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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 4 October 2005.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Carr (Chair)  
Councillors Booth, McTigue, Mawston and Robson.

**OFFICIALS:** J Bennington, G Brown, P Clark, A Crawford, J Ord, P Slocombe and E Williamson.

**\*\* PRESENT AS AN OBSERVER:** Councillor Brunton (Executive Member Children's Services) and Councillor P Thompson (Executive Member Education and Skills).

**\*\* APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cole, Dryden, Rogers, Rooney and Wilson.

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

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

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

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 24 August, 6 September and 21 September 2005 were submitted and approved.

## **YOUTH SERVICE ACTION PLAN – CHILDREN AND LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL**

Councillor Booth a Member of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel presented the findings of the Panel's investigation into the Youth Service Action Plan following its Ofsted inspection.

The Panel had concluded that the Action Plan was an appropriate and logical response to the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection although it was considered that more information could have been included in relation to the monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan.

The Board considered the following recommendations of the Panel: -

- a) That the updated Action Plan is submitted to the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel in six months time when the consultants report and the content of the Green Paper 'Youth matters' had been taken into account.
- b) That in updating the Action Plan, more information is included around how the implementation of the Action Plan would be monitored namely two additional columns to be added to the Action Plan, headed 'Actual Developments' and 'Success Criteria' to present a clearer picture of the current position.
- c) That the Youth Service re-appraises the completion date for Action Plan 2.4. with a view to bringing it forward to January 2006.

Members sought clarification and made a number of observations in relation to the following aspects: -

- i) it was confirmed that Ofsted had offered no guidance in terms of the compilation of the Action Plan;
- ii) an indication was given as to how the review of the management structure of the Youth Service would be undertaken as shown in the Action Plan;
- iii) Members referred to the importance of the monitoring arrangements for the implementation of the Action Plan;

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- iv) in terms of the intended submission of the updated Action Plan to the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel in six months time it was confirmed that such a period was effective from when the Panel approved the final report.

**ORDERED** as follows: -

1. That the findings and recommendations of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.
2. That the six months time period referred to in recommendation (a) above commence from the date when the Panel approved the final report.
3. That the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel consider the updated Action Plan in the light of:-
  - a) the Consultant's report on the review of the management structure of the Youth Service;
  - b) the Green Paper on 'Youth Matters';
  - c) the monitoring arrangements for the implementation of the Action Plan.

#### **WARDEN'S SERVICE – COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL**

A final report of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel on the findings of the Panel's assessment and suggested proposals relating to the Council's Warden Service had been circulated.

The Chair referred to the meeting of the Executive held on 27 September 2005 and in particular the final report and response to the Panel's findings in respect of the Active Intelligence Mapping process. It was pointed out that in considering such a report the Mayor had indicated his intention for certain aspects of the role and function of the warden service to be examined.

The Chair of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel reported upon the Panel's findings and recommendations in respect of the Council's Warden Service.

Members expressed the need for further evidence in respect of the Police's perspective; impact of the service in relation to crime figures; public's perception; current and future funding arrangements for the service. It was also considered that the supporting role of wardens should be more clearly defined.

**ORDERED** as follows: -

1. That the report of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel in respect of the Council's Warden Service be noted.
2. That the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel re-examine the report in the light of:-
  - i) further evidence from the Mayor, Executive Member for Community Safety and Leisure and appropriate Officers following the review of the supporting role and function of the warden service;
  - ii) taking into account the outcome of (i) above consideration be given to further evidence being sought in relation to the Police perspective and the funding arrangements for the warden service.

#### **EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

As part of the scrutiny process 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.

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**ORDERED** as follows: -

1. That the information provided be noted.
2. That in the light of the Board's recommendations following its meeting held on 3 August 2005 relating to the Call-In procedure in respect of Building Sustainable Communities – Inner Middlesbrough further information be provided on the involvement of scrutiny in respect of the following:-
  - a) report to Executive (25 October 2005) in relation to Housing Regeneration Strategy;
  - b) the decision of the Board for details of implementation including consultation mechanisms to be presented to the Economic Regeneration and Scrutiny Panel.

### **SCRUTINY REVIEWS - CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS**

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

NOTED

### **SCRUTINY PANELS - PROGRESS REPORTS**

A report of the Chair of each Scrutiny Panel was submitted which outlined progress on current activities.

In the absence of a quorum and one of the external witnesses it was noted that the scheduled meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel on 28 September 2005 had been adjourned.

NOTED

### **BUDGET ESTIMATES**

The Director of Resources submitted a report which outlined a response in accordance with the statutory procedure of Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 which required an authority's Chief Finance Officer to advise Members on: -

- a) the robustness of the budget forecasts; and
- b) the adequacy of the proposed level of financial reserves.

The setting of the 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 Budget had been based on work undertaken across all Council Services regarding the detailed preparation of expenditure and income forecasts following consultation with Members, Partners, Community Council representatives and Council Officers.

It was the opinion of the Director of Resources that the budget calculations for 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 were robust in that:

- a) proper medium term budget planning and monitoring processes were in place and maintained which ensured that known commitments were provided for budgets which were set in real terms with the effect on service delivery clearly identified;
- b) appropriate provisions were made within the budget for pay and inflation;
- c) a prudent view of the net costs of the Authorities overall cash flow and Prudential borrowing had been taken;
- d) an analysis of financial risks affecting the budget were completed;

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- e) appropriate consideration had been given to the level of Council Tax and external funding available to the Council.

The Director of Resources stated that in his view the proposed level of financial reserves was adequate given that: -

- i) it was appropriate to maintain a minimum of 2% of General Fund net expenditure which equated to between £3.5m and £3.8m over the medium term based on the extent to which budget monitoring processes were working effectively and the extent to which specific provisions were made to meet known and expected liabilities;
- ii) provision had been made for the impact of housing stock transfer and the associated Pension Fund liabilities;
- iii) any residual Housing Revenue Account balances would become available for use by the Council during 2006/2007;
- iv) the Council had been successful in achieving an increase in the population assumptions made by the Office of national Statistics and that any backdated grant should be applied against new infrastructure initiatives rather than being applied to support ongoing expenditure;
- v) appropriate earmarked provisions had been made for known liabilities, including equal pay and insurance liabilities.

NOTED AND APPROVED

#### **CALL IN REQUESTS**

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

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS – ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2005/2006**

With the approval of the Chair a copy of the draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2005/2006 was circulated at the meeting for Members' comments.

NOTED