

AGENDA ITEM: 7

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

8th FEBRUARY 2005

COMMUNITY STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To provide Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board with a summarised report of the individual Panels responses regarding the Community Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board approves the actions of the following Panels in relation to the Community Strategy :-

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Community Safety and Leisure | 11 th January 05 |
| Environment | 12 th January 05 |
| Children and Learning | 13 th January 05 |
| Social Care & Adult Services | 18 th January 05 |
| Economic Regen & Transport | 20 th January 05 |

PROGRESS OF THE PANELS

3. A copy of the draft Community Strategy was distributed to every member on a Scrutiny Panel. In addition a report outlining the background and the requirement for Scrutiny Panels views. The report contained a list which identified the theme within the Community strategy and the nominated lead officer and to which Panel the themes would be addressed.

4. The Overview and Scrutiny Board had already determined that the Panels' responses should be reported to the Board meeting of 8th February 2005 to ensure comments would be available to Middlesbrough Partnership for consideration without delaying their programme for completion of the Community Strategy.
5. The following briefly outlines the individual Panels' findings for the Board's consideration. It is understood these comments will be forwarded to the Middlesbrough Partnership for consideration before presenting a final draft to the Partnership meeting for their consideration/adoption. The Council's Executive will be asked to support the final draft before it is presented to Full Council in April for approval.

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

- 6 The Head of Streetscene Services presented the report that sought the Panel's views on the content of the draft Community Strategy, as part of the consultation process. The Theme relevant to the Environment Scrutiny Panel was "Transforming Our Local Environment".

It was hoped that the following outcomes would be achieved:-

- Cleaner town with reduced amounts of litter, graffiti and negligible fly tipping.
 - High quality parks and open spaces, valued by residents.
 - Public space that was viewed as safe and, therefore, well used by residents.
 - Increase in kerbside waste recycling by residents.
 - Improved air quality figures to dispel the perception of Middlesbrough.
 - Problems associated with climate change viewed as integral in decision making.
 - An active community sector engaged in environmental projects.
- 7 The Panel supported the contents of the draft Community Strategy in relation to Transforming the Local Environment. However, the following issues were raised: -
 - Whilst supporting the actions contained in the draft Strategy, a Member of the Panel expressed concern that the Panel had not been given adequate time in which to consider the relevant section for comment.
 - A query was raised regarding 'one-off' investment opportunities. Clarification was provided that once the draft Community Strategy was adopted, it would be adopted by the town as a whole and not just Middlesbrough Council. Once the Council has approved the Strategy and the objectives and targets contained therein, it would be more likely to have success in securing funding bids for such investment opportunities. Indeed, Government intends to use community strategies more and more in determining resource allocation.
 - A query regarding recycling was raised. It was confirmed that Middlesbrough was meeting its target of 18% and that only 12% of

Middlesbrough's refuse had gone to landfill last year which was significantly lower than most parts of the country.

CHILDREN AND LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

- 8 The Head of Lifelong Learning presented the report that sought the Panel's views on the content of the Children and Learning Section of the draft Community Strategy, as part of the consultation process. There are two parts to the theme, both of which are relevant to the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel. The first part is headed "Middlesbrough Learning Partnership".

Seven key priorities were established and are listed as:-

- Develop Middlesbrough as a Learning Community and promote Lifelong Learning to facilitate access to education and training, to improve the skill base
- Prepare all children to acquire the necessary skills to enable access to formal education
- Provide access to an appropriate curriculum, including vocational programmes for all secondary pupils, matched to individual needs with clear pathways for progression into further education, training or employment
- Improve attainment of all school pupils with particular emphasis on KS3 and KS4
- Significantly reduce the numbers of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and continue to reduce the 'not known' cohort
- Embed the agenda of inclusion to tackle absence and exclusion , through the use of new statutory powers
- Promote pride in Middlesbrough through citizenship, participation and raising self-esteem and aspiration.

- 9 The Panel supported the contents of the draft Community Strategy in relation to the Middlesbrough Learning Partnership. However, the following issue was raised:-

- A Panel Member requested that the figures quoted within the draft community strategy were updated to reflect the recently published figures.

- 10 The second theme to be presented to the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel was "Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership".

The key priorities established for this theme, are listed as:-

- in Middlesbrough, 56.2% of children lived in low income households, compared with 34.6% national average (low income = in receipt of Income Support or other benefits)
- in Middlesbrough PCT, there was the highest average decayed and missing teeth per child, at 2.24, as compared to the national average of 1. (It was

hoped that this was being addressed by the 'Brush Bus' scheme, whereby toothbrushes were distributed to schoolchildren, via a health promotion scheme).

- in Middlesbrough 9.9% of households were occupied by a single parent, compared to the national average of 6.4%.

11 The Panel supported the contents of the draft Community Strategy in relation to Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. However, the following issues were raised:-

- Discussion took place on the statistics provided and the consequences for the children of the town.
- A Member of the Panel asked why the children within the Middlesbrough PCT had such poor dental health problems, it was noted that this point is being looked at by the Health Scrutiny Panel.
- A Panel member enquired, as to what was the youngest age in which the Council could intervene in a child's life. It was noted that, with Sure Start schemes, intervention could be pre-birth and last until 5 years of age, when compulsory education began. However, social work intervention had to be asked for, unless an emergency occurred and a child was at risk. Families could access what services they required, but they could not be forced to support education.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL

12 As part of engaging Scrutiny as a formal consultee, members of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel were distributed with a draft copy of the Community Strategy for Members' consideration before the meeting. Panel members were required to address the respective parts of the draft Strategy, engage at the Panel meeting and report back to OSB.

13 The Panel was concerned that the elements associated with Community Safety had changed substantially to the report previously circulated to the Panel, and neither the revised copy or the amendments had been circulated in advance to Members. Consequently, the Panel could only respond in detail to the information conveyed at the meeting.

The Panel was advised that the main theme was "Creating Safer Communities" and the Panel concluded that they would endorse the updates and support the amendments conveyed at the meeting.

14 The Panel also noted the relative lack of reference to issues which are associated with Leisure, as leisure was within the Panel's remit and considered an important aspect when aimed at contributing towards a healthy lifestyle. The Panel would ask that this area be reconsidered to ensure proposals contained within the Community Strategy adequately reflect leisure.

SOCIAL CARE AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

- 15 The Panel endorsed the proposed Social Care content of the Community Strategy.
- 16 The panel also considered that the strategy contained a large number of aspirational actions for which the panel was concerned would be just a 'wish list'. The panel considered that it was important that the appropriate performance measures were in place to enable the effective monitoring of the proposed actions.
- 17 The panel also highlighted concern regarding the issue of smoking in Day Care Centres, Residential Care Homes and service users' homes. The Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities confirmed that centres and care homes have designated non smoking areas however restraints could not be operated in service users homes

ECONOMIC REGENERATION & TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL

- 18 The Panel endorsed the proposed Economic Vitality and Transport sections of the Community Strategy.
- 19 Members commented on the importance of working closely with the Esk Valley Rail Development Company on the Community Rail Development pilot project.
- 20 However with regard to the Business Support section, the panel considered that more emphasis should be included in the strategy on methods to encourage local entrepreneurs.
- 21 The panel also considered that the performance indicators and targets were ambitious and that progress made to date should not be ignored.
- 22 With regard to Culture, Members commented that there was a need for improvement in music venues and increase the number of music events.

COUNCILLOR MIKE CARR

CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background paper was used in the preparation of this report: -

26TH January 2005

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