

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 2 June 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor Brunton (Chair), Councillors Cole, Dryden, Elder, C Hobson, J Hobson, Ismail, Kerr, Khan, Mawston, McTigue, Purvis and Sanderson.

OFFICERS: B Baldam, J Bennington, G Brown, S Cartlidge, P Clark, A Crawford, S Joscelyne, J Ord, N Sayer, P Slocombe, P Stephens, K Warnock and E Williamson.

**** ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor McPartland.

APPOINTMENT – VICE CHAIR – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

The Chair sought nominations for Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board for the Municipal Year 2009/2010.

ORDERED that Councillor Dryden be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board for the Municipal Year 2009/2010.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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 5 May 2009 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

EXECUTIVE FEEDBACK – REVIEW OF LIBRARIES – COUNTRYSIDE MATTERS – CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON REDUCTION – EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

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.

The Board was also advised that the Executive had noted the response from Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust in relation to the Health Scrutiny Panel's investigation concerning Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health.

In relation to the review of libraries reference was made to the ongoing review and a changed timescale in relation to the implementation of the recommendations in respect of Whinney Banks library. The opportunity to receive an update at a later date was referred to.

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

REVENUE OUTTURN 2008/2009

The Director of Resources submitted a detailed report concerning the final outturn position for expenditure against the 2008/2009 Revenue Budget.

The Board was advised that a net budget saving of (-£59,000) was forecast within general fund services for the year.

A detailed breakdown of gross expenditure and income budgets against actual expenditure and income were outlined in Appendix A of the report submitted. A schedule of Corporate Services Grant carry forward requests were detailed at Appendix B and a breakdown of efficiency services outlined in Appendix C.

Specific reference was made to a number of areas of significant budget pressure with particular regard to Children, Families and Learning and the steps that had or were being taken to mitigate such circumstances.

NOTED

RESERVES AND BALANCES 2009

The Director of Resources submitted a report, which had been considered by the Executive at its meeting, held on 26 May 2009. Following the completion of the 2008/2009 accounts the report gave an update as to the position with regard to the level of available Reserves and Balances and outlined a process whereby resources would be allocated to a fund, which would be used for projects, that 'make a difference'. The projects were to be identified by services based on the criteria set out in the report submitted.

The Council was required to maintain appropriate reserves and balances together with adequate provisions to meet assessed future liabilities. The position was subject to regular review. The report stated that general balances were being maintained on the advice of the Director of Resources, at a minimum of £4.5 million. In addition the Council had earmarked reserves, which were maintained for specific purposes. The estimated level of earmarked serves and the estimated level of provision as at 31 March 2009 were attached to the report in appendices A and B respectively.

A review of Revenue Balances 2009/2010 was summarised in the report.

In terms of the overall process it was confirmed that a further report would be submitted to the Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Board and Council once the 2008/2009 accounts had been audited and proposed schemes would be outlined for consideration and approval. Confirmation was given of current arrangements, which allowed the opportunity for Members to put forward suggested projects to Executive Members.

NOTED

STRATEGIC PLAN 2008/2011 – REVISION 2009/2010

Further to the meeting of the Board held on 5 May 2009 the Board considered the final draft 2009/2010 revision of the Council's 2008/2011 Strategic Plan approved by the Executive at its meeting held on 26 May 2009 prior to submission to Council on 17 June 2009.

Members recognised the extent of the work undertaken and acknowledged the positive contribution of scrutiny into the overall process.

Reference was also made to the opportunity of scrutiny investigating any emerging issues and the possibility of examining certain comparable and national targets.

NOTED

CAR PARKING CHARGES– JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - FINAL REPORT – HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel outlined the process of investigation by the Panel into car parking charges at James Cook University Hospital.

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

- i) That a weekly ticket be introduced, guaranteeing a maximum amount that people can pay to park at the James Cook University Hospital site.
- ii) That the 15 minutes for free car parking be extended to 30 minutes.
- iii) That the Trust explores ways to make the parking charge setting process much less opaque and seeks the views of interested groups, in line with the Dept of Health guidance. The Panel would be happy to assist in this.
- iv) That when subsequent parking pricing reviews are ongoing, the Trust Board be involved in the discussions as a formal agenda item, prior to a decision being made.
- v) That the Trust seeks to publicise the £7.70 monthly tickets much more assertively and clarifies the price of the monthly ticket. For example, the Trust could include information in relevant patient letters and on car parking ticket machines.
- vi) That the Trust clarifies the process for applying for a monthly ticket and highlights the process that people can expect to go through. The Panel would also like to see the Trust confirm criteria for such tickets and the identity of the ultimate decision maker.
- vii) The Panel would like to suggest Council's Economic Regeneration & Transport Scrutiny Panel investigates the topic of parking in the Beechwood area.

Members endorsed the recommendations and specifically referred to the conclusions of the Panel and in particular supported the suggestion of further information being sought with regard to the following: -

- a) whether or not there was sufficient disabled parking spaces at James Cook University Hospital to meet demand;
- b) what the South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust could do about people who may be temporarily immobile, due to treatment, but who would not qualify for a disabled space.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Health Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive subject to the addition of two further recommendations based on (a) and (b) outlined above.

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.

Reference was made to the process of submission of requests for scrutiny reviews including the Council's website and a scrutiny leaflet.

The Board was advised of the intention for Scrutiny Panel's to consider their respective work programmes for 2009/2010 details of which would be reported to the Board for consideration and approval.

In response to a suggestion for a scrutiny investigation to be undertaken in relation to Nature's World it was suggested that it could be included in the list of possible topics to be shortly considered by the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

NOTED AND APPROVED

SCRUTINY PANELS – PROGRESS REPORTS

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

NOTED

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR MIDDLESBROUGH

A report of the Assistant Chief Executive was presented relating to the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Middlesbrough 2008/2023, which had been developed over the last 18 months.

The final draft of the SCS had been based on bringing together information from existing plans and strategies to support the priorities that had been agreed. It was confirmed that significant consultation had taken place with service providers, with Middlesbrough Partnership Action Groups and with wider stakeholders at partnership events.

The final draft SCS built on feedback from the Council's Corporate Assessment report (December 2008) and included longer-term outcomes which illustrated what Middlesbrough would like if the overall vision was achieved as well as demonstrating the incremental short, medium and long-term steps that would be taken to achieve the vision.

The final draft ensured that Middlesbrough Partnership was able to respond effectively to the requirements of the Comprehensive Area Assessment introduced in April 2009.

ORDERED that the Sustainable Community Strategy for Middlesbrough 2008-2023 be supported and recommended for approval by the Council on 17 June 2009.

CALL IN REQUESTS

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

NOTED