

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 26 August 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor Brunton (Chair), Councillors Cole, Cox, J Hobson, Ismail, McIntyre (as substitute for Councillor Purvis), McPartland (as substitute for Councillor Khan) and Williams.

OFFICIALS: B Baldam, J Bennington, P Clark, A Crawford, J Ord, N Sayer, P Slocombe and E Williamson.

****PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillor Coppinger, Executive Member for Community Protection
Councillor N J Walker, Executive Member for Resources.

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dryden, C Hobson, Khan, Mawston, Purvis, Sanderson and J A Walker.

**** 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 15 and 29 July 2008 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

EXECUTIVE FEEDBACK – CONSOLIDATED PERFORMANCE CLINIC APRIL 2007 TO MARCH 2008 – ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT – MAJOR ADAPTATIONS

As part of the scrutiny process and in a report of the Executive Office Manager it was reported that the Executive had considered the Board's comments on final reports in relation to the above.

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

NOTED

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 issues to be considered by the Executive as outlined in Appendix A of the report submitted.

NOTED

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS – ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

In a report of the Scrutiny Support Officer the Board was reminded of arrangements for individual Members of the Executive to attend Overview and Scrutiny Board and update Members on their respective work in terms of their aims, aspirations, objectives, priorities and any emerging issues. It also provided the opportunity for the Board to identify or highlight any issues of concern.

A schedule detailing proposed attendances was outlined in Appendix 1 of the report submitted. The Board was advised of a subsequent change to the schedule in that the Deputy Mayor would now be attending on 21 October 2008 and the Executive Member for Public Health and Sport would attend on 23 September 2008.

NOTED AND APPROVED

EXECUTIVE MEMBER – COMMUNITY PROTECTION

The Chair welcomed Councillor Coppinger who outlined the work and scope of the portfolio of the Executive Member for Community Protection responsible for the Council's role in community protection and health and food safety.

The Board was advised of ongoing work in relation to the main service area responsibilities in respect of community safety; environmental health and trading standards; bereavement services; climate change and environmental sustainability; and environmental enforcement.

Specific reference was made to a number of areas of ongoing work including:

- a) recent Green Flag award for the restoration work undertaken at Linthorpe Cemetery;
- b) recent appointment as the Council's Climate Change Champion the role of which was to underline local government's strategic leadership role, vision and commitment to tackling climate change;
- c) implementation of recent legislative powers and enforcement work;
- d) Bereavement Services Development Plan;
- e) recent decision to refer the North East Ambulance Service Contact Centre Consultation to the Secretary of State for Health;
- f) possible relocation of the Fire Emergency Control Room which could be the subject of a scrutiny investigation;
- g) mindful of 'credit crunch';
- h) development of a Carbon Reduction and Climate Adaptation Plan;
- i) establishment of a Free Trade website;

Reference was also made to associated work as Chair of the Cleveland Police Authority, Chair of Emergency Planning Committee and Chair of North East Board of Environment Protection.

A brief outline was given of the current reporting mechanisms and briefing arrangements.

ORDERED that the Executive Member for Community Protection be thanked for the information provided.

FIRST QUARTER – REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2008/2009

The Director of Resources presented a report regarding an estimate of the annual projected outturn for 2008/2009 based on the first quarter review of revenue expenditure against the current year's Revenue Budget.

The Council at its meeting held on 7 March 2008 set its revenue budget at £126.3 million for 2008/2009. A Council tax increase of 4.9% for Middlesbrough Council had been applied.

In setting the 2008/2009 budget, approximately £4.5 million of efficiency savings had been identified. The Council had approved an extra £5.1 million for key services including £0.8m for Children, Families and Learning, £3.4m for Social Care for older people and disadvantaged groups; £0.6m for investment in the Environment; and £0.3m for new investments.

The projected outturn position for 2008/2009 was reported as a net budget pressure of (+£1,022,000) which represented a 1% pressure against the £126.3m 2008/2009 budget.

A summary was provided of the overall projected outturn position and the Board's attention was drawn to a number of areas as outlined in the report in respect of the following: -

a) Children, Families and Learning:

- Catering Services
- Family Services (In House fostering, Agency Fostering Service, residential placements)
- reduction in grant income relating to the parental support advisory service;
- target for efficiency savings in respect of ASP Reductions of £111,000 which was not likely to be achieved;

b) Social Care:

- very little flexibility in respect of the use of contributions from Social Care demand led provisions;

c) Environment:

- increased fuel prices;
- shortfall in the level of pension back funding credit due to be received;

d) Regeneration:

- the service had been notified of a £900,000 Planning Delivery Grant allocation in 2008/2009, £57,000 of which would be used to meet spending pressures and the utilisation of the balance would be the subject of a separate report.

Members sought clarification on a number of areas in particular the action being taken to mitigate some of the identified pressures.

ORDERED that the information provided be noted including the ongoing work and proposed action plans.

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, Non Executive Members and members of the public since the last meeting of the Board.

The Board considered the suggestion of the Executive Member for Community Protection to examine the rationale of relocating the Fire Emergency Control Room.

ORDERED that further information be sought from the Council's representatives on the Cleveland Fire Authority.

CALL IN REQUESTS

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