

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

**A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 14 June 2005.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Carr (Chair); Councillors Booth, Robson, Rogers and T Ward.

**OFFICIALS:** J Bennington, G Brown, P Clark, J Ord, K E Robinson and E Williamson.

**\*\* APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mawston and Rooney.

### **\*\* DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

### **\*\* MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 3 May 2005 were submitted and approved.

## **EXECUTIVE FEEDBACK - SCRUTINY REPORTS - HEALTHY LIVING REVIEW - FAIR ACCESS TO CARE SERVICES**

As part of the scrutiny process and in a report of the Executive Manager it was reported that the Executive had considered the Board's comments in respect of the following final scrutiny reports:-

- a) Healthy Living Review - Health Scrutiny Panel
- b) Fair Access to Care Services - Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel.

The Executive had considered and supported both the Service Responses and the responses of the Corporate Management Team and had also agreed the proposed Action Plans.

Details of the recommendations contained within in each report together with the Action Plans had been incorporated into a report to be presented to the next Council meeting to be held on 22 June 2005.

NOTED

## **NIGHT TIME ECONOMY - ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL**

The Chair of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel presented the findings of the Panel's review of the Night Time Economy.

The Board's attention was drawn to the conclusions of the Panel in particular: -

- a) There is a clear need to develop and diversify the range of leisure uses and opportunities available in Middlesbrough town centre during the evening. This development is necessary because there is a need to:
  - i) Provide opportunities for new businesses and the further development of existing businesses that create more employment opportunities and further enhance the role of the town centre as the engine room of the town's economy;
  - ii) Counter the perception that the town centre is a place where drinking to excess is the main leisure activity and that this attracts, in the main, only young people; and
  - iii) Build Middlesbrough's reputation as the sub regional centre which is dependant upon the town centre being widely perceived as a place where people come in the evenings for entertainment and leisure that includes theatre, art, music of all kinds, cinema, sport and physical activity, shopping, dining and meeting people.

- b) It is clear from the survey and other evidence provided to the Panel that, whilst there is general agreement that this is desirable, the current position is a long way from this goal and there is some degree of scepticism in some quarters that this can be achieved. The view that Middlesbrough will never develop a café culture was put to the Panel. The Panel rejects this view.
- c) The Panel was presented with evidence that the town centre is beginning to change and develop in the desired direction, for example:
- i) The UGC Cinema has been very successful, attracting nearly one million people a year and other leisure facilities, especially restaurants have flourished at this end of the town centre;
  - ii) Linthorpe Road south is successfully supporting increasing numbers of restaurants and cafes;
  - iii) Planning consent has been given to develop two town centre office blocks into accommodation that will attract young professionals to live in the town centre;
  - iv) Town centre businesses reported to the Panel that they wish to diversify and develop their activities;
  - v) The Middlesbrough Institute for Modern Art (MIMA) and the new Civic square will be open in 2006 and will provide a new focal point for activities;
  - vi) The Council has ambitions to develop the concert facilities at the Town Hall and to provide a town centre theatre.
- d) There are a number of key areas, which require further investigation and policy development. These include:
- i) The need for secure evening parking for people visiting town centre venues;
  - ii) The need for improved evening public transport services to and from the town centre;
  - iii) The need to encourage retailers to provide early evening shopping opportunities;
  - iv) The need to address the public concern about personal security in the town centre in the evenings;
  - v) The need to ban drinking in public spaces in the town centre; and
  - vi) A recognition that there is a need to build confidence and work incrementally towards changing and diversifying the town centre leisure offer.
- e) Whilst the developments at Middlehaven are to be welcomed, we cannot afford to await developments here, nor is it desirable that this should be seen as the answer to diversification. It is the existing town centre that needs to diversify its evening economy.
- f) There is a need for the Council to develop a town centre diversification strategy and there is a need to establish a partnership body, led the Council, which owns and implements this strategy. The key elements of this strategy are likely to be:

- i) Encouraging and facilitating the development of a range of leisure and entertainment activities that will attract the public to the town centre during the evenings;
- ii) The development of living accommodation in and around the town centre that will attract a diverse range of people to live in the town centre;
- iii) Encouraging retailers to provide evening shopping opportunities;
- iv) Dealing with security and transport issues;
- v) Discouraging the further development of the kinds of pubs and clubs that currently exist within the town; and
- vi) Encouraging the development of restaurants, cafes and non-alcohol related leisure activities.

The Board considered the following recommendations of the Panel: -

1. That the Council accept the conclusions of the report and resolves to develop a town centre strategy that will lead to a diversification of the evening economy in Middlesbrough Town Centre.
2. That the Council establishes a town centre diversification partnership which promotes co-operation between the private and public sector in developing and implementing these proposals.
3. That as part of this overall strategy the Council pursues the provision of a town centre theatre and the improvement of the Town Hall Concert facilities with vigour.
4. That the Council considers banning the consumption of alcohol outside of licensed premises and their forecourts throughout the whole of the town centre area.

In terms of the methodology of the review the Board supported the use of market research in this particular case. Arising from the results of the survey it was suggested that a swimming amenity should be included in the facilities to be pursued as part of the overall strategy.

In commenting on the overall Town Centre strategy Members' referred to the potential impact of similar developments at Middlehaven.

**ORDERED** that subject to the addition of 'a swimming amenity' to recommendation 3 above, the findings and recommendations of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.

## **STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER 2004 TO 2006**

In a report of the Corporate Performance Manager details were provided of the results of year-end monitoring relating to the Council's Strategic Risk Register 2004-2005 and the 2005-2006 Register.

Pursuant to internal and external audits significant progress had been made by the Council in relation to its risk management approach which had included the development of a Corporate Risk Management Strategy (outlined the objectives and detailed the activities undertaken to ensure the effective management of risk) and a Strategic Risk Register (identified main strategic risks and detailed actions needed to contain the risks to an acceptable level).

Details were provided of the 20 identified risks (Appendix B) at 31 March 2005, which made up the Strategic Risk Register 2004/05 and the action taken to militate against the risks identified.

In terms of the 2005-2006 register 41 strategic risks had been identified of which 20 had been rolled forward from the previous register and 21 were newly identified risks. It was intended that

progress against the 41 risks would be monitored and reported on a quarterly basis (April - June, July - September, October - December, January - March).

In order to meet CPA requirements changes had been made in terms of the links to Council objectives. The register was divided under the headings of political, environmental, and social, technological, legislative, resources, competitive and customer/citizen.

The main points arising from the ensuing discussion were as follows: -

- a) a review of the Strategic Risk strategy, school ICT infrastructure and job evaluation were identified as possible topics for inclusion in the Board's work programme;
- b) a reference to maintaining links with all Council Members should be included under summary of approach of the risk factor relating to the Mayoral System;
- c) Ward Councillors to be involved in area initiatives should be included under the summary of approach in respect of the risk factor relating to Central Government approach to area initiatives.

**ORDERED** as follows: -

1. That the information provided be noted.
2. That the Board's comments as outlined be referred to the Executive.

#### **DIVERSITY ACTION PLANS 2004-2005**

In a report of the Head of Human Resources (Client Services) the Board was advised of the results of year-end monitoring relating to the Council's Diversity Action Plans 2004-2005 and the Diversity Action plans for June 2005 - May 2008.

The Diversity Action Plans for 2004/2005 contained 198 diversity objectives within 7 Diversity Action Plans and information was provided on the current status of such objectives. An indication was given of the key achievements over the last year, which included:

- the installation in the three main customer service points of Prestige Network, a telephone language line for people whose first language was not English;
- the setting up of a black Workers' Forum;
- the completion of a corporate strategy that embeds diversity;
- training initiatives on diversity and cultural awareness issues;
- assisted wheeled bin service for residents with mobility problems.

The Council had prepared a second Race Equality Scheme in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 which was a triennial plan which stated how the Authority would achieve the General and Specific duties encompassed in the Act to ensure that race equality was mainstreamed in all activities undertaken. Accordingly 7 new Diversity Action Plans 2005-2008 had been produced documenting how the Council would progress diversity in relation to Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Religion and Belief, Sexual Orientation and Generic.

Progress against each identified objective, 309 for the next three years, would be monitored on a quarterly basis (June - August 2005, September - November 2005, December 2005 - February 2006 and March - May 2006).

Members sought clarification in relation to; the existence of any training for reception staff in respect of dealing with members of the public with hearing difficulties; and the availability of Council premises for religious/belief groups. It was confirmed that further information could be provided on such issues.

NOTED

**DIVERSITY POLICY 2005 - RACE EQUALITY SCHEME 2005/2008**

In a report of the Head of Human Resources (Client Services) the Board was advised of the revised Diversity Policy 2005 and Middlesbrough Council's second Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008.

The Diversity Policy 2005 updated the previous policy to reflect new priorities and changes in the organisation and legislation.

The Council's second Race Equality Scheme as indicated in the previous report outlined above, covered both service delivery and employment issues and would be adapted, amended and modified to take into account new priorities and policies that may arise over the next three years.

Given the corporate nature of both documents the Board suggested that the reports should be considered by a wider representative group of Members rather than at an Individual Executive Decision Making Meeting (Executive Member for Environment) as currently proposed.

NOTED

**EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

As part of the Board's remit in terms of holding the Executive to account a report of the Senior Scrutiny Officer was submitted which identified the most recent entries to the Executive's Forward Work Programme since the last report to the Board. It was pointed out that this would not negate Non Executive Member's ability to call-in a decision after it had been made.

NOTED

**SCRUTINY REVIEWS - CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS**

It was confirmed that no requests for scrutiny reviews had been received from the Executive, Non Executive Members or members of the public.

NOTED

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - WORK PROGRAMME 2005/2006**

In a report of the Senior Scrutiny Officer regarding the Board's draft Work Programme 2005-06 an indication was given of the increased work by the Board in particular the integration of the Resources and Audit Scrutiny Panel and consideration of corporate issues.

As previously indicated, Members had identified possible topics for inclusion in the work programme to be discussed further at the next meeting of the Board to be held on 21 June 2005. Such topics included job evaluation, school ICT infrastructure, Strategic Risk strategy and Policy Framework.

NOTED

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - SCRUTINY PANELS - POSITION STATEMENT**

In a report of the Chair of the Board an update was provided on the current position regarding the conclusion of the 2004/05 work programme and an indication of the Panel's initial meeting dates which had been arranged to consider the 2005/06 work programme.

NOTED AND APPROVED

**CALL IN REQUESTS**

It was confirmed that no requests had been received to call-in a decision.