

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 6 February 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor Carr (Chair), Councillors Booth, Cole, Robson, Rooney, Sanderson and T Ward.

OFFICIALS: J Bennington, I Busby, P Clark, M Cooper, A Crawford, J Ord and E Williamson.

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dryden, Mawston and Wilson.

**** WELCOME – COUNCILLOR SANDERSON**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sanderson who was attending his first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in the current Municipal Year following his recent appointment to the Board.

**** 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 9 January 2007 were submitted and approved.

WEST MIDDLESBROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD TRUST – FINAL REPORT – ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chair of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel presented the findings of the Panel's scrutiny review of the West Middlesbrough Neighbourhood Trust.

The Board considered the following conclusions and recommendations of the Panel based on the submitted evidence:

Conclusions:

- a) The Panel was impressed by the work of the Trust and the progress that it had made, with its key partners, initiating neighbourhood management, increasing educational attainment and widening employment opportunities.
- b) The Panel was also pleased to see that the Trust had an excellent rating from the Annual Performance Management Framework, which was moderated by the Audit Commission.
- c) The Panel was also pleased to hear about the progress that was now being made in improving the housing stock and the environment in West Middlesbrough.
- d) The Panel had several areas of concern about the future of the Trust, these were:-
 - i) the proposed creation of a small, unaccountable body to manage a publicly funded programme;
 - ii) the Trust's decision to withdraw support from local consultative bodies and the level of mistrust amongst the local community that this appeared to have generated;
 - iii) the reduced involvement of the local authority in the management of the programme;
 - iv) the implausibility of the sustainability strategy.

Recommendations:

- i) That the considerable achievements of the West Middlesbrough Neighbourhood Trust in regenerating West Middlesbrough are recognised and celebrated.
- ii) That the Local Authority should exercise its role as the Accountable Body to influence the Trust to adopt a structure that is far more inclusive and open to influence from the local community than is currently envisaged and that it has a far more influential role for the local authority, including elected Members.
- iii) That the Local Authority should assist the West Middlesbrough Neighbourhood Trust in developing a credible and viable strategy to sustain the improvements gained beyond the end of the New Deal for Communities funding in 2010.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.

DIGNITY IN CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE – FINAL REPORT – SOCIAL AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chair of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel presented the findings of the Panel's scrutiny review of Dignity in Care for Older People.

The Board considered the following recommendations of the Panel based on the submitted evidence:

- i) That the Council, where possible, publicises its support of the Dignity in Care campaign and that the Social Care Department works with providers to ensure that the examples of good practice in Middlesbrough are highlighted.
- ii) That the Social Care Department come back to the Panel with the results of the next home care survey that will be undertaken and comment on how they have engaged with more vulnerable service users and the BME community to ensure that their views are sought. Service users should also be asked to comment on whether or not they feel they are treated with dignity.
- iii) That a process is established to ensure that the views of those service users who receive a Direct Payment and purchase care outside of the Social Care Department's provision are sought on the standard of care that they receive.
- iv) That a question is added to the Residential Care – Client Survey, which is used in the assessment of a grading for a residential home, which asks specifically if the client feels they are treated with dignity by the staff.
- v) That, following a year of the implementation of the grading system for residential homes, the Social Care Department attends a Panel meeting to update Members on a number of related issues:-
 - a) to report on how the scheme has been implemented and the impact that it has had;
 - b) the number of homes in each designated category and what work is being undertaken to help improve the standards of homes at the lower end of the scale;
 - c) details of the standards that have been used to grade each home;
 - d) details of the responses regarding questions that assess if people feel they have been treated with dignity (including those receiving respite care at homes).

- vi) That the Social Care Department considers working with other authorities in order to standardise the complaint forms that care home managers complete.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.

EXECUTIVE FEEDBACK – PARKING ON AND PROTECTING GRASS VERGES

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 relation to the final report in respect of parking on and protecting grass verges.

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

NOTED

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 and members of the public since the last meeting of the Board.

NOTED

SCRUTINY PANELS – PROGRESS REPORTS – HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY REVIEW – FUTURE REVIEWS

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

Specific reference was made to the following areas of examination.

Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel:

The Panel at its meeting held on 25 January 2007 received an update on the Housing Renewal Policy Review in accordance with one of the recommendations emanating from the Call-In procedure which had taken place in July 2006.

It was confirmed that negotiations for the acquisition of properties within phase 1a of the clearance area had commenced in September. The Council had made significant progress in acquiring properties, with 148 owners currently in negotiation to sell their properties.

Given that the process of acquisitions was at an early stage, only four owner-occupiers had submitted applications to the Council for the Older Housing Relocation Assistance Scheme (OHRAS). Although it had not yet been possible to provide a comprehensive review of how OHRAS was working in practice it was considered that the market data demonstrated that the level of OHRAS remained sufficient to bridge the gap between properties within the Older Housing clearance area and the retained area.

The Panel had agreed that a further update be submitted to the Panel in six months time.

Health Scrutiny:

Specific reference was made to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel, which had published its report into Acute Services Proposals following the referral to the Secretary of State for Health, by the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

The Secretary of State had announced support for the proposals, resulting in a short term concentration of consultant led maternity and paediatrics at University Hospital of North Tees before a new single site hospital was built to serve the communities north of the river.

It was noted that the concept of a single site for north of the river had not been part of the Acute Services Proposals but it had been a recurrent theme as a suggested option.

The overall joint scrutiny process was seen as a good example of inter-authority working and how it could influence the decision making process.

Work Programmes:

In terms of the remainder of the current Municipal Year and taking into account time constraints and the forthcoming elections, Scrutiny Panels had agreed to receive a number of updates on the implementation and impact of recommendations from previous reviews.

NOTED

CALL IN REQUESTS

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