowper, Kellett, Lightley, Lodge, McDonnell, Martin, Simmons, Thompson, Walker and Wolstenholme.



FORWARD PLAN

In accordance with Regulations 13 and 14 of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2000, As Amended, details of matters likely to be the subject of key decisions to be made by the City Council in the following 4 month period, commencing on Tuesday, 1st July, 2008, are set out hereunder. Anyone wishing to make representations to the City Council Cabinet or to the Decision maker about the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made may do so by writing to the Executive Director, 17 Claypath, Durham City, DH1 1RH, by no later than Tuesday, 1st July, 2008.

Topic	Decision Maker	Target Date for Decision to be made	Consultees (if any)	Contacts	Background Documents
Cumulative Impact Survey	* Cabinet	July,2008	Numerous Consultees	Head of Legal and Strategic Services Tel: 0191 3018878	City of Durham Statement of Licensing Policy Licensing Act 2003

***Cabinet Members:** Councillors Bell, Moderate, Jackson, Pitts, Reynolds, Southwell, Thomson, van Zwanenberg & Woods

Publication Date: Tuesday, 17th June, 2008.

Effective Date: Tuesday, 1st July, 2008.

Councillor F. Reynolds
Leader of the Council

Forward Plan No. 74

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**14 July 2008****DECISIONS TAKEN BY PORTFOLIO MEMBERS**

No.	Portfolio Member	Nature of Decision	Date
1	Cllr Reynolds	Application received from Mr Fisher of 4 Finchale View, West Rainton enquiring if the council would consider selling to him land adjoining his property which he currently leases from the council. The applicant intends to use the land for vehicular hard standing and the possibility of constructing a double garage or allowing access to this existing garden on which he may construct a garage. Recommended that the application be approved .	3.6.08
2	Cllr Reynolds	Application received from N King Parish Clerk Coxhoe enquiring whether the council would consider granting a licence to place a village sign on council land at Coxhoe. Recommended that subject to conditions an area of 9 sq m or thereabouts be offered to the applicant by way of licence.	3.6.08
3	Cllr Reynolds	Application to purchase land to the rear of 103 Priors Grange High Pittington received from Mr Minto of 103 Priors Grange High Pittington enquiring if the council would consider selling to him land to the rear of his property to use the land to place sheds and as additional garden. Mr Minto currently maintains the land in question. Recommended that the application be refused.	10.6.08
4	Cllr Reynolds	Flourishing Communities Executive Board request for grant of £995.43 from Ludworth Green Space Arts & Crafts to provide a wider range of materials to offer children a wider variety of activities. Recommended to award the grant from the Flourishing communities (Small Grants) Fund.	13.6.08
5	Cllr Reynolds	Flourishing Communities Executive Board request for grant of £4454.95 to Attlee Square Communal Hall to refurbish the hall to make it a venue for receptions, meetings and events thus providing a meeting place for the elderly and a small venue facility for the young. Recommended to award the grant from the Flourishing communities (Small Grants) Fund.	13.6.08
6	Cllr Reynolds	Flourishing Communities Executive Board request for grant of £5,000 from Witton Gilbert Methodist Church to fund installation of disabled toilet and new kitchen. Recommended to award the grant from the Flourishing communities (Small Grants) Fund.	13.6.08
	E-mails	Application to Grant a Temporary Road Closure for an Illuminate 2008 Parade in Durham City on Saturday, 14 June 2008 Recommended that an Order be made in accordance with the provisions of Section 21 of the	29.5.08

		Town Police Clauses Act 1847 authorising the temporary closure	
7	Councillor Thomson	Application received in respect of a Home Loss payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from her home (Ref 320) Recommend that a payment of £4,400 be made to the applicant.	19.6.08
8	Councillor Reynolds	Application received from Mr Robinson of 27 Halliday Grove, Langley Moor enquiring if the Council would consider granting a vehicular access licence over Council land at 22 Lowland Road, Brandon. Recommend that the application be refused	19.6.08
9	Councillor Reynolds	Durham City Arts(DCA) occupies premises at Cottage 2 Fowlers Yard Back Silver Street by virtue of a 3 year lease which is due to expire in April 2009. As a business tenant Durham City Arts is entitled to renew the lease on substantially the same terms but in order to protect its position the City Council must now serve statutory notice on DCA not objecting to a new lease and otherwise indicating any revised terms. Recommendation to agree to the granting of a further 3 year lease to DCA.	26.6.08
10	Councillor Thomson	An Application has been received in respect of a Disturbance Payment as a result of the Council compulsorily displacing the applicant from her home (Ref 320). Recommend that a payment of £1,000 be made to the applicant	24.6.08
11	Councillor Reynolds	An application has been received from Mr Jamieson of 18 Alston Way, Meadowfield enquiring if the Council would consider selling to him land adjacent to his property for use solely for the purpose of extending his garden. Recommend that the application be refused.	26.6.08