

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 24 September 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor Carr (Chair), Councillors Biswas, Cox, G Rogers, Rooney and Williams.

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

**** PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillor Kerr, Deputy Mayor.

**** APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bishop, Cole, Ismail, Mawston and Ward.

**** 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 28 August 2007 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

DEPUTY MAYOR

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Kerr thanked the Board for the invitation and opportunity to outline the work and scope of the portfolio of the Deputy Mayor, the key areas of which included the following: -

- a) To lead on corporate strategic issues in relation to central services, financial and personnel aspects.
- b) To promote and co-ordinate liaison between the Mayor, the Executive and non-Executive Members on a full range of services including the integrated performance and budget clinics.
- c) To promote and develop Member accountability especially in relation to Members' performance both in terms of the general framework and the area specific to Executive Members.
- d) To undertake such duties as may be directed by the Mayor.

In terms of current and impending key issues reference was made to ongoing work in respect of the following: -

- i) the decline in Key Stage 3 results as reflected across the UK;
- ii) collection rates of Council Tax;
- iii) development of Middlehaven including improved access to the area;
- iv) maintaining four-star rating as part of the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) from the Government's Audit Commission.

Support was also provided of a non-political nature in representing the Council at certain functions in the absence of the Chair of the Council or the Mayor.

Confirmation was given of ongoing work and discussions in relation to long-standing regeneration projects such as Middlehaven, Grove Hill and Hemlington Grange. Other responsibilities included involvement in member development and training.

ORDERED that the Deputy Mayor be thanked for the information provided.

CONSOLIDATED PERFORMANCE CLINIC REPORT APRIL TO JUNE 2007

In a report of the Principal Corporate Development Officer details were provided of the Council's performance, for the first quarter of 2007/2008 in respect of:

- a) Key Planned Actions given in the 2006/2007 Strategic Plan
- b) Best Value Performance Indicators.

In overall terms it was considered that the Council had performed well in the first quarter of 2007/08. It was confirmed that 94% of Key Planned Actions were on target to be achieved within timescale and 64% of BVPIs were expected to achieve the target set.

The Board was advised that at the first quarter performance clinics it was considered that directorates had been overly optimistic in their estimates, which may impact on their ability to put in place remedial actions at an early stage to ensure that targets were met.

Performance against planned actions and BVPIs for the first quarter 2007/2008 was considered to be progressing well although estimated performance against BVPIs targets and predicted end of year performance needed to be monitored carefully to ensure that problems of under performance were identified in sufficient time to put in place remedial action to ensure that performance was back on track.

It was acknowledged that a number of targets with particular regard to regeneration were dependent upon external agencies and/or funding. Members emphasised that such circumstances should be reflected in the data and that the extent of the Council's control and/or contribution should be clearly identified.

In commenting on the BVPIs in particular housing benefits specific reference was made to the measures to be undertaken in an attempt to achieve the target in respect of accuracy of calculation on the amount of benefit due (BV 79 (a)).

The Board acknowledged the difficulties in achieving the correct balance between setting aspirational and realistic targets.

ORDERED that the information provided be noted.

EXECUTIVE'S 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.

Specific reference was made to a report in respect of Trade Waste, which had been identified within the Plan to be considered by the Executive at a meeting to be held on 15 October 2007. Given the current topic of investigation by the Environment Scrutiny Panel on the Waste Services Review the Board requested that the position should be clarified and the report be brought to the attention of the Panel.

In response to concerns regarding an overall lack of detailed information in a number of cases it was confirmed that the matter had been raised and was currently being investigated.

NOTED AND APPROVED

SCRUTINY REVIEWS - CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS

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

SCRUTINY PANELS – PROGRESS REPORTS

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

NOTED

CALL IN REQUESTS

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

AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL - CORPORATE ISSUES

The Chair referred to the meeting of the Board held on 28 August 2007 when it had been agreed to consider the establishment of an Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel to examine the current process of the Executive Scheme of Delegation.

With the approval of the Chair and the Board a report was circulated at the meeting, which gave an indication of the possible subject matters to be considered by the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel. As previously indicated it was considered appropriate for the Board to establish an Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel to examine issues of a corporate nature, which may arise.

The suggested terms of reference for the initial and future topics for the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel were outlined as follows: -

- a) To examine the current process of the Executive Scheme of Delegation and the process for undertaking Executive decisions.
- b) To undertake scrutiny examination on corporate issues as directed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

ORDERED that an Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel to consider corporate issues be established comprising 8 Members (5 Labour: 1 Conservative, 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 unallocated) its first topic of examination to be the current process of the Executive Scheme of Delegation.