

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 18 December 2007.

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

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

**** PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillor Brunton, Executive Member for Social Care.

**** APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bishop, Dryden and Ward.

**** 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 20, 22 and 29 November 2007 were taken as read and approved as a correct record subject to the inclusion of a declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest of the Chair, Councillor Carr in respect of the meeting held on 29 November 2007 as he was a member of the Erimus Board.

EXECUTIVE MEMBER – SOCIAL CARE

Councillor Brunton thanked the Board for the invitation to attend and opportunity to outline the work and scope of the portfolio of the Executive Member for Social Care. The portfolio included the overseeing of a range of social care and health services, which covered adult services, poverty and health, street wardens and a number of social services' partnerships.

It was confirmed that the CSCI star ratings for Adult Social Services had been published. Middlesbrough Department of Social Care had achieved the highest possible rating having been judged as 'Excellent' in delivering outcomes and 'Excellent' capacity for improvement. It was pointed out that only 18 local authorities in the UK had achieved this standard.

The main areas of responsibility included the following: -

- a) the Community Care Plan in terms of the policy framework;
- b) other plans and strategies included Supporting People Strategy, Better Care Higher Standards, Prevention Strategy, Drug Treatment Plan, National Health Service Plan, Older People's Strategy, Physical Disabilities Strategy, Social Services' Equality Plan, Social Services' Care Service Plan, Mental Health Strategy, Learning Disabilities Strategy;
- c) services and functions included Adult Services, Social Services Performance and Modernisation, Poverty, Health and Social Services' Partnerships and Street Wardens.

The Board was advised of the current work programme the key areas of which included: -

- much work was being undertaken to tackle the complex needs of an increasing number of elderly people;
- ongoing work to facilitate and promote independence and helping people to live at home;
- in the light of an increased demand efforts were being made to develop extra care provision;
- promoting healthier lifestyles and preventative services was regarded as a high priority and would assist in the long term of reducing charges for care;

- pursuing strategy for Telecare Services;
- extensive work was carried out in partnership in particular with Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust and voluntary groups;
- ongoing work to tackle drug and alcohol associated problems was regarded as a high priority;
- further work was to be undertaken on developing work opportunities for people with learning disabilities, physically disabled or with mental health problems.

Reference was made to Ayresome Industries, which had shown recent significant improvements and was developing new social enterprises.

In terms of the overall budget the Department had achieved financial balance for the third year running and was in a better position to cope with and respond to ongoing and arising pressures.

During the ensuing discussion confirmation was given of the following: -

- commissioning of care home services was now on the basis of agreement on quality assurance of services;
- street warden service was now with the Social Care Department given the change of emphasis of the work associated with preventative measures and working with vulnerable people such as the elderly and people with mental health problems;
- in terms of managing resources many of the services provided were statutory and therefore robust financial management arrangements were required to ensure expenditure was well balanced to reflect the changing balance of service costs related to the evolving pattern of services.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That the Executive Member for Social Care be thanked for the information provided.
2. That congratulations be extended to all concerned for the Department receiving excellent star ratings for Adult Social Services in delivery of outcomes and capacity for improvement.

PEOPLE STRATEGY 2007 TO 2010 DRAFT

The Director of Human Resources presented a report regarding the draft People Strategy 2007-2010, which had been endorsed by the Executive at its meeting, held on 11 December 2007. The Strategy linked the Council's overall vision, values and priorities with national and regional challenges whilst also demonstrating how these would be achieved in HR terms.

The Strategy had previously been annual but in 2007 had been updated and developed into a three year plan in line with national guidelines. The draft Strategy 2007/2010 amalgamated the organisations' strategy human resource requirements and workforce planning processes to form Middlesbrough Council's overarching approach to people management for the next three years.

The format of the People Strategy 2007/2010 had evolved and now comprised:

Part One: The People Strategy providing an overview of the medium-term priorities for all strategic human resources and the workforce planning process;

Part Two: The Corporate Workforce Plan which explained how the human resources priorities would be delivered in practical and operational terms and detailed how it was intended to address current and future skill requirements;

Part Three: The Workforce Profile, which contained an analysis of the current workforce of Middlesbrough Council and other statistical information, used in the workforce planning process. Members sought clarification on a number of areas including the following: -

- a) it was noted that the percentage of casual and temporary staff was in line with national averages;
- b) reference was made to a current project relating to casual and temporary staff the number of which had reduced in recent years;
- c) in commenting on the number of staff leaving the Authority an indication was given of the aim to develop new and different ways of recruiting and retaining staff;
- d) it was noted that where the Council was shown to have staff shortages many other local authorities had demonstrated similar patterns;
- e) the overall consultation process included the Black and Minority Ethnic Focus Group to pursue a number of initiatives to recruit from all backgrounds;
- f) it was confirmed that further detailed information could be provided on the numbers involved in the apprenticeship scheme;
- g) 3% of employees with a Disability compared to a new national figure of 4%;
- h) it was noted that more accurate figures had been obtained regarding the above percentage the numbers of which had shown to have increased;
- i) confirmation was given that measures were being pursued to ensure that the provision of reliable workforce data was a priority in the workforce plan.

Information was also provided on the second phase of the Single Status Job Evaluation process which was due to be completed by the end of March 2007 involving 900 staff approximately and 600 different jobs. A programme of briefing sessions was currently being carried out.

ORDERED that the information provided be noted.

CONSOLIDATED PERFORMANCE CLINIC REPORT JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2007

In a report of the Principal Corporate Development Officer details were provided of the Council's performance, for second quarter July to September 2006/07 in relation to: -

- a) Key Planned Actions given in the 2007/2008 Strategic Plan
- b) Best Value Performance Indicators
- c) Local Area Agreement targets.

In overall terms it was considered that the Council had performed well in the second quarter of 2007/2008 with 90% of Key Planned Actions being on target to be achieved within timescale.

It was reported that 87% of planned actions were on target to be achieved within the timescale set and 63% of BVPIs were on target to meet the target set for the end of the year which compared with an end of year performance of 91% of planned actions achieved and 53% of BVPIs achieving target performance.

In terms of the progress for 2007/2008, 94 of the 156 targets within Middlesbrough's Local Area Agreement were reported to be on target.

Reference was made to the 240 Planned Actions for 2007/08. Of the 235 reported for the second quarter, 212 (90%) were on target to be achieved within the timescale set and 23 (10%) were not on target.

Members sought clarification on and details were provided of the Planned Actions not achieving the target set and the agreed response.

ORDERED that the information provided be noted.

SCRUTINY REVIEW – RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION

The Senior Scrutiny Officer submitted a report which outlined progress achieved in relation to the implementation of agreed Executive actions resulting from the consideration of Scrutiny reports.

In terms of the Executive actions which should have been implemented by October 2007 (Appendix A), 430 had been implemented, 14 partially completed and 4 had been not been implemented as a result of funding issues.

Appendix B of the report gave an update in relation to the Health Scrutiny Action Plan.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That the information provided be noted.
2. That future quarterly update reports be based over a period of 18 months.

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.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS – AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL – EXECUTIVE SCHEME OF DELEGATION

With the approval of the Chair, the Board considered a report on the outcome of deliberations by the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel at its meeting held on 15 November 2007 regarding their findings on the application of the Executive Scheme of Delegations.

The report contained the following recommendations: -

- i) That the Forward Work Programme is brought fully up to date as soon as possible.
- ii) That only routine, administrative or technical decisions or those, which are urgent, are taken at Individual Executive Member Meetings.
- iii) That so far as possible, decisions of a wider political or public interest are taken by the Executive as a whole.
- iv) That, subject to the ruling of the Chair, non-Executive elected Members are invited to comment on all issues for decision at the Executive.

ORDERED that the report be approved and referred to the Executive.