

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 1 July 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor Brunton (Chair), Councillors Cox, Dryden, J Hobson, Ismail, Khan, Mawston, Purvis, Sanderson and Williams.

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

**** PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillor Carr, Executive Member for Children, Families and Learning.

**** PRESENT AS AN OBSERVER:** Councillors McPartland and Rehman.

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cole, C Hobson and J A Walker.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**** MINUTES – MATTERS ARISING – REVENUE OUTTURN 2007/2008**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 3 June 2008 were submitted.

Members referred to the report considered at the meeting of the Board held on 3 June in relation to the Revenue Outturn 2007/2008 and requested that further clarification be provided regarding the variance of £10,000 in respect of local elections.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 3 June 2008 be approved subject to the inclusion of Councillor Mawston in the list of apologies for absence.
2. That further information be provided in relation to the £10,000 variance in respect of local elections as identified in the report regarding the Revenue Outturn 2007/2008.

YOUTH COUNCIL

A report of the Executive Office Manager had previously been circulated which sought the views of the Board on plans to provide the Youth Council with opportunities to participate in the Council's decision-making processes.

The Executive Member for Children, Families and Learning outlined the main proposals the key areas of which were as follows: -

- improve the way the Youth Council was consulted on important issues relevant to young people;
- Youth Council invited to contribute to Council decision making through the scrutiny process and for the Council to provide assistance in terms of training and support to undertake three investigations per year;
- work jointly with the Youth Council to produce young persons' guide on their democratic rights.

The Executive at its meeting held on 1 April 2008 had approved the proposals and as part of the consultation process had agreed to seek the views of both the Youth Council and the Board. The Youth Council at its meeting held on 18 June had agreed to the proposals.

Specific reference was made to the proposed arrangements for dealing with a final report using the existing Council framework. It was suggested that the process could be more streamlined in that it should not be a requirement for Final reports to be submitted to Scrutiny Panels but they could be submitted direct to the Board following consideration by the Youth Council.

Members sought clarification regarding Officer support, which would be made available by the Scrutiny Team in terms of the initial stages in commencing a scrutiny investigation and the day to day administrative support provided by the Youth Service.

Members asked if consideration had been given to offering some form of reward system in acknowledgement of the work undertaken by the Youth Council. It was confirmed that whilst there were no financial proposals there might be other ways of rewarding such work for example a celebratory event.

The Board concluded as follows: -

- i) the proposals to encourage the involvement of young people and provide the Youth Council with opportunities to participate in the Council's decision-making processes as outlined were supported;
- ii) it was agreed that the Executive should examine the possibility of rewarding the Youth Council in some way in acknowledgement of the work undertaken;
- iii) in order to further demonstrate the importance of the involvement of young people on relevant issues consideration be given to the inclusion of an additional heading of 'Youth Implications' under the current sub-heading of 'Financial, Legal and Ward Implications' in the general format for Committee, Executive and Scrutiny reports;
- iv) the suggestion to remove the requirement for Final reports of the Youth Council Panel to be submitted to Scrutiny Panels prior to submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Board was supported.

ORDERED that a report based on the conclusions of the Board as outlined above be submitted to the Executive.

EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

As part of the Board's remit in terms of holding the Executive to account Members considered a report of the Executive Office Manager which identified the forthcoming decisions of the Executive as outlined in Appendix A of the report submitted.

NOTED

CONSOLIDATED PERFORMANCE CLINIC REPORT APRIL 2007 TO MARCH 2008

The Principal Corporate Development Officer presented a report which provided an overview of Council performance for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. An update was also provided on the implementation of the new national indicators.

It was stated that the Council had performed well in 2007/2008 with specific reference being made to the following: -

- 87% of Planned Actions had been achieved;
- 79% of LAA targets had been achieved;
- 64% of BVPIs had been met or exceeded the target set;
- 76% of BVPIs had either improved or remained the same compared to performance during 2006/2007;
- CPA 2007 score retained four stars and 'Improving Strongly' for the Direction of Travel';

- Strategic risks were monitored and mitigated in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy.

The Council had achieved a high percentage of the Planned Actions, LAA Actions and BVPI targets set as outlined in table 1 of the report submitted.

The approach taken by Service Areas to mitigate strategic risks were outlined in the report together with a summary of Service Area performance against the Planned Actions. It was noted that all service areas were achieving a high level of performance with Environment achieving the highest proportion of targets at 95% and Social Care achieving the lowest outturn, 81%. It was pointed out however that the information for a number of Social Care Planned Actions relied on other organisations such as the Primary Care Trust, the direction and requirements from which had to be taken into account.

It was reported that the outturn in respect of BVPIs ranged from 45% of targets achieved for Children, Families and Learning to 83% of targets achieved within Social Care. It was pointed out that many in respect of the Children Families and Learning targets were negotiated using a national formula and the targets set for Middlesbrough were often deemed to be over ambitious.

Comparative information was provided in relation to the performance of BVPIs between 2006/2007 and 2007/2008. It was confirmed that performance during 2007/2008 in 93 (76%) BVPIs had improved or remained the same compared to performance during 2006/2007.

The report indicated that structuring the Local Area Agreement around the themes and strategic priorities of the Community Strategy had provided a coherent framework for Middlesbrough Council to measure its contribution to achieving LAA targets.

The Board was advised of a new national indicator set which had been introduced on 1 April 2008. Given the different ways in which performance would be collated and reported accountability sessions were being held within each department to ensure managers took responsibility for individual indicators and to ensure they were able to collect robust and reliable information in accordance with national definitions.

The Board sought further details and clarification on a number of areas including the following: -

- a) in relation to only 64% of 79 BVPIs achieving target it was explained that whilst improvements had been attained a number of targets had been imposed nationally and had proved to be very challenging to achieve;
- b) Members questioned whether or not any of the targets which were considered impossible to achieve had been challenged and more reasonable targets set;
- c) in respect of Children, Families and Learning for which only 45% of above mentioned BVPI targets had been achieved it was noted that there were ongoing discussions between the Authority and Government departments to have more realistic targets appropriate to Middlesbrough;
- d) it was confirmed that the changes to the new national indicator set would result in more user friendly data;
- e) in terms of the 35% (Social Care) (performance against LAA targets) not on target it was explained that many targets related to healthy living and life expectancy rates.

ORDERED that the information provided be noted.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES – HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL FINAL REPORT

The Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel gave an outline of the process of investigation and presented the findings of the Panel's scrutiny investigation into Audiology Services.

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

- i) That the PCT and South Tees Trust prepare a report for the Health Scrutiny Panel at the end of 2008, highlighting how many, if any, people are waiting outside 18 weeks for a hearing aid following GP referral.
- ii) That the South Tees Trust and PCT deliver a more substantial town centre presence for audiology services, to reduce the amount of people having to travel to James Cook University Hospital, for what can be very minor matters.
- iii) That the South Tees Trust invests in handheld alert devices for use in the reception at Audiology Services in James Cook University Hospital, aimed at ensuring people know when their appointment is due. The Panel feels this would be beneficial for service users' peace of mind, following representations the Panel has received around people missing appointments.
- iv) That the South Tees Trust improves the visibility and accessibility of information in the Audiology section around how to make complaints and raise concerns. The Panel would like to know how this is done.
- v) That the South Tees Trust engages on a regular basis with Middlesbrough Deaf Centre aimed at improving communication, solving problems early and building a better relationship. The PCT, as Commissioner, should be kept aware of the outcome of these debates.

The Chair also referred to the suggestion from the Panel that further information be submitted regarding additional resources which had been made available and the impact of such resources on the waiting list.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Health Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.

EXTENDED SCHOOLS – CHILDREN AND LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL FINAL REPORT

The Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Panel (at the time of the scrutiny investigation) gave an outline of the process of investigation and presented the findings of the Panel's scrutiny investigation of extended schools.

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

1. That the Executive notes the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel's conclusion that excellent progress is being made in implementing the extended schools agenda across Middlesbrough, with a number of examples of good practice having been developed.
2. That the results of the next audit which is undertaken of extended schools provision are reported to the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel and that, specifically:
 - a) The number of schools which are not yet providing the full extended schools core offer is identified;
 - b) The Scrutiny Panel is informed of how any shortfall in provision is to be addressed to ensure that all schools meet the requirements of the core offer by the 2010 deadline; and
 - c) The Scrutiny Panel is kept updated on progress thereafter.
3. That the numerous examples of extended schools good practice are shared among schools and service providers to illustrate to other schools the range of integrated services that can be achieved, as well as the numerous benefits.

4. That the community use element of extended schools is actively promoted to encourage the involvement of, not only local parents, but local people without school-age children and also the wider community who might consider themselves to be outside a school's immediate catchment area.
5. That, in the light of increased community usage of schools, the importance of school security issues is recognised and addressed as appropriate - for example as improvement programmes are developed through Building Schools for the Future and Primary Strategy for Change.

Members supported the recommendations and commented on the positive outcome of the review.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.

TOWN CENTRE PARKING – ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL FINAL REPORT

The Chair of the Panel (at the time of the scrutiny investigation) gave an outline of the process of investigation and presented the findings of the Panel's scrutiny review of Town Centre Parking.

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

- a) That the parking strategy is reviewed by the Panel in a year's time and the service area should report on whether or not the car park capacity is meeting the need from commuters/shoppers.
- b) That the Council ensures that there is sufficient safe and secure evening car parking provision, which is well publicised in order to attract evening visitors to the town's developing night time economy.
- c) To ensure that adequate publicity is given to the mobile phone payment scheme for public awareness.
- d) That the Council maintains a dialogue with the private sector parking providers regarding the developments and parking provision in Cannon Park to ensure town centre car parking is not compromised by out of town schemes.
- e) That the Council discusses the condition of the toilets at the Captain Cook Car Park with the Management of the Captain Cook Centre with the view to each organisation making a contribution to funding for improvements to the toilets.
- f) That the Council install variable messaging systems at appropriate locations which direct visitors/commuters to available parking spaces within the town.
- g) That the residents parking is given a priority within the capital programme to enable the previous panel's recommendation regarding the introduction of the scheme in the University Ward to be implemented.

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

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009

The Senior Scrutiny Officer submitted a report which outlined progress by the various Scrutiny Panels in considering their respective scrutiny work programmes for 2008/2009.

The report summarised the suggested topics for investigation in respect of the following: -

Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel:

- Support for young people leaving care – to include implications for looked after children of the recent Government White Paper ‘Care Matters’;
- Youth Service – to include Connexions;
- Parenting strategies;
- Plus short reviews on:
 - The implications of the Government’s national Challenge- relating to the poorest performing schools;
 - School attendance – an update;
 - Substance misuse by parents/carers – update;

Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel:

- Victims of Crime – reporting back to victims;
- CCTV – coverage, effectiveness and future;
- Youth Centres and Community Centres – use and effectiveness;
- Golf Club – benefit to community against income and financial support required;
- Police Response Times in relation to vehicle crime, burglary, assault, robbery, accidents;

Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel:

- Community Centres;
- Middlesbrough’s Population – identify issues prior to undertaking a major review;
- Promoting Middlesbrough;
- Review of Libraries;
- Young People’s Transport Needs;

Environment Scrutiny Panel:

- Countryside Matters – to include bio-diversity and tree management;
- Condition of Empty Shops and Properties;
- Takeaway Policies – to include an examination of effect on local communities;
- Allotments Strategy;
- Plus short reviews and or updates in respect of Area Care, Recycling, Junk Jobs, contribution of street wardens to Town cleanliness, waste services review, Council’s Carbon Reduction and Climate Adaptation Action Plan;

Health Scrutiny Panel:

- Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health in Middlesbrough;
- How Practice Based Commissioning is working for the local NHS;
- Stroke Services;
- Effectiveness of the local suicide prevention services;

Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel:

- Improving levels of Employment for People with Disabilities;
- Early Intervention/Preventative Services;
- Individual Budgets and Person Centred Planning;

South Tees Health Scrutiny Joint Committee:

- Community Foundation Trust consultation;

Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee:

- Service or strategy development in Mental Health;

- Learning Disability Services;
- Ambulance Services;
- Cancer Screening services focussing on accessibility and take up;

Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel (suggested topics):

- Use of ex Netherfields House/empty site on Fulbeck Road;
- Democracy – turnout in local elections;
- Town Boundaries;
- Waste – expenditure on catering and use of envelopes;
- Council's Asylum Seekers & Refuge Dispersal Policy;
- Council's Race Equality Policy;
- Council's Anti Racism and Racial Harassment Policy;
- Socio-economic impact of a Casino in deprived areas in Middlesbrough;
- Cleveland Show;
- Tourism/Directional Signs in the Town;
- Relationship between Executive Member and Executive Director;
- Growing Your Own Food.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer confirmed that in view of current difficulties in obtaining appropriate evidence the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel had agreed to consider CCTV as the first scrutiny topic of investigation.

The Board was advised of other suggested topics of investigation by the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel including Natures World, Child Poverty in Middlesbrough, Play Strategy for Children with Complex Needs and, Social Problems and Financial Inclusion (Credit Unions).

Reference was made to the possibility of joint work being undertaken by Members of the Health Scrutiny Panel and the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel in respect of Dementia Services focussing upon support for carers.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That with the exception of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel the Scrutiny Work Programme 2008/2009 as outlined be approved.
2. That the Cleveland Show be the first scrutiny topic of investigation by the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel.
3. That further consideration be given to undertaking the joint scrutiny work identified in respect of the Dementia Services.

CALL IN - OUTCOME – SOUTHLANDS CENTRE COMMUNAL WORKSHOPS

In a report of the Senior Scrutiny Officer reference was made to the outcome of the meeting of the Board held on 17 June 2008 in accordance with the Authority's Call-In procedure. The Board had reviewed the decision made at an Individual Executive Decision Making meeting of the Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development held on 20 May 2008 relating to a review of the Southlands Centre Communal Workshops.

The Board had agreed that the decision taken at the Individual Executive Decision Making Meeting by the Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development on 20 May 2008 be not referred back on the basis of the evidence presented.

NOTED

SCRUTINY PANELS – PROGRESS REPORTS

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

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

CALL IN REQUESTS

It was confirmed that arrangements were being made for a meeting of the Board to be held to consider a Call-In in respect of an Executive decision taken at its meeting held on 24 June 2008 relating to Unallocated Resources.